



## **ABOUT SIDNEY NOLAN**

Of Irish origin, Sidney Nolan was born in Melbourne, Australia on 22 April 1917. During his lifetime he became recognised as one of the foremost international modern artists.

In the 1940s, Sidney painted his now famous series inspired by the life of the outlaw Ned Kelly. At this time he travelled extensively throughout Australia working incessantly and created a series of landscapes of the interior, drought paintings and others relating to the shipwrecked Mrs Fraser.

In 1951 he left Australia for London. He immediately travelled across Europe and in 1956 moved to Greece where he spent a year painting themes derived from Greek mythology. He also spent time at Studio 17 in Paris studying engraving and lithography with S. W. Hayter.

Nolan was awarded a Harkness Fellowship in 1958 to study in the United States. During the two years he spent there, he formed a close friendship with the American poet Robert Lowell and illustrated several books for him.

In England, Sidney was a regular visitor to the Aldeburgh Festival (then in its formative years) and developed a strong friendship with Benjamin Britten, exhibiting paintings inspired by Britten's works in the festival exhibitions. In 1973, Faber Music Limited published a fine limited facsimile edition of the original score of Britten's music for Berthold Brecht's "Children's Crusade" illustrated by Sidney Nolan. Sidney's love of music and the opera led him to design sets and costumes for many productions, most notably for the Kenneth McMillan production of the Rite of Spring, first performed to acclaim at the Royal Opera House in 1962.

Sidney's desire to see the world was insatiable and took him beyond Europe to Africa, China and Antarctica. He painted many series of works inspired by these continents and the people that lived there. However, his affection for Australia and sense of his Australian nationality was strong, and he continued to return there for a least a few months of every year.

Major retrospective exhibitions of his work were held in Sydney in 1967 and 2007, in Melbourne in 1987 and 1992, at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London in 1957 and at the Royal Dublin Society in 1973. Important exhibitions of his early work were held at the ICA in London in 1962 and later in 1994 by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Sidney's work is well represented worldwide and is in the collections of the National Gallery, Tate, MoMA, the Pittsburgh Museum of Art and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, among others.

When Sidney settled on the borders of Wales in the summer of 1983, he expressed the sense of belonging once again to a landscape of great magnitude quoting a line he had written in his youth: "All was static and monumental with the first of the dawn."

At the age of 60 he felt compelled to devote himself to a review of his life, the music, opera and poetry that he loved and the characters he had met, and in his studio. In the great barns at The Rodd he worked on paintings of increasing size exploring these themes. For Sidney these paintings were a particularly important aspect of his life's work.

Sidney Nolan was knighted in 1981 and was awarded the Order of Merit in 1983. He was made a Companion of the Order of Australia, elected an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a member of the Royal Academy of Arts.

**For more press information please contact Iliana Taliotis on +44 (0)7931 341 112 or [mail@ilianataliotis.com](mailto:mail@ilianataliotis.com)**