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MAUL ROBERTS

Dealer's Old Master collection consigned to Australian auction house Leonard Joel

A group of around 30 Old Masters from the collection of the late dealer Robert Compton Jones is being offered at Leonard Joel in Sydney on December 8.

Alex Capon12 Nov 2025



The Island of San Giorgio Maggiore from the west, one of two works by Francesco Guardi being offered as a single lot estimated Aus\$500,000-700,000 at Leonard Joel.

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The auction house said that, to its knowledge, an Old Master collection of this calibre has not been offered in Australia before.

Compton Jones, who had dual citizenship of both Australia and the UK, traded under the name The Woollahra Trading Company in both London and Sydney. He regularly exhibited at fairs with his wife Judy, including the Olympia fair and Paris Biennale, and helped bring some important pieces of European art to Australian institutions.

Compton Jones died in 2020 and the works featured in the auction were those he chose to keep for personal enjoyment, shipping them with him when he relocated to Sydney later in life. Many were bought from either the major London auctions or leading dealers.



Robert Compton Jones and his wife Judy who was also his business partner.

In 2023 Leonard Joel offered his impressive porcelain and furniture collection which raised Aus\$1,146,625 (£602,095) including premium and included a Sèvres vase from 1762 that made a hammer price of Aus\$170,000 (£89,080) – see issue no 2596.

Here, the 28 Old Master lots have a combined low estimate of Aus\$1.736m (£860,000).



View of the Cannaregio, with the Ponte dei Tre Archi and the Palazzo Surian-Bellotto, one of two works by Francesco Guardi being offered as a single lot estimated Aus\$500,000-700,000 at Leonard Joel.

Among the highlights of the upcoming auction are two Venetian scenes by Francesco Guardi: *The Island of San Giorgio Maggiore from the west* and *View of the Cannaregio, with the Ponte dei Tre Archi and the Palazzo Surian-Bellotto*. The works were once part of the collection of Harold Sidney Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Rothermere (1868-1940), and were housed at Warwick House in London.

Compton Jones bought them at Christie's in London in 2006 where they were offered with a £120,000-180,000 estimate but took £400,000. At Leonard Joel they are pitched at Aus\$500,000-700,000.



Saints Romauld, Mark and Paul the Hermit, a panel attributed to Jacopo di Cione, estimated Aus\$100,000-145,000 at Leonard Joel.

Another leading lot is a rare tempera on gold ground panel attributed to Jacopo di Cione (fl.c.1362-1400) depicting three Saints – Romauld, Mark, and Paul the Hermit. It is estimated at Aus\$100,000-180,000.

The panel is believed to have been created as part of the Ognissanti Altarpiece, originally located in the Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, which would have comprised images of 12 Saints (six are now in the National Gallery, London, while three others were stolen from the Hutton collection in 1933 and are known only from photographs).

With an ownership history that can be traced back to the 18th century, the panel in Australia last sold at auction at Phillips in 1985 where Compton Jones is presumed to have bought it.



Saint Michael by Luca Signorelli, estimated Aus\$140,000-180,000 at Leonard Joel.

Elsewhere at the Leonard Joel sale is a small but powerful panel of Saint Michael by Luca Signorelli (c. 1450-1523), identified by art historian Laurence Kanter as originating from one of the pilasters of Signorelli's *Lamentation* (1501-02), now housed in the Diocesan Museum. Compton Jones bought it at Christie's in London in 2009, and here it is estimated at Aus\$140,000-180,000



A Man Lighting a Lamp by Matthias Stomer, estimated Aus\$80,000-120,000 at Leonard Joel.

Other artists represented in the collection include Jacopo Tintoretto, Giuseppe Maria Crespi, Marco Basaiti, Neri di Bicci, Paolo Schiavo, Girolamo di Benvenuto, Bicci di Lorenzo and Carlo Maratta.

Among three works that Compton Jones bought from dealer Colnaghi in the 1960s and kept in his collection for the rest of his life was *A Man Lighting a Lamp* by Matthias Stomer (c.1600-52). Compton Jones bought it in 1962, and here the trademark atmospheric portrait by the Dutch artist who settled in Italy is pitched at Aus\$80,000-120,000.

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