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Australia's top 12 bestselling women artists – and their biggest sales



Jenna Price

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While women artists earn significantly less than men, it's worth recognising the highest achievers when it comes to auction prices.

Annette Larkin, a fine art dealer and an expert on the Australian art auction market, has documented the top Australian female artists sold at art auctions in Australia. Larkin started following the contemporary art market in a career that began at Macquarie Galleries in the mid-'80s. She then worked at auction house Christies for 11 years before setting up her own art dealership and consultancy, Annette Larkin Fine Art.

Australia's bestselling female artist Emily Kame Kngwarreye during a visit to Sydney in 1992. FAIRFAX MEDIA

In the list below, the top priced work is shown for each of the 12 bestselling women artists.

In comparison, the top results at auction since 1980 for Australian male artists are Sidney Nolan's *First-Class Marksman*, 1946, which sold for \$5.5 million, Brett Whiteley's *My Armchair*, 1976, (\$3.92 million) and *The Olgas for Ernest Giles*, 1985, (\$3.48 million) and John Brack's *The Old Time*, 1969 (\$3.36 million).

Emily Kame Kngwarreye

Earth's Creation, 1995

Synthetic polymer paint on linen, four panels, 632 x 275 cm. Est: \$500,000-\$700,000, Lawson-Menzies (now trading as Menzies), Aboriginal Fine Art, Sydney. **\$1.056 million and sold again in 2017 for \$2.1 million.**

Emily Kame Kngwarreye's 'Earth's Creation I'.

Ethel Carrick Fox

Market, Under Trees, 1919

Oil on canvas, signed and dated '19 lower left, 73 x 98.5 cm. Est: \$400,000-\$600,000, Sotheby's, Important Australian Art, Sydney. **\$1.008 million and then sold again in 2019 for \$1.464 million.**

Ethel Carrick Fox's Market, Under Trees.

Grace Cossington Smith

The Window, 1956

Oil on composition board, signed and dated 'G. Cossington Smith 56' lower left; signed and inscribed 'The Window. / Grace Cossington Smith' verso, 122.2 x 91.5 cm. Est: \$250,000-\$350,000, Sotheby's, Important Australian & International Art, Sydney. **Sold for \$671,000 (another work was sold for \$638,181 in 2020).**

Grace Cossington Smith's The Window.

Rosalie Gascoigne

Scrub Country 1981

Weathered painted wood from discarded soft-drink crates, with aluminium strip supports,

144 x 376 cm. Est: \$600,000-\$800,000, Bonhams, The Grundy Collection, Sydney. **Sold for \$671,000 (other works sold for \$610,000 and \$585,600).**

Rosalie Gascoigne's Scrub Country.

Freda Robertshaw

Australian Beach Scene, c. 1940

Oil on canvas, signed lower right, 112 x 125 cm. Est: \$120,000-\$150,000, Sotheby's, Fine Australian and European Paintings, Melbourne. **\$475,500.**

Freda Robertshaw's Australian Beach Scene (c. 1940) COURTESY SMITH & SINGER FINE ART

Margaret Preston

Native Honeysuckle, 1933

Oil on canvas, signed and dated 'M. Preston 33' lower right, 56.5 x 46 cm. Est: \$150,000-\$200,000, Bonhams, The Grundy Collection, Sydney. **Sold for \$463,600.**

Margaret Preston's Native Honeysuckle, 1933. BONHAMS

Bronwyn Oliver

Shell, 2003

Copper on bronze base, 150 cm diameter. Est: \$400,000-\$500,000, Menzies, Australian & International Fine Art & Sculpture, Melbourne. **\$414,818,**

Bronwyn Oliver's Shell.

Del Kathryn Barton

Of Pollen, 2013

Synthetic polymer paint and gouache on polyester canvas, signed, dated and inscribed '– of pollen – 2013 / del – kathryn barton' lower centre, 160 x 140 cm. Est: \$100,000-\$140,000,

Sotheby's, Important Australian & New Zealand Art (lots 1-98) | Important Australian Art

from The J.G.L. Collection (lots 99-137), Sydney. **\$378,200.**

Del Kathryn Barton, Of Pollen, 2013. ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY

Maggie Watson Napangardi

Mina Mina Dreaming, 1995

Synthetic polymer paint on canvas, inscribed verso: Napangardi Waton/ */
KAMW004/95, 202 x 148 cm. Est: \$260,000-\$320,000, Lawson-Menzies (now trading as
Menzies), Contemporary, Modern Australian and Important Abor, Sydney. **Sold for
\$348,000.**

Maggie Watson Napangardi's *Mina Mina Dreaming*, 1995 MENZIES

Joy Hester

Girl with Cocky C. 1957

Oil on paper on board, unsigned, titled and dated on Strines Gallery label (attached
verso), handwritten certification of painting by Albert Tucker, 1986 on second label
(attached verso), 49 x 62 cm. Est: \$90,000-\$120,000, Leonard Joel, Fine Art, Melbourne.
\$316, 727.

Joy Hester, *Girl with Cocky C.* ADAM OBRADOVIC & JOSEPH HAMMOND

Cressida Campbell

Interior with Cat, 2010

Watercolour on incised woodblock, signed 'Cressida Campbell' lower left, signed and
dated 'Cressida Campbell / 201' verso, 92 x 50 cm. Est: \$100,000-\$120,000, Sotheby's,
Important Australian Art, Sydney. **\$292,800.**

Interior with Cat by Cressida Campbell. SOTHEBY'S

Florence Fuller

Weary, 1888

Oil on canvas, Sotheby's Australia 28/04/15oil on canvas, signed and dated 'F Fuller/1988-' lower right, 91.8 x 70.8 cm. Est: \$150000-\$200,000, Sotheby's, The David Clarke AO Collection of Australian Art; Important Australian Art, Sydney. **\$260,000.**

Florence Fuller, Weary, 1888. AGNSW

Other women artists who have sold at auction for about \$100,000:

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Blind viewing shows how female artists are undervalued

Yvonne Audette: \$103,700 (2018)

Clarice Beckett: \$102,225 (2001)

Dorrit Black: \$91,500 (2018)

Fiona Hall: \$95,160 in (2015)

Gwyn Hannsen Pigott: \$102,000 (2007)

Makinti Napanangka: \$105,600 (2015)

Alison Rehfish: \$103,700 (2020)

Ellis Rowan: \$90,000 (2011)

Jane Sutherland: \$96,000 (2008)

Known commercial gallery or private sales above \$100,000*:

Grace Crowley

eX de Medici

Mikala Dwyer

Sally Gabori

Rosemary Laing

Janet Laurence

Lindy Lee

Tracey Moffatt

Makinti Napanangka

Yukultji Napangati

Susan Norrie

Patricia Piccinini

Iso Rae

Hilda Rix Nicholas

Aida Tomescu

Jenny Watson

*There may be a few other private sales not visible in *the Herald's* research.

Jenna Price is a Sydney journalist and art collector.

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[Jenna Price](#) is a regular columnist for The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age. Connect via [Facebook](#) or [email](#).