

COLLECTIONS: IMPORTANT ASIAN, AUSTRALIAN & EUROPEAN ARTS & DESIGN INCLUDING PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF THE LATE COLLEEN McCULLOUGH AO ACHIEVES \$676,490 IN SYDNEY

Colleen McCullough's personal manuscript of *The Thorn Birds* Sells for \$54,900 at Sotheby's Australia

A Set of Four Embroidered Silk Panels Belonging to the Author Realise \$64,660 Against a Pre-Sale Estimate of \$8,000–10,000



**Melbourne, 30 October 2019** – Tonight, Sotheby's Australia's final *Arts & Design* auction of 2019 realised \$676,490 in Sydney, with strong Australian and international competition in the saleroom. Exceptional results were achieved for works of Australian, Asian and European art and decorative arts, including \$26,840 for a pair of famille-rose 'figural' porcelain plaques from the Republic period (lot 12, estimate \$10,000–12,000), \$23,790 for Norman Lindsay's *Captured* (lot 68, estimate: \$10,000–15,000), \$21,960 for Max Dupain's *At Newport* 1952 (lot 89, estimate \$10,000–12,000) and \$31,720 for *The Dream of Galileo* 1998 by James Gleeson (lot 111, estimate \$15,000–25,000).

The fiercest bidding of the evening was for a group of works offered on behalf of The Estate of the Late Colleen McCullough AO. The selection comprised personal manuscripts, research materials, and treasured possessions – including late author’s cherished typewriter – and garnered strong demand from Australian and international private and institutional buyers. Within the group, McCullough’s personal manuscript of *The Thorn Birds*, complete with her hand-written notes, realised \$54,900 (lot 134, estimate \$20,000–30,000), and was shortly followed by a set of four embroidered silk panels formerly belonging to the author that soared passed their estimates – eventually being hammered down at \$64,660 (lot 148, estimate \$8,000–10,000).

### **AUSTRALIA’S MOST BELOVED AUTHOR**

In 1972 Colleen McCullough (1937-2015) set out to turn her life-long passion for writing into a career as a professional author. She had two modest goals: first, the practical need to supplement her wage as a neurophysiologist in the Department of Neurology at Yale Medical School, in New Haven, Connecticut, and second, to write each of her books in a different style of fiction to its predecessor. Little was she to realise that her goal of financial independence was to be realised so quickly, with her first published novel, *Tim* (1974) and then the runaway success of *The Thorn Birds* (1977) – the best-selling Australian novel of all time and a best-seller internationally – allowing her to leave her medical research career to become a full-time writer.

McCullough’s second goal was achieved over the next 43 years, writing historical novels, cookery, biography and autobiography in some 25 published books. Her trademark was a meticulous attention to detail and research, a characteristic she attributed to both her training in medical research and her boundless curiosity.

In spite of her fame as an Australian author, most of McCullough’s books were written outside Australia, firstly in the United States while working at Yale and later from her home on Norfolk Island, 1,412 kilometres off the coast of New South Wales, where she settled in 1979.

In her later years, McCullough used her high profile to lobby members of government in Australia and internationally for the citizens of Norfolk Island to be granted greater rights in the management of their local community. In her correspondence – some of which is presented in this collection – her characteristic humour is instantly recognisable, together with her determination to have her opinion heard, no matter what bureaucratic barriers may be placed in her way.

IMPORTANT ASIAN ARTS & DESIGN

Lot 12, a pair of famille-rose 'figural'  
porcelain plaques  
Republic period  
(2)

each 19.5 x 11 cm, overall 22.5 x 14 cm  
Estimate \$10,000–12,000  
Sold for \$26,840



Lot 63, a pair of huanghuali continuous arched  
back armchairs, Nanguan Maoyi  
(2)

each chair 95 cm high, 60 cm wide,  
56 cm deep  
Estimate \$5,000–7000  
Sold for \$23,180

Lot 64, a huanghuali and hardwood  
openwork round-corner two-part cabinet  
20th century

162.5 cm high, 92 cm wide, 45 cm deep  
Estimate \$4,500–6,500  
Sold for 30,480



AUSTRALIAN & INTERNATIONAL ART

Lot 68, NORMAN LINDSAY 1879-1969

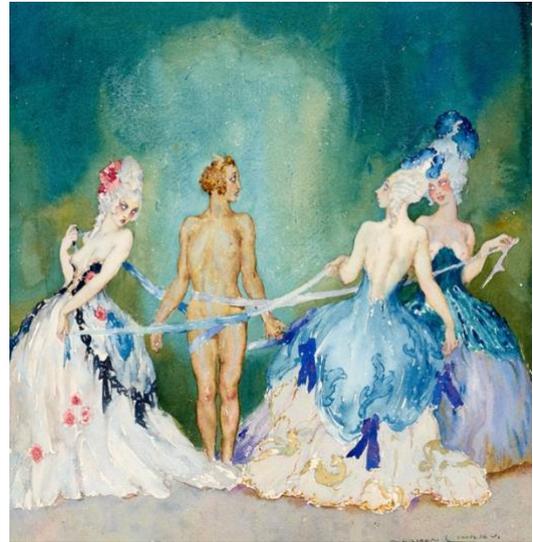
**Captured**

watercolour on paper, 38 x 36.5 cm

Estimate \$10,000–15,000

Sold for \$23,790

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Lot 89, MAX DUPAIN 1911-1992

**At Newport** 1952

gelatin silver print, printed later,

40.4 x 45.5 cm (image)

Estimate \$10,000–15,000

Sold for \$21,960

Lot 111, JAMES GLEESON 1915-2008

**The Dream of Galileo** 1998

oil on canvas, 133 x 178 cm

Estimate \$15,000–25,000

Sold for \$31,720

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PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF THE LATE COLLEEN McCULLOUGH AO



Lot 134, the earliest known surviving manuscript for *The Thorn Birds*, (published 1977), including the author's handwritten amendments, and associated material

Estimate \$20,000–30,000

Sold for \$54,900

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Lot 141, Colleen McCullough's original pencil portraits and hand-drawn and printed maps from the historical fiction series, *The Masters of Rome*, (published between 1990-2007)

Estimate \$5,000–6,000

Sold for \$6,100

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Lot 145, the Royal typewriter  
Colleen McCullough used to  
write *Tim* (published 1974)  
and *The Thorn Birds*  
(published 1977),  
grey powder-coated and  
chromed metal, bearing a  
mailing label inscribed  
'BRITAIN / 22 CHURCH STREET  
/ FEN DITTON / CAMBRIDGE  
C85 BSU / ENGLAND'  
46 cm wide, 21 cm high,  
45 cm deep  
Estimate \$3,000–5,000  
Sold for \$4,636



Lot 148, a set of four  
embroidered silk panels,  
19th/20th century  
(4)  
each panel 124.5 x 42 cm,  
135 x 53 cm overall  
Estimate \$8,000–10,000  
Sold for \$64,660

## AT A GLANCE

Collections: Important Asian, Australian & European Arts & Design  
Including Property from the Estate of the Late Colleen McCullough AO  
Auction in Sydney, 30 October 2019, 6 pm  
The Hughenden, 14 Queen Street, Woollahra

Total sold: \$676,490 including buyer's premium

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