



Cesari snapped up in bidding battle

A RARE work of art came up for auction at Leonard Joel on Monday night. *The Judgement of Paris*, an oil on copper work measuring 43.5 by 51 centimetres believed to be by the Italian artist Giuseppe Cesari (1568-1640) was offered for sale by a Melbourne man whose father had bought it at auction in Melbourne in the 1950s. Post-war Melbourne was apparently fertile ground for informed collectors who were able to buy artworks at auction for far less than they would cost in Europe or the US.

This unsigned work was estimated to sell for between \$60,000 and \$100,000 but sold for \$140,000 to a local anonymous buyer. Joel's head of art, Peter Struthers, said bidding was spirited, with bidding coming from the auction room as well as from overseas bidders by telephone. There are only believed to be about 11 of Cesari's works on copper, and no Australian institution is believed to hold any of his works. Monday's auction of Australian and European works saw about 80 per cent of works offered sell for a total of about \$1 million.

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