

5 Malakoff Street, North Caulfield, Vic, 3161
Telephone: (61 3) 9509 9855 Facsimile: (61 3) 9509 4549
Email: ausart@diggins.com.au Website: www.diggins.com.au
ABN.19006 457 101

LAURINE · DIGGINS · FINE · ART



ARTHUR STREETON 1867 - 1943

Heidelberg 1889

oil on canvas on board

24 x 44 cm

signed lower left: Arthur Streeton 89

inscribed lower right: Heidelberg

Provenance:

Sir Percy Spender, Sydney

Savill Galleries, Sydney

R. Farquharson, Canberra

Australian Auctions, Sydney, March 1984

Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne

Max Carter, Adelaide, 1987

Lauraine Diggins Fine Art, Melbourne, 1988

John and Marita McIntosh, Melbourne

The Collection of John and Marita McIntosh, Mossgreen, Melbourne, 15 Oct 2013, lot 5
private collection, Melbourne

Exhibited:

The Australian Impressionists: Their Origins & Influences, Lauraine Diggins Fine Art,
Melbourne, Westpac Gallery Victorian Art Centre, Melbourne, then St Neots, Double
Bay 15 Aug - 16 September, 1988, cat. no. 12

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The freshness of the Impressionist technique and its lively display of paint gave Australian artists of the time a great advantage in describing the landscape in all its individuality. It was a fresh vision for a burgeoning sense of nationhood. Combine the enthusiasm of youth with the springtime of the year and you have the marvellous paintings of the young Arthur Streeton at his lyrical best. He was at the beginning of his twenties when he painted *Heidelberg* 1889. The skies are heavy with rain clouds of plenty and yellow flowers dance across the fields, pastures providing food in abundance for the grazing cattle. Streeton, Charles Conder and other brothers of the brush of the 'Heidelberg School' embraced the seasons of noonday suns and foggy morns, the transience of dawn and twilight, and the ever-fleeting spring, with an immediacy that only the brilliant Impressionist technique would allow. 'Mr Streeton is steeped in "Impressionism" to the tips of his fingers' enthused a writer for *The Australasian Art Review*, lauding him as 'one of the ablest Australian exponents'.¹ He was a master of the feel of the enveloping atmosphere, a highlight of our *Heidelberg*, captured so effectively *en plein air*. His efforts were so good that another critic was moved to write, of a different work, that Streeton 'has a marvelous power of suggesting air effects'.²

Heidelberg, in the outer reaches of Melbourne, was a favourite painting ground during the late eighties into the 1890s. Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin have left many memorable canvases of their pioneering achievements in paint. And the group combined to present the sensational *9 x 5 Impression Exhibition* in the same year as our painting was completed. The catalogue declaring to a startled Melbourne public 'An effect is only momentary...'.³ Streeton's little paintings included *The Dying Day* (Famdal Collection, Sydney); *The Lover's Walk* (private collection, Sydney); and *Impression for 'Golden Summer'* (Benalla Art Gallery). The final painting, *Golden Summer, Eaglemont* 1889 (National Gallery of Australia, Canberra) achieved an honourable mention in the Paris Salon of the Société des Artistes Français (Old Salon) of 1892. Other gems from this time range from *Butterflies and Blossoms* (1889) in the National Gallery of Victoria to the majestic '*Still glides the stream, and shall for ever glide*' 1890 in the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Streeton's luminous paintings, through which he identified himself so readily with the landscape, were widely appreciated by his contemporaries. Enthusiasm continues unabated.

David Thomas, 2016

1. *The Australasian Art Review*, 1 August 1899, p.23

2. *The Melbourne University Review*, vol. VI, no. 1, March 1890, p.27

3. 'To The Public', *The 9 x 5 Impression Exhibition* [catalogue introduction], Melbourne 1889