

Neighbours producer's \$20m art collection on show

May 8, 2013 - 10:45AM

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A visitor to Bonhams London views Fred Williams' painting *You Yangs landscape 1*, 1963, set to fetch up to \$2 million at auction. Photo: Getty Images

Paintings from the personal collection of Australian TV producer Reg Grundy have gone on display for the first time in London, ahead of a predicted record-breaking auction.

The 90 works by some of Australia's most renowned artists are expected to fetch up to \$20 million at Bonhams in Sydney on June 26.

An exhibition of 30 of the paintings opened in London on Tuesday before being returned to Australia next week to be shown around the country.



A Bonhams employee moves Tom Roberts' *The old Sacramento*, 1885. Photo: Getty Images

Works by Fred Williams, Arthur Boyd, Eugene von Guerard, Sidney Nolan, John Brack, Tom Roberts, Ian Fairweather and Rosalie Gascoigne are among the collection built by Mr Grundy, 89, and wife Joy Chambers-Grundy over almost 30 years.

It is considered the finest single-owner collection of Australian art to be offered at auction.

"The interesting thing about the collection is that the collectors wanted the best and could afford the best," John Cruthers, the curator of the collection said.



A Bonhams London employee views *Scrub Country*, 1981, by Rosalie Gascoigne, part of Reg Grundy's collection. Photo: Getty Images

Among the most prominent paintings is Williams' 1963 painting *You Yangs Landscape 1*, carrying an estimated value of between \$1.5m and \$2m.

"That picture is the turning point in Fred Williams' career," Mr Cruthers said.

"We didn't just buy works by the best people, we bought their best works."



A Bonhams employee hangs Herbert Badham's *Travellers*, 1933, at the London auction house. Photo: Getty Images

Mr Cruthers said the paintings were being sold as Mr Grundy and Mrs Chambers-Grundy travelled less and did not want to put them in storage.

Better known for their show-business connections - Reg as the producer of some of the most popular shows on Australian television, including *Neighbours*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Prisoner*, and Joy as an actor and author - the multimillionaire couple began collecting art to display in their numerous homes around the world.

The pair will keep 65 paintings.

Bonhams said The Grundy Collection was expected to set a new Australian art record for any single-owner collection and exceed previous blue-chip collections sold at auction, including The Fosters Collection of Australian Art (sold for \$13.3m in 2005) and the Harold E Mertz Collection (sold in 2000 for \$15.9m).

AAP, with Dewi Cooke

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