Behind the Scenes

Hans Heysen’s Art World Networks

Ralph Body
Department of Art History
School of Humanities
Faculty of Arts
University of Adelaide

February 2019
Behind the Scenes

Hans Heysen’s Art World Networks

Volume One

Ralph Body
Department of Art History
School of Humanities
Faculty of Arts
University of Adelaide

February 2019
# Table of Contents – Volume One

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................ iii
Thesis Declaration ......................................................................................................................... v
Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................... vii
Abbreviations ................................................................................................................................ ix
Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 1
  Literature Review ..................................................................................................................... 8
  Conceptual Framework and Methodology .............................................................................. 22
Chapter One: Establishing a Career, c.1903-1914 ................................................................. 33
  1.1. 1904: Getting Established in the Cultural Field ............................................................. 34
  1.2. Gallery Validation: Recognition of Heysen’s Art by Municipal Collections ............... 40
  1.3. Group Exhibitions: Showing with Artists’ Societies ......................................................... 48
  1.4. Solo Exhibitions: Pursuing Commercial and Symbolic Rewards ............................... 56
  1.5. W. H. Gill, Commissions and Prestigious Clients .......................................................... 69
  1.6. Visits, Visitors and Introductions: Heysen’s Expanding Art World Network ............. 76
  1.7. Competing and Coexisting Criteria: European Credentials and Australian Characteristics ...................................................................................................................... 88
Chapter Two: Suspicion and Support: Heysen during the First World War ..................... 111
  2.1. Wartime Security Measures and their Effect on German-Australians .................... 112
  2.2. Multiple Conflicts: The NGV’s Decision to Renge on a Purchase ......................... 119
  2.3. Heysen’s Resignations from Artists’ Societies ......................................................... 125
  2.4. Heysen’s Finances and Place in the Field ................................................................. 133
  2.5. Nellie Melba’s Support ................................................................................................. 138
  2.6. Wartime Patronage from the Vice-Regency .............................................................. 145
  2.7. The Impact on Heysen’s Emotional Life .................................................................... 151
Chapter Three: On the Same Page: Heysen and *Art in Australia* Magazine .............. 157
  3.1. Sydney Ure Smith and *Art in Australia* ................................................................. 158
  3.2. Heysen and Sydney Ure Smith .................................................................................... 169
  3.3. *The Art of Hans Heysen* (1920) .............................................................................. 177
  3.4. Lionel Lindsay’s Writing on Heysen ........................................................................... 185
  3.5. Heysen and Reproductions of his Work .................................................................... 195
3.6. The Introduction of Heysen’s Flinders Ranges Works in 1928........201

Chapter Four: Where to Draw the Line? Heysen and Modern Art...........219
4.1. Defining Modern Art in the Australian Context..........................219
4.2. Hans Heysen’s Networks, c.1932-1951....................................228
4.3. Heysen’s Views on Modern Art ..............................................234
4.4. Involvement with the Australian Academy of Art, 1937-1949 ..........266
4.5. Heysen, Lionel Lindsay and Addled Art, 1940-43......................278
4.6. Heysen and the Cultural Field, 1934-1951................................291

Chapter Five: Competing Values: Heysen and the Art Market............309
5.1. Examining the Art Market ......................................................310
5.2. The Art Boom, c.1916-1928 ..................................................315
5.3. The Depression and Second World War, 1929-1945 ....................332
5.4. The Post-War Period, 1946-1968 ............................................349
5.5. Heysen and Collectors .........................................................363

Conclusion .....................................................................................371

Table of Contents - Volume Two

Images.........................................................................................1
Appendix I: Chronology of Key Events, 1903-1968.........................77
Appendix II: Works by Hans Heysen acquired by Public Collections 1904-1915 .................................................................101
Appendix III: Works by Hans Heysen included in Group Exhibitions, 1899-1921 .........................................................................105
Appendix IV: Heysen’s Lecture “Observations on Art,” 1906 ..............123
Appendix V: Hans Heysen and Lionel Lindsay’s Collaborative Review of the 1909 Federal Exhibition.............................................135
Appendix VI: Hans Heysen in Sydney Ure Smith’s Publications, 1916-1949 ...143
Appendix VII: Hans Heysen and the Collection of the National Gallery of South Australia before 1940.............................................161
Bibliography ...............................................................................193
Primary Sources .............................................................................193
Secondary Sources .........................................................................210
Abstract

The artist Hans Heysen is closely associated with the South Australian regional environment, which featured as the subject matter of his most celebrated works. At the same time, however, he also rapidly established a national reputation, achieving critical and commercial success in the interstate art worlds of Melbourne and Sydney. This dissertation investigates the significant role of Heysen’s art world networks in establishing, shaping and maintaining his career and reputation. Most of the existing scholarship on Heysen has either been biographical or concerned with analysing the style and subject matter of his paintings. While previous authors have alluded to the importance of his networks, these have not been their central focus of study. Similarly, Heysen’s ties to the urban Australian art worlds where his works were exhibited, reviewed and sold have been little researched.

Heysen’s networks encompassed fellow artists, art critics, publishers, dealers, collectors and museum trustees and directors. Due to his geographical isolation written correspondence played an essential role in his long-distance career management, with the letters he exchanged providing valuable insights into the importance of his networks. Consequently, this dissertation has involved intensive archival research, cross-referencing the archives of Heysen and his correspondents, together with studying historic exhibition catalogues, art magazines and published reviews. The interpretation of this material has been informed by two complementary conceptual frameworks. The first is Howard Becker’s conceptualisation of art (and art world success) as the product of collaborative activity. This has been utilised when analysing the specific
operations of Heysen’s networks. The second is Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of a ‘Field of Cultural Production,’ a metaphorical, changing space in which cultural agents compete for symbolic capital. These ideas have been employed to examine the structure of the Australian art world and the construction of reputation.

This research demonstrates the essential role of Heysen’s art world networks in representing and advancing his interests. The support of key associates enabled Heysen to withstand the threats to his career presented by anti-German sentiments during the First World War, the impact of the Depression on the art market and the ascendency of modernism. While he generally benefited from his networks, the entrenched conservatism or overt commercial concerns of some of Heysen’s associates proved detrimental to his reputation. This dissertation shows that while Heysen’s traditionalist style and subject matter did not change dramatically over the course of his lengthy career, there were considerable shifts in the way in which he displayed, promoted and sold his works which reflected broader changes in the Australian art world. Similarly, perceptions of Heysen progressed from regarding him as an innovator in the Edwardian period, to an establishment figure during the interwar decades and finally as the last representative of a past generation. Heysen is shown to have been a strategically-minded professional who closely monitored both his own critical fortunes and those of other Australian artists.
Thesis Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university of other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of the degree.

I give permission for a digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University’s digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Ralph M. Body 30 November 2018.
Acknowledgements

The completion of this dissertation would not have been possible without the support and assistance of many individuals and institutions. Amongst the most essential, to whom I am immensely grateful, are my two supervisors Professor Catherine Speck and Professor Ian North. Their patience, guidance and knowledge have been invaluable in nurturing this dissertation to fruition.

I wish to thank Allan Campbell, curator of The Cedars, for sharing information, putting me in touch with members of the Heysen family and providing access to interesting and useful family documents. Dr. Peter Heysen kindly granted me permission to access and copy correspondence by Hans and Sallie Heysen. I am also grateful to Michael Heysen and David Dridan for sharing their personal recollections.

I am deeply indebted to numerous librarians and archivists for their help and expertise. My particular thanks to Jin Whittington and Ju Phan of the Art Gallery of South Australia Research Library, together with Cheryl Hoskin, Lee Hayes and Marie Larsen of the Rare Books and Special Collections, Barr Smith Library. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts and assistance of staff at the following institutions: the State Library of South Australia; Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide; National Library of Australia, Canberra; State Library of Victoria; State Library of New South Wales; Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archives, Art Gallery of New South Wales; QAGOMA Research Library; State Library of Queensland; Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria; National Gallery of Australia Research Library; University of Melbourne Archives; and State Records of South Australia.

The financial burden of postgraduate study was considerably eased thanks to an Australian Postgraduate Award. Postgraduate research support funding from the University of Adelaide also helped subsidise the costs of my interstate research trips.
In terms of personal support, advice and encouragement, I would like to thank my friends, family and fellow postgraduate students. Your faith in me was often much greater than my confidence in myself. I am particularly grateful to my colleagues, both staff and students, on level three of the Napier Building. Having moved to Adelaide from overseas, you promptly made me feel welcomed into a larger community of scholars. Although I have grown increasingly cynical about the broader university sector, you have reaffirmed my belief in the value and importance of quality research and teaching.

I especially wish to thank my friend and officemate Elyse Chapman, with whom I’ve shared innumerable milestones, conversations, complaints, frustrations, achievements and laughter over the past five years. I am also grateful to her for proofreading my bibliography.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my dear friend Roger Bednall. Firstly, for his astute proofreading of the final draft of my dissertation. More importantly, however, for his constant love, encouragement and belief in both me and this project.
Abbreviations

AAA – Australian Art Association.

ADB – *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre for Biography, Australian National University.

AGNSW – Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

AGSA Research Library – Art Gallery of South Australia Research Library, Adelaide.


CAS – Contemporary Art Society.


HH Papers – Papers of Sir Hans Heysen, MS 5073, National Library of Australia, Canberra.


LF Papers – Lindsay Family Papers, 1902-1976, MS 9242, Sir Lionel Lindsay, inward correspondence, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

MG Files – Moreton Galleries Artists’ Files, Special Collections, QAGOMA Research Library, Brisbane.

NAGNSW – National Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (from 1958 known as the Art Gallery of New South Wales).


NGV – National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

NGSA – National Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (from 1967 known as the Art Gallery of South Australia).

RASNSW – Royal Art Society of New South Wales.


SASA – South Australian Society of Arts (from 1935 known as the Royal South Australian Society of Arts).


SLNSW – State Library of New South Wales.

SLSA – State Library of South Australia, Adelaide.

SLV – State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.

s.n. – Sine nomine (literally “without a name”) to signify that the publisher of a work is unknown.


Introduction

Sir Hans Heysen, the German-born South Australian artist, holds an established position in the cultural imagination of his adopted country.¹ His art enjoys popular acclaim and his name has been inscribed upon the Australian landscape with several roadways, structures and geographical features bearing his name. The popular image of Heysen is that of an artist close to nature, who lived and worked in rural seclusion amongst the landscape he depicted (Fig. 1). This appealing and eminently marketable image was circulated in both textual and photographic representations throughout his lengthy career. At the same time, however, Heysen’s critical and financial success was dependent upon the positive reception of his art in the metropolitan art worlds of Melbourne and Sydney.

For many of his admirers the appeal of Heysen’s art is closely tied to its subject matter. For this reason they prefer to regard him in relation to his regional environment, rather than considering the field of aesthetic debates, art world politics, cliques and commercial considerations that also form a background context to his works. Much of the existing literature on Heysen is either biographical or focused upon his creative practice. Consequentially, both foci tend to reinforce the image of Heysen as an isolated genius. What is lacking is a detailed consideration of the role of cultural institutions or art world gatekeepers and tastemakers in helping to advance his reputation and commercial fortunes.

Since the 1970s Art History has become increasingly concerned with addressing

¹ Heysen’s legal name was Wilhelm Ernst Hans Franz Heysen, but he was always known as Hans. As he did not receive his knighthood until 1959, for the remainder of this dissertation this title will not be used. This practice will also be followed for members of Heysen’s networks who later received knighthoods. However, where an individual already possessed a title prior to Heysen making their acquaintance this will be employed.
and critiquing such individualistic notions of the artist and has instead acknowledged the important role of social forces in shaping artistic careers and contributing to critical and commercial success.² An understanding of these aspects of Heysen’s professional life would serve to enhance and enrich both accounts of his biography and evaluations of his art works.

The central purpose of this dissertation is to consider the role of Hans Heysen’s art world networks in establishing and shaping his career and reputation. Heysen maintained an extensive network of contacts in the Sydney and Melbourne art worlds. These included fellow artists, critics, publishers, dealers, collectors and art gallery directors and trustees. Due to Heysen’s geographical isolation, written correspondence played an important role in his long-distance career management. Fortunately, a large proportion of the letters he both wrote and received have survived and provide valuable insights into his activities as a professional artist. In assessing the significance of his networks, attention will be given to such considerations as: the changing manner in which Heysen presented his works to the art buying public; the importance of carefully stage-managed solo exhibitions in establishing his professional identity; the role of art criticism in shaping the reception of his work; the contribution of art publications in establishing the national basis of his reputation; and the importance of sales to municipal collections as a form of artistic consecration.

The examination of these frequently interrelated themes in this dissertation will demonstrates the essential role of Heysen’s art world networks in shaping his career and facilitating his success. It will be established that far from being disconnected from the operations and art politics of Australia’s urban art worlds, Heysen was very well informed about their activities and strategically managed his career in the interests of advancing both his reputation and commercial success. Heysen’s career also corresponded with several significant changes in the Australian art world, which as considered in later chapters included: the increased patronage of Australian art by both municipal galleries and private collectors; the rise of dealer galleries and subsequent decline of artists’ societies as the primary means of exhibiting and selling art; the emergence of illustrated Australian art publications; the increasing importance and erudition of professional art critics; the writing and increased awareness of Australian art history; successive developments in Australian and international modernism; and the growing recognition of Aboriginal art by non-indigenous Australians. Indeed, it was during this period that many facets of the art world as we know it today took shape. While Heysen’s own work may not have changed dramatically in terms of style or subject matter across the course of his lengthy career, the manner in which his art was situated in relation to the changing cultural institutions of the Australian art world changed substantially. By situating Heysen’s art in relation to these broader developments, it will become apparent how his career was far more intrinsically linked to processes of modernisation than his often nostalgic images might suggest.
As this dissertation concentrates upon Heysen’s career from 1904 until the 1960s, it is apposite to here briefly summarise the details of his early life and training. Heysen was born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1877 to a middle class family which had fallen on hard times. He travelled to South Australia with his mother and siblings in 1884, to join his father who had migrated the previous year.³ German migrants formed a sizeable minority in South Australia, constituting approximately 10% of the colony’s population by the 1890s.⁴ Following a bilingual education, Heysen left school at 14 and commenced work in various menial jobs. He also began pursuing his interest in art, studying part time from mid-1893 with the local artist James Ashton at his privately run art schools, the Norwood Art School and later the Academy of Art. Heysen further developed his skills by making weekly Sunday sketching trips in the Adelaide Hills. He began exhibiting his works in 1895, showing with the Easel Club and the South Australian Society of Arts.⁵ During his Adelaide studies he learned to work in oils, watercolours and a range of drawing media.⁶ On two occasions he was fortunate to receive sponsorship from local benefactors, which enabled him to undertake further art study. In 1898, Robert Barr Smith paid his fees for the South Australian School of Design, enabling him to study part time under Harry P. Gill and later Archibald Collins.⁷ The following year he was granted an extraordinary opportunity, when four local businessmen agreed to provide £400 to

⁴ Ian Harmstorf, "The Interests of the German Community in the 1890's," in *South Australia in the 1890's* (Adelaide: Constitutional Museum, 1983), 95.
allow him to pursue art studies in Europe in exchange for the right to sell any
works he produced during his studies.\(^8\)

By managing his money prudently Heysen was able to remain in Europe from
November 1899 until August 1903. He initially established himself in Paris,
which was then a hub for international art students. Heysen commenced studies
at two private art schools, the Académie Julian and the Académie Colarossi. In
April 1901 he was admitted to the prestigious École des Beaux-Arts, after
completing the demanding entrance exam. This assessed not only life and
anatomical drawing skills, but also required a history essay written in French.\(^9\)
Of the 70 applicants selected, Heysen was ranked fourth in order of merit and was
one of only six foreigners admitted.\(^10\) Elena Taylor has considered the
experiences of Australian art students, including Heysen, in the French ateliers
during this period.\(^11\) Heysen’s studies in the art schools concentrated on the
human figure, with particular attention paid to the careful delineation of form.
However, outside of his classes and during summer sketching holidays to
England, Scotland and the Netherlands Heysen further developed his landscape
painting, investigating the varying effects of light and atmosphere.\(^12\) These dual
preoccupations with light and form remained persistent characteristics of
Heysen’s art throughout his career. Heysen concluded his time in Europe with a
year-long independent study tour of Italy, in which he studied the works of the old

---

\(^{8}\) Thiele, *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 38-44. The four men were William Davison, Henry Higham Wigg, Charles DeRose and Frederick Joyner.
masters and sketched local land and townscapes. He arrived back in Adelaide, now part of the recently federated Australia, in September 1903.13

Chapter One will consider the eleven years following Heysen’s return to Adelaide. During this crucial period in Heysen’s career, he established his nationwide reputation and art world networks. Particular attention will be given to the changing manner in which he placed his work before the art buying public. The chapter will also consider the different means by which Heysen accrued art world prestige, including how he capitalised on both the burgeoning nationalism of the Federation period and the status associated with his European art studies.

Chapter Two will then address the implications of the First World War for Heysen’s career, when the same patriotic sentiments that had previously advanced his popularity instead contributed to the prejudice he experienced as a German-born artist. Heysen’s experience will be contextualised in relation to wartime security measures and their implications for German-Australians. This chapter will examine the discrimination he encountered, Heysen’s strategies in dealing with this and the help and encouragement he received from key members of his networks.

Heysen’s representation in Art in Australia magazine forms the subject of Chapter Three, which will examine his links to key individuals and groups associated with this publication. Particular attention will be given to Heysen’s social and professional association with the artist-publisher-administrator Sydney Ure Smith and the important role of Lionel Lindsay’s art criticism in promoting

13 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 68-75; Andrews, Hans Heysen, 36-43.
Heysen’s work. Detailed consideration will be given to the central role of Art in Australia Ltd’s publications in introducing Australian art lovers to Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges. Chapter Four will then consider the changing nature of the Australian art world and antagonism between modernists and traditionalists prompted by the ascendance of modern art. It examines the period between 1932 and 1951, with attention given to Heysen’s views on modernism, his connections to some watershed conflicts and the implications that this shift in artistic values had for his reputation. The chapter will also analyse the repositioning of Heysen within the cultural field, considering the changing manner in which his work was situated in art historical studies and retrospective exhibitions.

Finally, Chapter Five addresses Heysen’s relationships with art dealers and collectors and contextualises these in relation to broader changes in the Australian art market. It commences by discussing the ‘art boom’ of the late 1910s and 1920s; examines the changing commercial strategies that Heysen was obliged to employ in response to the Depression and Second World War; then assesses the implications of the strong post-war market for Heysen’s artistic and commercial practice. The chapter concludes by considering Heysen’s social and epistolary contact with art collectors, again demonstrating the importance of his networks in facilitating many of these associations. Through these different stages and facets of Heysen’s career, this dissertation will demonstrate that far from being a solitary genius living in rural seclusion, he was in fact actively involved with Australia’s urban art worlds and with the assistance of his influential networks sought to strategically manage his career.
Literature Review

Several important texts evaluating Heysen’s art were published during his lifetime. Many of these early publications and their implications for Heysen’s career and reputation are considered in the core text of this dissertation, particularly Chapters Three and Four. Consequently, this literature review will concentrate on publications regarding Heysen from the 1960s onwards. It commences by considering studies with a biographical emphasis, then discusses monographic studies, especially exhibition catalogues, which focus upon Heysen’s art. It concludes by examining the manner in which Heysen has been situated in broader studies of Australian art, particularly those examining either landscape or still life painting. In keeping with the emphasis of this dissertation, particular consideration is given to the manner in which these texts acknowledge Heysen’s networks or seek to situate him in relation to the broader Australian art world.

The best-known and most detailed biography of Heysen is Colin Thiele’s *Heysen of Hahndorf* (1968), which was researched and written during the artist’s lifetime, but published soon after his death. Thiele’s account of Heysen’s life was guided by interviews with Hans and other family members, which were then augmented and contextualised with reference to Heysen’s correspondence and earlier publications. While his biography provides detailed coverage of the key events and phases of Heysen’s family life and professional career, Thiele makes little attempt to situate Heysen’s art or experiences within a wider art historical context. As its title suggests it is primarily concerned with locating Heysen in
relation to his immediate regional environment, with less attention given to his strong ties to the Sydney and Melbourne art worlds. This is true also of Thiele’s later publication *Heysen’s Early Hahndorf* (1976). By contrast, this dissertation is very much concerned with shifting Heysen out of Hahndorf and instead considering the presence and reception of his works within the broader cultural field.

Throughout the biography, Thiele acknowledges the importance of Heysen’s circle of friends and acquaintances, but with the exception of his lengthy friendship with Lionel Lindsay, rarely considers these in detail. Although *Heysen of Hahndorf* describes the popular, critical and financial success of Heysen’s solo exhibitions, little attention is given to the manner in which these were carefully stage managed to advance Heysen’s reputation and commercial fortunes and William H. Gill is the only one of his dealers to receive individual consideration. Thiele’s biography has also served to reinforce the myths that Heysen was a solitary creator, uninfluenced by other artists and that he never painted for the market. The current study challenges these assertions. Later biographical accounts of Heysen by Jean Campbell (1978), Andrew Mackenzie (1988) and Lou Klepac (2016) owe a significant debt to Thiele. Like him, these authors attempt to explain Heysen’s success primarily in terms of the artist’s hard

15 After Heysen’s correspondence with his wife Sallie, it is his letters to Lindsay that receive the greatest attention. An appendix titled “Heysen on Nature and Art” includes extracts from 46 letters written to Lindsay between 1912 and 1949. *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 288-312.
work, talent and love of nature, rather than by considering the social and structural influences that advanced his career and reputation.

Lou Klepac’s *Hans Heysen: Paintings, Drawings and Watercolours* (2016) combines elements of a biography and an art historical appraisal. At times Klepac’s mission seems to be defending Heysen and resurrecting his reputation from its demotion by “modernist-orientated” critics and curators. Such advocacy may have been necessary during the late twentieth century, when Klepac sought to address those factors which had led to Heysen’s neglect in a 1988 catalogue essay. However, by the time of his later publication, such defensive arguments seem rather superfluous following the success of the 2008 Heysen retrospective exhibition. Klepac makes some attempt to situate Heysen’s work within the broader Australian art world, comparing him to other prominent landscape painters and acknowledging key events signalling the ascendency of modernism. However, these are largely presented as a background context to Heysen, rather than developments with which he was directly engaged. This reflects Klepac’s fundamental adherence to the notion of Heysen as an isolated genius. Lionel Lindsay is again the member of Heysen’s networks who receives the greatest consideration, although Klepac attempts to downplay the beneficial nature of this friendship as it was characterised by Thiele. Instead he argues that “in the long term he was also a handicap for Heysen,” and comments

---

17 *Hans Heysen*, 11, 18.
20 *Hans Heysen*, 176-79.
upon Heysen’s absence from Lindsay’s autobiography. However, this fails to consider the extent to which the two artists shared and indeed reinforced one another’s views regarding modern art, nor acknowledges that Heysen’s art was praised in Lindsay’s *Addled Art* (1942).

A very different sense of the life and personality of Heysen is provided by Catherine Speck’s edited collection of letters, *Heysen to Heysen: Selected Letters of Hans and Nora Heysen* (2011). In the letters they exchanged between 1934 and 1968, father and daughter discuss their own and other artists’ work, significant art gallery purchases and appointments, the state of the art market, and their opinions of exhibitions visited and art books read. Whereas Thiele’s biography gives greatest attention to the first two thirds of Hans Heysen’s long life, this book concentrates upon the final third. The content of the letters and Speck’s scholarly commentary helps locate both artists within their broader contexts and gives a sense of the important role that networks of art world contacts played in both their careers. As Speck acknowledges: “These people, who determined acquisitions in major galleries, headed up artist societies and lobbied major politicians, were integral to the course of Australian art from the 1920s to the early 1960s.” Speck describes how Hans’s letters “show him throughout as having his finger on the pulse” with much of his information gleaned from his “extensive connections in the art world and also his close

---

21 Ibid., 132-36. Lindsay only mentions Heysen in passing as one of the artists represented in James McGregor’s art collection. Lionel Lindsay, *Comedy of Life: An Autobiography* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1967), 240.
22 *Addled Art* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942), x, 51.
23 Thiele covers the final third of Heysen life (1938-68) in the space of 37 pages, whereas 107 pages are devoted to the first thirty years of his life and 136 pages to the middle third.
reading of magazines and newspapers."  

This dissertation builds upon Speck’s research, by considering the epistolary dialogues that Heysen maintained with other members of his art world networks, from the Edwardian period until the 1960s.

Although providing valuable insights into the significance of Hans’s networks, Speck’s book is weighted towards Nora’s experiences. The letters from Nora significantly outnumber those of her father; in part because some letters she received when overseas have not survived. The chapter structure likewise reflects the phases of Nora’s biography, rather than her father’s. This is understandable, given that during this period Nora was beginning her career and experiencing many changes, both in location and artistically, whereas her father’s reputation and style were already well established. Nonetheless, Nora’s letters, particularly those written in Sydney, still offer insights into Hans’s networks and demonstrate the importance of written correspondence in providing him with a connection to the Sydney art world. This book builds upon earlier research by Speck in which she considers the relationship between Nora and her famous father as simultaneously supportive and constraining of her creative development and formation of an independent artistic identity. Jane Hylton also acknowledges these concerns in her exhibition catalogue Nora Heysen: Light and Life (2009).

---

25 Ibid., 11.
26 There are 325 letters from Nora Heysen, 71 from Hans Heysen and 24 from Sallie Heysen.
Most other monographs on Heysen are catalogues for exhibitions of his work. As befits their function as publications accompanying displays of visual material, their critical essays are primarily concerned with analysing the style, subject matter or technique of Heysen’s art. While Heysen’s networks are acknowledged in passing, they tend to explore the development of his career in terms of the changing visual characteristics of his works rather than in relation to the mechanisms of the art world. Two early examples are the lavishly illustrated publications by David Dridan (1966) and Colin Thiele (1977). Both authors seek to counter the widespread perception that Heysen merely painted gum trees by emphasising his range of subject matter. Particular attention is also given to the centrality of draughtsmanship to his practice and Heysen’s “almost pantheistic reverence for Nature.”

While proclaiming Heysen’s importance to Australian art, neither text attempts to situate his work in a larger art historical context. Ian North has considered the manner in which “Heysen founded his art deeply and fruitfully on European models,” in his essays “The Originality of Hans Heysen” (1977) and “Gum-Tree Imperial” (1988). North curated the substantial Hans Heysen Centenary Retrospective of 1977, composing the earlier text as the catalogue essay for this nationally touring exhibition. He argues that Heysen helped revitalise early twentieth-century Australian landscape painting, imbuing it with “a dimension at once human and heroic” through his “wedding of

humble subject matter, patiently observed, with grand European stylistic sources.”

North evaluates Heysen’s engagement with the dignified, structured compositions of academic art; the poetry of everyday rural life found in Naturalism; and his partial assimilation of Impressionism’s interest in the effects of light. The European basis of Heysen’s work is also discussed by John Neylon, whereas Alwynne Mackie has less convincingly argued to the contrary that “Heysen’s landscapes are fundamentally different in structure and composition from traditional European landscapes.”

This dissertation considers the manner in which Lionel Lindsay frequently compared Heysen’s works to those of European artists in his critical writing, thus elevating Heysen’s status within the Australian art world. North also recognises, but does not explore, several paradoxes that characterise Heysen’s life and outlook. This study further examines Heysen’s ambivalent engagement with the art market and modernism, two of the themes to which North alludes.

Heysen’s creative debt to European influences is also a central theme in Rebecca Andrews’s *Hans Heysen* (2008). While North appraises Heysen’s art in terms of the European landscape and pastoral artists he was known to admire, Andrews concentrates more on the works Heysen produced while in Europe between 1899 and 1903. She demonstrates that this was a crucial formative period in Heysen’s development as an artist, equipping him with the technical

---

32 Ibid., 10-11.
skills, aesthetic preoccupations and knowledge of European art history which informed his more famous Australian works.\textsuperscript{35} This dissertation also considers the significance of Heysen’s European studies, but primarily from a reputational rather than a stylistic point of view, identifying them as a marker of professional status within the Australian art world. Andrews’s second catalogue essay focuses particular attention on Heysen’s paintings of the Flinders Ranges, which she proclaims as “the most significant phase of his career.”\textsuperscript{36}

Other exhibitions of Heysen’s art have emphasised his working methods and technique. Julie Robinson’s \textit{Hans Heysen: The Creative Journey} (1992) demonstrates the centrality of drawing to Heysen’s creative practice. She examines the manner in which his finished pictures were developed via a succession of preliminary sketches and frequently combined several discrete elements, thus making them constructs rather than unmediated views of specific scenes.\textsuperscript{37} Chapter Five of this dissertation will consider Heysen’s increasing tendency to rely on his portfolio of sketches during the final three decades of his life, which served to stifle his creative development and led him to frequently duplicate earlier, successful compositions. Jane Hylton and John Neylon’s \textit{Hans Heysen: Into the Light} (2004) focuses upon Heysen’s watercolours. Its authors acknowledge the broader fashion and market for watercolours in Australia during the early decades of the twentieth century and discuss Heysen’s style, materials and technique when using this medium.\textsuperscript{38} Neylon’s essay helps shift the

\textsuperscript{35} Andrews, \textit{Hans Heysen}, 24-42.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 114.
\textsuperscript{37} Julie Robinson, \textit{Hans Heysen: The Creative Journey} (Adelaide: Art Gallery Board of South Australia, 1992), 3-16.
\textsuperscript{38} Jane Hylton and John Neylon, \textit{Hans Heysen: Into the Light} (Kent Town, S.A.: Wakefield Press, 2004). For further considerations of Heysen’s painting materials, see Rosemary Diana Heysen
consideration of Heysen’s works away from their subject matter by focusing instead upon the broader aesthetic and thematic concerns that informed his art.\textsuperscript{39}

The majority of surveys of Australian art history focus on Heysen’s landscape paintings, suggesting that his two principal contributions were establishing the gum tree as a subject in its own right and his depiction of the inland Australian landscape from an artistic, rather than purely topographical, perspective. Nonetheless, as Speck has observed, Heysen has sometimes suffered from “a lack of location within a narrative of Australian art,” because many accounts move quickly from the Heidelberg artists of the late nineteenth century to the emergence of Australian modernism, and only consider the landscape artists of the Edwardian and interwar periods in passing.\textsuperscript{40} In contrast to studies which emphasise the development of modern art, Ian Burn argues that landscape imagery constituted the dominant cultural form in Australia prior to the Second World War, serving as “a crucial site of conflict, change and innovation.”\textsuperscript{41} In recent decades several publications have helped to better contextualise Heysen’s achievements in relation to broader developments in the history of Australian landscape painting.

Heysen features prominently in Margaret Plant’s “The Lost Art of Federation: Australia’s Quest for Modernism” (1987), in which she acknowledges Australian

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{39} Neylon, “Into the Light,” 16-31.
\textsuperscript{40} Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 6.
\end{flushright}
art of the early twentieth century as a distinctive phase, representing a “necessary process of maturation.” Like North, Plant regards Heysen as “the master of the admixture” of “the homely and the heroic” which typifies the period. She argues that while such paintings were often academic in scale, their subject matter and style tended to be “familial, enclosing, comforting, elegiac.” The exhibition Our Country: Australian Federation Landscapes 1900-1914 (2001), curated by Ron Radford, presents a different interpretation. Contrary to Plant and Burn, who characterise the landscapes of this period as more generalised, contained and domesticated, Radford interprets their often monumental scale and expansive spaces as representing a growing sense of confidence and national identity, albeit accompanied by a mood of sober reflection. He considers Heysen’s representations of eucalypts, alongside those of other artists, in relation to the symbolic characteristics attributed to such trees by early twentieth-century Australian writers. This dissertation engages with these discussions when considering the popularity of Heysen’s early landscapes in relation to the burgeoning nationalism of the Federation period.

43 Ibid., 114.
44 Ibid., 126.
45 For the significance of this exhibition in enhancing appreciation of Federation-era landscapes, see, Joanna Mendelssohn et al., Australian Art Exhibitions: Opening Our Eyes (Port Melbourne, Vic: Thames & Hudson, 2018), 155-56.
46 Catherine Speck has similarly observed a confidence about a national style, exemplified by the landscape genre, in newspaper coverage of Adelaide’s Federal Art Exhibitions during the first decade of the century. Catherine Speck, "Adelaide's Federal Art Exhibitions 1898-1923," in Seize the Day: Exhibitions, Australia and the World, ed. Kate Darian-Smith, et al. (Clayton, Vic.: Monash University ePress, 2008), 17.8, 17.11; Burn, National Life and Landscape, 38-50.
While Plant suggests that the prevailing mood of the Federation era continued to characterise Australian art into the 1930s, Ian Burn has identified a shift in the pastoral landscape imagery produced following the First World War. He argues that the depictions of peaceful, pastoral prosperity by Heysen and others affirmed “Australia’s international trading status and, in that sense, symbolised national progress.”

Heysen’s agricultural imagery is also considered by Jeanette Hoorn in *Australian Pastoral: The Making of a White Landscape* (2007), as part of a broader argument concerning a cult of “pastoraphilia,” whereby a culturally and politically dominant oligarchy promoted Australian agriculture and its representation in art as a “healthy” alternative to the urban, industrial and modern. Hoorn observes many pastoraphiles were also hostile to modernist art, linking these paired attitudes to the similar mindset of National Socialism. On the basis of superficial similarities in style and subject matter, she argues that Heysen’s agricultural pictures echoed the aesthetics and ideology of the Third Reich.

Hoorn’s notion of “pastoraphillia” has merit, as does her acknowledgement of Heysen’s close ties to key art world powerbrokers. However, her association of his art with that of the National Socialists is over-simplistic and lacking in historical basis. Instead, it will be argued in Chapter Two that Heysen’s depictions of local German farmers may be interpreted as his response to both the brutality of the First World War and the attendant anti-German prejudice.

Art historians have also sought to establish a place within Australian art for Heysen’s depictions of the arid inland landscape of the Flinders Ranges. Mary

---


Eagle has related these to a broader stylistic change which took place in Australian painting during the 1920s, whereby the soft, indefinite treatment of form was replaced by a sharper, more linear style. She describes Heysen’s works as possessing “the sculpted outlines and smooth skin of the new look,” while nonetheless demonstrating “proof of an industrious vision” and careful craftsmanship to reassure viewers that “this modern image represented reality.”

Ian Burn, Alisa Bunbury and Roslynn Haynes contextualise Heysen’s Flinders works in relation to other artists who have engaged with similar scenery. Burn credits proponents of “the new outback image” as helping to release Australian landscape painting from its “bondage to the pastoral industry.” More emphatically than Eagle, he describes Heysen’s Flinders works as possessing “the look of mild post-impressionism,” in their stark forms and bolder, flatter colours. Burn argues that such works thus “represented a rapprochement between modernist style and the idea of the landscape, further discrediting a categorical separation between the traditional and the modern.”

Chapter Three gives particular attention to the role of Art in Australia magazine and other cultural institutions closely affiliated with Heysen’s networks in introducing his Flinders pictures to the art buying public.

Ann Elia has extended the discussion of Heysen beyond that of his landscape and agricultural imagery by directing attention to his frequently overlooked still

---

53 Ibid., 190.
54 Ibid., 189.
In *Useless Beauty: Flowers and Australian Art* (2015) Elias argues that floral imagery in Australian art frequently embodies a dialectic tension between such binary oppositions as gender roles, the national and cosmopolitan, and the academic and modernist. In this and earlier publications she suggests that the floral still lifes of Heysen and other male artists “objectify the interior, female space, setting it at a distance and reflecting the different social roles of the sexes in Edwardian society.” Elias also observes that Heysen’s still lifes were mainly painted either during or immediately after the First World War, a time when Heysen experienced anti-German prejudice and may have felt “dislocated from the land.” She contrasts the European characteristics of Heysen’s still lifes of “exotic flowers and fruit that are consistently non-Australian in character” with the nationalistic discourse surrounding his landscapes. This is further apparent in her consideration of the frequent comparisons made between Heysen’s work and that of the French still life painter Henri Fantin-Latour. This dissertation engages with Elias’s ideas regarding the German character of Heysen’s home life, the psychological impact of the prejudice he encountered during the First World War and her analysis of Lionel Lindsay’s critical writing on Heysen’s still life paintings.

---

Heysen’s popularity meant that from early in his career many artists sought to imitate his work. Bernard Smith lamented the effect upon Heysen’s reputation of this “tangled scrub of little gum tree painters,” while Robert Hughes christened them “the Heysenettes, a dilapidated and creaky chorus line.” However, Heysen’s work has exerted a productive influence on several more recent artists who have appropriated his iconic images as source material for postmodern or postcolonial reflections upon Australian art history. These include Imants Tillers, Ian North, Anne Zahalka and Juan Davila. Similarly, the short story “Into the Light,” by the indigenous author Kim Scott, takes Heysen’s *Droving into the Light* (1914-1921, Art Gallery of Western Australia) as the inspiration for its narrative. Whereas most non-indigenous viewers would interpret this painting as a tranquil depiction of an evening homecoming, Scott instead describes the fatal final journey of a settler who has shown brutality towards his Aboriginal wife and children and caused ecological damage to the landscape. Such reinterpretations introduce Heysen’s works into a broader conversation whereby popular icons of Australian nationalism are reconsidered in relation to the dispossession and marginalisation of First Nations people through the processes of colonisation.

---

62 Desmond MacAulay and Bettina MacAulay, *What’s Lost/What’s Won: Conviction and Contradiction in the Art of Frederick McCubbin with Works by Ten Contemporaries* (Toowoomba: Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery, 1999), 3-6. Heysen’s work was not included in this exhibition, but its catalogue essay addresses themes pertinent to his art. Cf. Anna Louise Lawrenson, “Flesh + Blood: Appropriation and the Critique of Australian Colonial History in Recent Art Practice” (PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2007); Joan Kerr, “Past Present:
This is a significant theme which merits further consideration, but it falls outside the scope of the present dissertation.

**Conceptual Framework and Methodology**

The notion of an ‘Art World’ is a key conceptual framework for understanding the development of Heysen’s career and the role of his networks. The phrase “art world” has been in general use since the mid-nineteenth century, referring to the sector of society concerned with the production and appreciation of the visual arts. However, it was not until the 1960s that the structure of this sphere became the subject of analysis for art historians, philosophers and sociologists. An early text pertinent to the approach employed in this dissertation is Lawrence Alloway’s “Network: The Art World Described as a System” (1972). Alloway conceives of the art world as an interconnected network which encompasses “original works of art and reproductions; critical, historical, and informative writing; [dealer] galleries, museums, and private collections. It is a sum of persons, objects, resources, messages, and ideas.” Significantly, Alloway views the output of the art world as “not art” but “the distribution of art, both literally and in mediated form as text and reproduction.” His assertion is consistent with this dissertation’s interest in the social, critical and commercial processes, subsequent to the act of creative production, which served to advance Heysen’s reputation as an artist. Although foregrounding the distribution rather than the production of...
art, Alloway nonetheless regards the artist as the “essential figure” in the network, responsible for “the product on which the system depends.”

By contrast, the sociologist Howard Becker’s study *Art Worlds* (1982/2009) describes art as the product of collective activity. As a member of the Chicago School of Symbolic Interactionism, Becker emphasises the role of individual activity in the organisation of society. He asserts that the artist works “in the centre of a network of cooperating people, all of whose work is essential to the final outcome.” This notion of cooperation is posited “in a very extended way, as encompassing anything that people do together in which they take into account, and respond to, what the others involved are doing,” thus allowing for obstacles and disagreements. Similarly, he argues that cooperation between art world participants is facilitated through shared conventions, which form “complexly interdependent systems.” Artists are free to disregard these conventions and the associated constraints they place upon their creative practice, although this usually comes at a cost.

---

65 Ibid., 30.
67 Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds: 25th Anniversary Edition, Updated and Expanded* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2008), 25. Becker’s study is not limited to the visual arts and includes such clearly collaborative art forms as theatre and orchestral music. However, he argues that the idea of collective activity is equally applicable to the works of authors and artists, who have traditionally been viewed as embodying notions of the solitary genius.
69 Becker, *Art Worlds*, 28-29, 32, 35, 310. He cautions that whenever “artists depend on others for some necessary component, they must either accept the constraints they impose” or expend the time, energy and resources “necessary to provide it some other way.” There is also a greater risk that their works will be excluded from the existing systems of distribution and reception.
His model is thus more cyclical than Alloway’s, acknowledging the implications that the critical and commercial fortunes of a completed work have for the production of subsequent art works.70

A third model is offered by Pierre Bourdieu’s “The Field of Cultural Production” (1983/1993), which posits the metaphorical space of an artistic “field.” This “space of positions” and “position-takings” consists not only of individuals, but also of art works, groups, ideas, institutions and categories. Each position is defined relative to the other positions in the field and in terms of the possession “of a determinate quantity of specific capital.”71 Within a cultural field the most important forms of capital are symbolic capital, which “refers to the degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honour” and cultural capital, which “concerns forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions.”72 Bourdieu conceives of the artistic field as a “field of struggles” between those who wish to transform and those who prefer to conserve the existing structure.73 As such, a “field is a dynamic concept” where “a change in agents’ positions necessarily entails a change in the field’s structure.”74 Bourdieu argues that scholars should consider “not only the direct producers of the work in its materiality … but also the producers of the meaning and value of the work.”

70 Ibid., 3-4, 93, 95.

73 "Field of Cultural Production,” 30.
such as “critics, publishers [and] gallery directors,” together with such institutions as “academies, journals, magazines, [and] galleries.” Thus the sociology of art takes “as its object not only the material production but also the symbolic production of the work, i.e. the production of the value [or] belief in the value of the work.”

While there are strong parallels linking the three writers, there are also divergences. Becker and Alloway comprehend the art world as a primarily cooperative network, while Bourdieu emphasises struggle. Both Alloway and Bourdieu include institutions, information and objects as part of their frameworks, whereas Becker conceives of the art world in terms of the people involved, foregrounding social activity. Conscious of these differences, Becker and Bourdieu criticised one another’s theories. This dissertation does not propose a finite understanding of the art world that is dogmatically aligned with one of these theorists, but is instead informed by all three. In investigating the development of Heysen’s career and reputation it is necessary to examine the role played by institutions and information, but these will be considered largely in terms of the actions, exchanges and preferences of specific individuals. When considering the nature of Heysen’s networks and how they operated, this dissertation will primarily draw upon Becker and Alloway, whereas Bourdieu’s ideas will be utilised when discussing the broader cultural field of the Australian art world.

75 Bourdieu, "Field of Cultural Production," 32, 37.
76 Ibid., 37.
The discussion of Heysen’s changing reputation will also engage with Bourdieu’s writing regarding symbolic and cultural capital, and the social basis of taste.\textsuperscript{78}

The use of the term network also requires clarification. The word has long been used to describe a web of connections. Traditionally, these tended to denote technical linkages, such as a railway network. However, from the 1950s the concept of networks was increasingly employed in the social sciences to consider interrelationships between people. Frank Webster has observed that while some disciplines used “the word ‘network’ in a metaphorical sense, to capture qualitative features of relationships,” network analysis also “grew as a distinctly mathematical dimension of sociology and social psychology.” In these fields it was frequently concerned with identifying and analysing various points (or nodes) connected by lines, which could be used to calculate “the number of relationships, their frequency, direction, and perceived weight,” by which “a sociogram (a diagrammatic representation of a social network) might be produced.”\textsuperscript{79} In recent years some scholars of the creative arts have applied similar quantitative or computational methodologies to analyse networks, acknowledging both the opportunities and limitations of such approaches.\textsuperscript{80} However, for the present


dissertation it has been deemed more fruitful to assess and analyse Heysen’s networks in qualitative terms. It should also be acknowledged that the term “network” is used anachronistically and is not a concept that Heysen or his associates would have utilised to describe their own or other’s relationships.

One colloquial usage of the term is the notion of an ‘old boys’ network,’ whereby the informal contacts that exist between people (particularly men) can lead to favouritism and unfair advantage. This aspect of networking is pertinent to Heysen given the manner in which his friends frequently helped promote his interests when acting in an official capacity as members of gallery boards or exhibition selection committees. Indeed, Rex Butler and Andrew Donaldson describe Heysen and many of his associates as constituting “a kind of boys’ club that had ruled the Australian art world since the nineteenth century and would continue to do so well into the 1930s.”

Gender and endemic sexism undoubtedly affected which artists and types of art works received recognition during Heysen’s lifetime, as will be acknowledged at several points during this dissertation.

---

82 Conversely, Helen Topliss has described how modernist women artists “formed an artistic network” where “their discoveries related to art overseas were usually made in a group context where one artist learnt from another.” Helen Topliss, Modernism and Feminism: Australian Women Artists 1900-1940 (Roseville East, NSW: Craftsman House, 1996), 12, 173.

Fisher and Kinsey have used “the metaphor of the ‘boys club’ to denote the shared discourses and practices amongst men which institutionalise men’s dominance … but which remain covert or are dissembled as harmless social interactions.” See, Virginia Fisher and Sue Kinsey, “Behind Closed Doors! Homosocial Desire and the Academic Boys Club,” Gender in Management: An International Journal 29, no. 1 (2014): 45.
Heysen’s correspondence is the principal source used to investigate his art world networks. When Thiele wrote *Heysen of Hahndorf* he preferred to concentrate upon correspondence “that probes the spirit and reveals the heart,” such as letters providing poetic descriptions of the landscape, rather than those dealing with the practical, business side of life as a professional artist. By contrast, such concerns are an important focus of this dissertation. The central resource has been the “General Correspondence” files of the Papers of Sir Hans Heysen, held by the National Library of Australia. These have been cross-referenced with letters that Heysen wrote to several key correspondents. Consequently, it has been possible to partially reconstruct Heysen’s “wider epistolary network,” a framework that Liz Stanley has termed “an epistolarium.” The interpretation of this material has been informed by theoretical writing about the character of letters. Scholars have emphasised the dialogic nature of letters, with content tailored to reflect the concerns of a particular addressee. In addition to their content, letters should be considered for the function they perform, as networks and relationships are not just reflected, but also constructed through correspondence. Furthermore, letter writing

---

85 These consist of the letters that Heysen received from non-family members. They are particularly comprehensive from 1912 onwards, after he moved to The Cedars and began preserving his inward correspondence more assiduously.
constitutes a social practice, which is coded and conditioned by cultural conventions.89

John House has observed that an artist’s “private” letters were sometimes “targeted at a wider public … aimed at various forms of dissemination at or soon after the time they were written.”90 Thus the content, function or usage of letters can frequently undermine binary distinctions between the “private/social sphere and the public/economic sphere.”91 For example, during the 1910s and 1920s Lionel Lindsay frequently quoted from Heysen’s letters when writing articles about his friend, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. Heysen was aware of the role his correspondence would play in shaping his posthumous reputation. In 1950 Nora Heysen informed her father that some of his letters had been put on display in a memorial exhibition to Sydney Ure Smith.92 One year earlier, Lionel Lindsay had advised him that Professor Joseph Burke was assembling a collection of letters by Australian artists. Conscious that their generation of artists was being maligned by modernist critics, Lindsay wished to see Heysen’s letters preserved, in order “to even out this ‘history of art’ through letters before it’s too late.”93 Joanna Mendelssohn has described the Lindsay family’s recognition of the role of letters in retrospectively shaping reputations, with family members

---

92 Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 18 July 1950, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 196.
93 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, March 1949, HH Papers. Cf. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: 14 April 1949; 13 May 1949, HH Papers.
strategically editing archival collections or composing partisan letters with an eye to posterity. Additionally, Heysen enjoyed reading the letters of other artists, including Jean-Francois Millet, Camille Pissarro and Vincent van Gogh. Such publications undoubtedly enhanced his awareness that an artist’s life and work may subsequently be ‘read’ in terms of their letters.

The accurate dating of letters is necessary in order to clearly situate them within their broader context. Frustratingly, both Heysen and several of his correspondents frequently dated their letters with the day and month, but not the year in which they wrote. Many of the letters held in archival collections have subsequently been annotated with the probable year. In many cases this is accurate, but several letters have been inscribed with incorrect dates. Where this author disagrees with a nominated date, this is communicated in square brackets in the footnote. Similarly, several important letters by Heysen, such as those written to Elioth Gruner, only survive as preliminary drafts. Lacking confidence in his writing ability, Heysen usually composed a practice attempt. As Heysen may have changed his wording in the final letter, when a draft version is referenced this is acknowledged in the footnotes. When quoting from letters, certain eccentricities, such as the use of dashes to separate clauses or the capitalisation of words such as “Art” and “Nature,” have been preserved.

95 Heysen to W. H. Gill, [annotated: 20 October 1909], WHG Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 10 February 1945, LF Papers; Heysen to Norman Carter, February 1950, NC Papers; Hans Heysen to Nora Heysen: 12 March 1945; 2 September 1949, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 164, 91-92.
96 Lionel Lindsay advised his brother Daryl that he was attempting to add the year to all of Heysen’s letters before passing these on to Professor Burke. In several cases his annotation are out by one or two years. Lionel Lindsay to Daryl Lindsay, 28 May 1950, “The Lindsay Letters,” written by Lindsay, Lionel, Sir between 1935-1961, Series 1/62, Joseph Burke Papers, 78/39, University of Melbourne Archives.
97 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 180.
However, other anomalies of punctuation or misspellings of proper names have been silently corrected in accordance with *The Chicago Manual of Style* guidelines. ⁹⁸

In addition to studying Heysen’s correspondence, other primary sources consulted include art gallery and artists’ society minute books, exhibition catalogues and published art criticism. As part of this research two oral history interviews were conducted with individuals who knew Heysen. These were undertaken with the approval and in accordance with the protocols of the University of Adelaide’s Human Research Ethics Committee. ⁹⁹ Earlier oral history recordings held by the National Library of Australia have also been utilised as source material. As with letters, oral histories are rarely free of bias or inaccuracies, but can also provide valuable and unanticipated insights. ¹⁰⁰ Consequently, caution has been exercised when interpreting these sources.

*This dissertation therefore is a thematic investigation of Hans Heysen’s professional life, which will examine the role of his art world networks in establishing, shaping and maintaining his career and reputation. Consequently, it seeks to broaden an understanding of Heysen beyond the scope of the existing*

---


⁹⁹ The project has the ethics approval number H-2014-097.

literature, which has largely focused upon his biography, the art historical appraisal of his work or his contribution to Australian landscape painting. This will be accomplished through a careful study of Heysen’s correspondence, exhibition history and the critical discourse regarding his work, which are interpreted through the framework of sociological interpretations of art worlds. This research both enriches the interpretation of Heysen and offers broader insights into the operations of the Australian art world from the Edwardian period to the mid-twentieth century, foregrounding the important role of networks in facilitating recognition and success.
Chapter One: Establishing a Career, c.1903-1914

This chapter considers the development of Heysen’s career and formation of his networks during the first eleven years following his return to Australia in late 1903. After first considering the events of 1904 it adopts a thematic rather than chronological approach, assessing Heysen’s growing art world prominence in relation to: the acquisition of his works by public galleries; his involvement with various artists’ societies; his solo exhibitions; and private commissions for his work. Through these different facets of his career, Heysen sought to establish and improve his position within the cultural field of the Australian art world. In the interests of detailed critical investigation, the different sub-sections sometimes separate events that were happening in close temporal proximity. Colin Thiele’s biography of 1968 has already presented the milestones of this stage of Heysen’s career in a linear manner, contextualising them mainly in terms of Heysen’s changing family circumstances. While these are not the focus of this dissertation, this chapter covers the period of Heysen’s marriage to Selma Bartels and the birth of six of the couple’s eight children, events with important implications for the Heysens’ financial and housing needs. As a further guide to the sequence of events under discussion, Appendix One provides a chronology of Heysen’s life and career. The chapter will conclude by considering the expansion of Heysen’s circle of art world contacts and the recognition accorded to his work both for its Australian qualities and European foundations.

1 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 76-163.
1.1. 1904: Getting Established in the Cultural Field

In the year following his return to Adelaide the three most important members of his network in terms of establishing himself as an artist were Frederick Joyner, Elizabeth Maude Wholohan and Harry Pelling Gill. Joyner was a solicitor and one of the four benefactors who had funded Heysen’s studies abroad. He was also an accomplished photographer, working in the pictorial style and actively involved with the South Australian Photographic Society.\(^2\) The subjects of many of Joyner’s photographs, nostalgic images of rustic labour, have affinities with works produced by Heysen while in Europe and following his move to Hahndorf.\(^3\) One of Heysen’s first concerns was finding a suitable studio, both for his own work and to receive pupils. At Joyner’s suggestion he leased part of the top floor of the Adelaide Steamship Company’s Building, where Joyner and his partner had their offices.\(^4\) The construction of this building was only completed in late 1903 and its top floor was specifically intended for artists’ studios (Fig. 18).\(^5\) Heysen maintained a studio here for two years. Artists who subsequently established studios in the building included the sisters Madame Mouchette and Mademoiselle Lion; J. S. Pringle Brooks; Bessie Davidson and Rose McPherson (later known as Margaret Preston).\(^6\)


\(^4\) Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 76.

\(^5\) “Adelaide Steamship Company – the new building,” Advertiser, 2 October 1903.

\(^6\) “Artistic French Ladies,” Register, 12 April 1905; “A Charming Studio,” Express and Telegraph (Adelaide), 11 April 1905; “Attractive Art Display,” Register, 20 September 1906; Deborah Edwards, Rose Peel, and Denise Mimmocchi, Margaret Preston (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2005), 272-73.
When establishing and promoting his art school he was greatly assisted by “the redoubtable Mrs Wholohan,” an amateur artist best known for her floral still lifes, whom Thiele describes as “at the heart of most of the outings, dinners, teas, meetings, and displays in the art world in Adelaide.” Her wide circle of social connections and organisational skills made her a particularly valuable friend. In addition to encouraging potential students, she hosted a tea party to introduce Heysen to his pupils and suggested that he commence his teaching with a fortnight-long sketching trip to Victor Harbour. Thiele implies that Heysen sometimes resented Wholohan’s “busy-bodying on his behalf,” but acknowledges that he “was in need of [her] organizational advice and assistance.” Wholohan also helped with preparations for Heysen’s first solo-exhibition of May 1904, taking responsibility for having the catalogues printed and suggesting potential buyers who should be sent invitations.

Joyner and Wholohan’s assistance was invaluable in helping Heysen to establish his teaching studio. However, Heysen’s letters suggest that he did not enjoy teaching private pupils and was often blunt in his criticisms of their work. When approached by one potential student wishing to arrange tuition, he “dealt her out a pound of honest criticisms – weighted it out by ounces – so it must have seemed rather severe – no wonder I can’t get any pupils – I must try & learn to be more diplomatic. I am sure she will never come again.” However, Heysen continued to receive pupils until 1908, relying on their fees to supplement his irregular income from the sale of paintings.

7 Thiele, *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 78–79.
8 Ibid.
9 Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated [early May 1904], HH Papers.
10 Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated [1904], HH Papers.
H. P. Gill was the most powerful and influential figure in the Adelaide art world during the decades on either side of Federation (Fig. 21). He was master, and later principal, of the School of Design from 1882 until 1915, honorary curator of the National Gallery of South Australia (NGSA) from 1892 until 1909, vice-president of the South Australian Society of Arts (SASA) from 1893 to 1909 and president from 1909 to 1911. In 1895 the satirical paper *Quiz and Lantern* described him as “the chief apostle, the high priest of local art, the Supreme Boss of artistic societies, the unsparing critic of others’ works, the Lord High Everything of clamorous cliques.” While subsequent art historians have praised him for his good judgement and the programs he instigated, they also acknowledge he could be “autocratic, abrasive and opinionated.” Heysen had studied under Gill during the 1890s and following his return sought advice and assistance from his former teacher.

As Heysen’s 1904 letters to Sallie document, he had heard from mutual acquaintances that Gill was dissatisfied with the teaching of Archibald Collins, the antique and life master at the School of Design, Painting and Technical Arts. Keen to secure a regular source of income, Heysen enquired if there was a possibility of his being employed by the School. Gill indicated that he would be

---

11 In 1892 the School’s title changed to School of Design, Painting and Technical Art.
12 “Society of Arts Exhibition – Curt Comments by a Phillistinic Pen,” *Quiz and Lantern*, 20 June 1895.
amenable to employing him, but in order to create such a vacancy “another would have to go,” which was unlikely to happen “because the board of Governors are loyal to those who they ‘have chosen.’” Gill suggested that Heysen ask William Laidlaw Davidson, another of the businessmen who had funded his studies abroad, to approach the president of the Board of Governors for the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, Sir Samuel Way, in the hope of achieving his ends. At that time Way was also the Chief Justice and president of the SASA. Through Davidson Heysen secured an introduction to Way, but was not appointed and Collins remained with the School until 1909. Heysen had appreciated his studies with Collins in 1899 and corresponded with him while in Paris. He concluded one letter with the observation that, “I am sure that in a very short time your teaching will do an enormous amount of good for S. Australian Art – which I am sure it needs badly.” While Heysen’s desire for stable employment is understandable, it is surprising that he would be prepared to see someone with whom he had previously been on friendly terms lose their job.

Although examples of Heysen’s European paintings were included in SASA exhibitions in 1902, the first opportunity for the Adelaide public to comprehensively assess the fruits of his studies was his 1904 solo exhibition. This took place between 18 and 21 May in his studio, with at least 64 works on display. The majority were European scenes, with more than a third depicting

---

15 Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated [1904], HH Papers.
17 Heysen to Selma Bartels, [annotated: 25 April 1904], HH Papers.
Italy, although at least four paintings featured Australian subjects.\textsuperscript{19} Heysen included a diagram of his proposed hanging of pictures in a letter to Sallie (Fig. 3), but this had to be reconsidered after he decided to include his recently completed large oil \textit{The Coming Home} (1904, AGNSW).\textsuperscript{20} He advised Sallie that his largest European oil, \textit{Interior, St. Marks, Venice} (c.1904, Fig. 2), was priced at £100 and other oils at between £30 and £45, the “Venetian sketches I priced at £10 each – and only about 6 at £5,” drawings were priced between £4 and £6.\textsuperscript{21} The catalogue shows that nearly 40\% of works were priced between £6 and 10 guineas. Prior to its opening, Heysen sent out almost 300 invitation cards and approached local newspapers which helped publicise the event.\textsuperscript{22}

While the exhibition was a popular and critical success, sales only reached £23, which barely covered Heysen’s expenses.\textsuperscript{23} Heysen wrote of the visitors, “from how they study & return to some of the pickies I know they think something of them – but … they are just like a lot of fish nibbling & waiting for someone to take the bait – to make the beginning they haven’t confidence enough in their own judgement.” He was particularly disappointed that the board of the NGSA did not purchase any works, suggesting that had “they bought before our Exh opened – it would have made all the difference – I would have sold many others.”\textsuperscript{24} However, after challenging Gill on this point, he accepted his explanation that the board had a policy of only purchasing from the Federal

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Catalogue of Pictures by Mr. Hans Heysen}, (Adelaide s.n., 1904).
\textsuperscript{20} Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated letters [mid-May 1904], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{21} Heysen to Selma Bartels, Friday [13 May 1904], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{22} Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated letters [May 1904], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{24} Heysen to Selma Bartels, [20 May 1904], HH Papers.
These, together with the importance of institutional validation for securing private sales, are discussed below. Despite this lack of financial success, Heysen observed: “I don’t think we can quite estimate how much good – indirectly our Exhibition has done us. I really believe our first step has been put down with a firm foot, eh! I hear people are talking about it & all seemed well satisfied.” Heysen’s statement corresponds with the notion of establishing a position in the cultural field by demonstrating to Adelaide art lovers that he was an accomplished and committed artist.

During the second half of this extremely eventful year, Heysen continued to place his works before the Australian public. He showed works at the annual exhibitions of the SASA in late June, the Victorian Artists’ Society in July, the Royal Art Society of New South Wales (RASNSW) in September and at the SASA Federal Exhibition in November. The inclusion of his works in the Sydney exhibition led to the sale of The Coming Home to the National Art Gallery of New South Wales (NAGNSW) for 150 guineas. Two months later Mystic Morn (Fig. 4) was acquired by the NGSA for the same amount. At the start of December, it was announced that the latter work had been awarded the Wynne Prize, valued at £35-10-0, by the New South Wales trustees. The significance of this recognition will be considered below. Although his income remained unpredictable, these financial successes gave Hans and Sallie the confidence to marry. While the regular letters exchanged during their courtship provided valuable insights into Heysen’s career during 1904, henceforth they would only

---

25 Heysen to Selma Bartels, Saturday [21 May 1904], HH Papers.
26 Heysen to Selma Bartels, [date stamped: 23 May 1904], HH Papers.
27 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 87-88.
write during periods of separation, such as when Heysen was away on a painting trip or attending to an interstate exhibition.

1.2. Gallery Validation: Recognition of Heysen’s Art by Municipal Collections

Between September 1904 and March 1915, 14 works by Heysen were purchased by municipal galleries and a further 5 were gifted by private donors. During this early phase of his career, the sale of works to public collections was of significance for two reasons. The highest form of validation that could be accorded locally to an artist’s work was for it to be purchased by a municipal gallery. Bourdieu has identified museums as key “legitimized and legitimizing institutions,” recognised as conferring “cultural consecration.” As Heysen acknowledged during his 1904 solo exhibition, patronage from a municipal gallery served to reassure private collectors of an artist’s merits. The status conferred was further demonstrated during his 1907 visit to New Zealand, where he was able to secure a commission from the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts on the merits of his having sold paintings to three Australian galleries priced at 150 guineas, a price “quite unheard of in N.Z. for local men’s works.” Secondly, prior to the success of his 1908 Melbourne solo exhibition, discussed below, Heysen’s income was heavily derived from the sale of a small number of high-priced works to public collections. This was evident in 1907, when the sale of his oil painting A Pastoral (1907) to the NGSA accounted for 58% of his total

---

28 These purchases and donations are listed in Appendix Two.
30 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, undated [c.26 January – 1 February 1907], HH Papers.
income for that year. However, despite his success in achieving this recognition, he also encountered frustrations, disappointments and compromises.

As Ron Radford has documented, between the 1890s and 1914, the number of public art-exhibition spaces in Australia increased significantly as new municipal galleries were opened or extensions added to existing buildings. During the same period The National Galleries of South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales all received major endowments. Both Heysen’s reputation and finances were to benefit from these bequests. In 1897 Sir Thomas Elder bequeathed £25,000 to the NGSA for the purchase of pictures. Elder’s legacy compelled the South Australian Government to construct a permanent, purpose-built gallery for the state’s art collection. This new Roman Doric styled gallery was completed in 1900, during Heysen’s time abroad (Fig. 19). In 1903, the NGSA received additional funds for acquisitions from the Morgan Thomas Bequest, making it for a short time the wealthiest art gallery in Australia. However, in 1904 it was surpassed by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), following Alfred Felton’s bequest of £189,000. Radford has observed that as the spaces and collections of municipal galleries expanded, there was a corresponding increase in public attendance. The NGSA’s annual visitor numbers increased from 50,000 in 1899 to 113,000 in 1903, while viewers at the NAGNSW more than doubled between 1899 and 1906. Radford suggests that “the nationalism augmented by

32 Radford, Our Country, 120-22.
34 This bequest of £65,000 was shared with the South Australian Museum and State Library.
35 Radford, Our Country, 126-32.
Federation” shifted the development of public collections away from a “colonial emphasis on European, primarily British, art,” with a greater commitment to collecting Australian works. In turn, he argues, the displays of these institutions influenced public taste, consequently municipal patronage of Australian art encouraged private patronage of comparable works.36

Interest in Australian landscape painting was further stimulated following the establishment of the NAGNSW’s non-acquisitive Wynne Prize, funded by a bequest from Richard Wynne. This had been awarded annually since 1897 for “the best landscape painting of Australian scenery in oils or watercolour, or for the best example of figure sculpture by an Australian artist.” However, the prize was only rarely awarded for sculpture, leading to the misconception that it was exclusively for landscape painting, the genre regarded by most critics as best suited to conveying Australian nationalist sentiments.37 Heysen was awarded the Wynne Prize on three occasions (1904, 1909 and 1911) during this period. Although he sold few works to Sydney private collectors during the decade, the prospect of winning this accolade provided a motivation for Heysen to send important landscapes to Sydney. In 1908 he advised Sallie that he intended forwarding his large oil Timber Hauling, South Australia to Sydney to “compete” for the Wynne Prize.38 Heysen was unsuccessful that year, but partially repainted the work and exhibited it under the reversed title of Hauling Timber in 1911 (Fig. 10). It was purchased by the NAGNSW for 200 guineas (50 guineas more than

---

36 Ibid., 20, 132, 46.
38 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [annotated 21 August, actually 20 August 1908], HH Papers.
its 1908 price) and subsequently awarded the Wynne Prize, fulfilling his ambition of three years earlier.

On the advice of H. P. Gill, a third of the Elder Bequest was invested in treasury bonds, with the intention that during the next five years the interest realised would be spent on the purchase of contemporary Australian art. These works were selected from annual Federal Exhibitions, organised by the SASA, to which artists from the various Australian colonies (later states) and New Zealand were invited to submit works. The success of this approach saw the scheme continued beyond the first five years, with annual Federal Exhibitions taking place from 1898 to 1923. Many of the key late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australian paintings in the Gallery’s collection were acquired through these exhibitions, including significant works by Tom Roberts, Sydney Long, Walter Withers and Frederick McCubbin. However, as Jane Hylton and Catherine Speck have observed, the quality of both the exhibitions and acquisitions began to decline following Gill’s forced retirement as Honorary Curator in 1909. Heysen shared this view, criticising the large proportion of “very poor student work” in the 1911 and 1912 exhibitions.

Gill was only able to recommend purchases, with the final decision made by the Fine Arts Committee of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery. Heysen’s letters show that he considered the majority

---

41 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 5 December 1911; 7 December 1912, WHG Papers.
of board members “unqualified” to make informed judgements about art.\textsuperscript{42}

William Moore similarly observed in an article about Australian public collections:

Each gallery is controlled by trustees, who are appointed, not for their knowledge of art, but for their eminence in politics, law or commerce. They are guided by the advice of various experts, but … what discernment can one expect from a body which, in most instances, is entirely composed of laymen?\textsuperscript{43}

In an even more convoluted process, before being purchased with Felton Bequest funds, any artworks recommended by the NGV’s director Lindsay Bernard Hall had to first gain the approval of both the Gallery Committee of the Trustees of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum and the separate Felton Purchase Committee. As John Poynter and Gwen Rankin have documented, not all recommendations progressed smoothly through this three-tier process, with frequent disagreements between Hall and the two committees.\textsuperscript{44} This was the case in 1909, when Hall’s recommendation to purchase Heysen’s watercolour \textit{Movement of Light} was endorsed by the Gallery Committee, but rejected by the Felton trustees.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 29 January 1909; 8 May 1915, WHG Papers; Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated [May 1904], HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 20 March [annotated 1911, probably 1912], LF Papers.


\textsuperscript{45} Meeting of the Trustees: 29 July 1909; 9 August 1909; 26 August 1909, Minutes of the Trustees of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum, vol. 16, June 1904 – December 1915, MSF 12855, SLV.

Similarly, Hall nominated three works for acquisition from Heysen’s 1908 Melbourne solo exhibition. However, the Gallery trustees only voted to purchase two of these, a decision confirmed by the Felton Committee. See, Special Meeting of Trustees, 13 August 1908, Minutes of the Trustees, vol. 16; Meeting of the Felton Bequest Committee, 20 August 1908, Minutes of the Felton Bequest Committee, Records of the Felton Bequest, MS 14852, SLV.
Both Hall and Gill thought the development of their galleries’ collections should be “scientific,” systematically acquiring the best examples of a range of artists, who represented different phases of art, while avoiding duplication. Consequently, in May 1908 the Board of Governors of the NGSA adopted the policy “that not more than three oil or water colour paintings by one artist be purchased.” Speck has identified this policy as contributing to the decline of the Federal Exhibitions, as it removed the incentive for important artists already well represented in the Gallery’s collection to send their best works. In 1913, after mainly concentrating on watercolours during the previous four years, Heysen exhibited his major, academy-scale oil Red Gold to immediate critical acclaim (Fig. 14). It initially appeared that the Gallery may not be able to acquire it as they had already purchased three paintings by Heysen. However, this policy could be circumvented by having the work gifted by a private donor. The British philanthropist and ship owner the Right Hon. Charles Booth had instructed his Adelaide representatives to spend £250 on a painting, preferably by an Australian artist, for donation to the NGSA. At the request of the Fine Arts Committee they approved the purchase of Red Gold and Heysen consented to reduce his price from 300 guineas to the amount available.

47 “Public Library Board,” Register (Adelaide), 16 May 1908.
49 “Heysen’s Year – Magnificent Landscapes Dominate Art Exhibition – A Triton Among Minnows,” Mail (Adelaide), 15 November 1913.
50 Booth had been pleased with the enthusiastic reception of Holman Hunt’s The Light of the World (c.1900-1904, St Paul’s Cathedral, London) in Australia, when he sponsored its tour of the British Empire between 1905 and 1907. He believed this “afforded ample evidence of a taste that only requires material to satisfy its needs.” Mary Booth, Charles Booth: A Memoir (London: Macmillan, 1918), 28. Cf. Mark Douglas Stiles, “Reading Ruskin: Architecture and Social Reform in Australia, 1889-1908” (PhD, University of New South Wales, 2010), 383, 89-92.
51 Crompton & Son to the Board of Governors, 27 May 1913; J. P. G. Adams to Crompton & Son, 12 November 1913, Letters Received, 1906-1926, GRG 19/5, AGSA Research Library.
During the Federation era, the directors of the State galleries regularly communicated with one another and took an interest in which Australian artists were being collected by their interstate counterparts. In February 1906, Hall wrote to H. P. Gill asking if Heysen’s painting *Sunshine and Shadow* (1904-05, Fig. 5) on display at the Australian Manufactures and Products Exhibition in Melbourne, “is the same subject as that in your Gallery,” as the work was “so badly hung that it can hardly be seen.” The painting depicts the same group of saplings shown in *Mystic Morn*, but without the cows and under brighter midday sunlight. Presumably Gill provided a positive assessment as the painting was recommended by Hall and approved for purchase by both the Gallery and Felton committees for 150 guineas. Similarly, Heysen hoped that the NGV’s purchase of two works from his 1908 Melbourne exhibition would inspire comparable interest from the NAGNSW. He wrote to Sallie, “I hope Lionel Lindsay will bring the event before the Sydney Trustees – it will show them up a bit I hope.”

Indeed, in June 1909 the NAGNSW purchased Heysen’s watercolour *Summer*, which was the same size as the NGV’s recently-acquired *Midsummer Morning* and also depicts sheep passing between trees (Figs. 8 & 9). Heysen had priced this work at 60 guineas, but was initially offered 40 guineas by the trustees. He advised G. V. F. Mann, the superintendent of the NAGNSW, that he could not

52 William Moore suggests that the NGV purchased Charles Wheeler’s *The Poem* (1910) in response to the NAGNSW’s acquisition of Wheeler’s *The Portfolio* (1909), a painting the NGV had previously contemplated but declined to buy. Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, 2, 34.
53 L. Bernard Hall to H. P. Gill, 7 February 1906, Letters Received by the Hon. Curator, GRG 19/2, AGSA Research Library. Letters from Hall to Gill of 29 August 1904 and 12 December 1904 also make reference to Heysen’s work.
54 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [annotated 21 August, actually 20 August 1908], HH Papers.
accept less than 50 guineas, as Spencer was willing to purchase it at this price. The Gallery agreed to this amount, the same price the NGV had paid for *Midsummer Morning* the previous year. Heysen wrote indignantly to Lindsay, “I thought this a very reasonable figure – don’t you think it … a damn shame to try & cut me down to a Lister Lister price.” His comment shows Heysen was conscious of the prices commanded by his contemporaries, such as the Sydney artist William Lister Lister, who was president of the RASNSW and a trustee of the NAGNSW, but whom Heysen regarded as an inferior artist. Equally, the actions of the Gallery demonstrate their awareness of both the recent market value of Heysen’s work and the collections development of the NGV. *Summer* received the Wynne Prize later that year.

Heysen was extremely conscious of the important role of sales to public collections in motivating private collectors to buy an artist’s work. Consequently, he would have recognised that the reduction given on *Summer* was amply compensated by the prestige conferred in the minds of private collectors. In 1908, he considered it “a great pity” that the NGV’s purchase of two works was not confirmed until two days prior to his exhibition closing. Aware of the institutionalised consecration that such news would confer, he felt it would “have given our Exhibition another impetus forward – it gives buyers confidence (in their doubts) to buy.” Following the official confirmation of their purchase,

---

55 Heysen to G. V. F. Mann, 31 May 1909, General Correspondence files, Capon Library.
56 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 July 1909, LF Papers.
57 Heysen similarly sold works to galleries at a discount on a number of occasions. For instance, in 1907 the NGSA purchased A Pastoral for 125 guineas, 25 guineas less than its catalogue price. Special Meeting of Fine Arts Committee, 5 November 1907, Fine Arts Committee Minutes, vol. 5, October 1905 – March 1911, AGSA Research Library; Thiele, *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 105.
58 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: [annotated 18 August, actually 17 August 1908], HH Papers.
Heysen took both paintings to a photographer, as the Melbourne representative of the British art magazine *The Studio* had requested two photographs of his work. These were published in April the following year (Fig. 7).

After a hiatus during the First World War years, which is considered in the following chapter, Heysen enjoyed his greatest number of sales to public collections during the 1920s and 1930s. However, while fewer in number the acquisition of his works by municipal galleries during the Edwardian period was of greater significance in establishing his reputation with the art buying public. Heysen’s willingness to reduce his prices, a concession he rarely made for private collectors, shows his awareness of the prestige accorded by sales to state galleries. Although up until 1908 he was heavily reliant on the income from these sales, he would have recognised that the discounts given were justified by the value private collectors attached to institutional recognition. During this decade Heysen’s networks did not yet encompass the large number of gallery directors and trustees he knew during the interwar period. Nonetheless, his few acquaintances like H. P. Gill and Spencer acted to promote his interests and Heysen made a conscious effort to bring his works to the attention of gallery boards.

### 1.3. Group Exhibitions: Showing with Artists’ Societies

In the decade between Heysen’s return to Australia and the outbreak of the First World War, he regularly exhibited with artists’ societies in Adelaide,

---

59 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: [annotated 19 August, actually 21 August 1908]; [annotated 11 August, actually 9 August 1908]; [13 August 1908], HH Papers.
61 Between 1920 and 1932 Heysen received the Wynne Prize a further six times.
Sydney, Melbourne and other centres. These groups usually mounted “large mixed, salon-type” annual exhibitions overseen by selection and hanging committees of artists, “thereby conferring reputations through peer-group recognition.” Discussing the Sydney art world, Heather Johnson has argued that such societies “formed the ground swell of the art network” and “served as a link not only between the [municipal] Gallery and artists, but also between private galleries and artists, between artists themselves, and between artists and the public.” During this period they provided the main outlet for artists, amateur and professional alike, to display and sell their works. Heysen was strategic about which works he placed in particular exhibitions, depending on whether he was hoping to sell works to a public collection, secure commissions from private collectors or display the latest phase of his art to his art world peers.

Immediately following his return to Adelaide in 1903, Heysen was nominated and elected a Fellow of the SASA. This was the highest level of membership, reserved for those who practised art professionally, whereas amateurs and students were admitted as Associates. It meant he was eligible to serve on the council of the SASA and could be elected to the selection or hanging committees for the society’s exhibitions, positions he regularly attained. The swiftness with which Heysen was accorded this honour indicates the significance that overseas

Appendix Three lists the various group exhibitions that Heysen participated in during this period.


Council Meetings: 6 October 1903; 3 November 1903, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
training was accorded as a marker of professional status. Will Ashton and Rose McPherson were similarly elected Fellows upon their return from Europe.66

During his first five years back in Adelaide Heysen was actively involved in the affairs of the SASA. He served on its council from September 1905 until March 1909, when he resigned following his move to Hahndorf.67 Concomitantly, he was appointed to sub-committees to organise “a Club for practical art work and discussion” and to report on improving “the social side” of the society’s work.68 The latter sub-committee recommended that for the 1908 Annual Exhibition:

Lady Way be asked to act as hostess & that invitations be issued for a free private view … that each subscriber be allowed to nominate six influential names or art patrons to whom invitations be sent, and that 3 Influential Ladies be asked to invite their friends to ‘at Homes’ on 3 Evenings during the Exhibition season.69

Evidently it was hoped that the social and cultural capital of individuals prominent in Adelaide society would help establish the exhibition as a fashionable event, thereby leading to higher attendance and sales. Heysen also took part in the monthly general meetings, which typically featured a lecture on an art-related topic. He presented the paper “Observations on Art” in August 1906.70

66 Council Meetings: 5 December 1905; 9 April 1907, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
67 Council Meetings: 1 August 1905; 2 March 1909, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
68 Council Meetings: 25 September 1906; 11 February 1908, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
69 Council Meeting, 3 March 1908, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records. Lady Way was the wife of the SASA’s president, Sir Samuel Way.
70 “Society of Arts,” Advertiser, 17 August 1906. The text of Heysen’s talk is provided in Appendix Four.
While the SASA provided a structure for bringing members of the South Australian art world together, relations were sometimes soured by rivalries and cliquism. Heysen was drawn into one such conflict in 1910, when the president, H. P. Gill, nominated him as the society’s representative upon the Board of Governors of the Library, Museum and Gallery, in competition with the long-serving incumbent Edward Davies. Gill, who had been forced to retire as honorary curator of the NGSA the previous year, publically stated that he was in opposition to the re-election of Davies. A ballot was conducted and Davies nonetheless returned.\textsuperscript{71} The following year a number of articles and letters to the editor appeared in Adelaide newspapers reporting deep divisions within the SASA. These primarily related to the alleged “blackballing” of McPherson by a clique who accused her of using the society for her own “self-aggrandisement.”\textsuperscript{72} Davies raised Heysen’s nomination as evidence of Gill subjecting him to “annoyance and embarrassment,” in retaliation for Davies involvement with the 1908 inquiry into the School of Design, where Gill was principal, which had resulted in Gill’s retirement from the Gallery.\textsuperscript{73} Heysen’s former pupil Ethel Barringer disputed Davies interpretation, defending “the wholehearted enthusiasm of the President of a society, for its most distinguished member, and the wish to secure that member’s services in a position which his study, travel, and exceptional attainment pre-eminently fit him to fill.”\textsuperscript{74} While Barringer’s praise indicates the cultural capital that Heysen had accrued, this was insufficient to overcome the insular personality politics apparent in the broader dispute.

\textsuperscript{71} Annual General Meeting, 25 October 1910, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
\textsuperscript{74} “S.A. Society of Arts – Wanted, Enquiry,” \textit{Register}, 16 October 1911.
As shown in Appendix Three, between 1904 and 1911 Heysen usually exhibited at both the SASA’s annual exhibitions and the Federal Exhibitions. As the Federal Exhibitions were organised to allow the NGSA to purchase works, they frequently attracted exhibits from prominent interstate and expatriate artists. Thus, conscious of both the prospect of a gallery purchase and wishing to appear favourably alongside his eminent peers, Heysen tended to show his more ambitious, higher-priced pictures there. By contrast, the buyers from the annual exhibitions were limited to local private collectors. Excluding Heysen’s unpriced works, a third of his pictures shown at the Federal Exhibitions between 1904 and 1914 were priced at 100 guineas or more, whereas only two of the works he showed at the SASA’s annual exhibitions were priced this high. By contrast, 73% of the works he showed at the annual exhibitions were priced at ten guineas or less, while only a third of those in the Federal Exhibitions fell into this category. However, the prospect of sales was not Heysen’s only motivation for showing his best works in the Federal exhibitions. As he wrote to Lionel Lindsay in 1909, “Certainly there seems little encouragement to be expected from Private buyers … It is good to have the opportunity of seeing what our brother artists are doing in Aus. – but it is a great pity that Adelaide cannot guarantee more substantial support.”

Conscious of the national scope of these exhibitions, as opposed to the SASA’s more provincial annual exhibitions, he wished to strongly assert his position within the cultural field of the Australian art world.

---

75 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 July 1909, LF Papers.
Indeed, one of Heysen’s exhibits in the 1909 Federal Exhibition was the watercolour *In Sunset Haze* (1909, Fig. 11), borrowed from Professor Baldwin Spencer. As it was required that works in the exhibition be for sale, Heysen priced Spencer’s picture at £200, a higher price than any of his previous exhibits, to “deter the Trustees from buying.” His other four watercolours were each priced at 20 guineas. *In Sunset Haze* attracted the hoped for recognition. In declaring the exhibition open, Sir Samuel Way described Heysen’s watercolour as representing “an epoch in the history of art in South Australia.” The following year Heysen included this work in the Victorian Artists’ Society’s annual exhibition, along with a watercolour borrowed from the Governor of Victoria, Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael. On this occasion the lenders were identified in the catalogue. As discussed below, both men were respected connoisseurs, thus their ownership conferred prestige upon the works. Despite neither picture being for sale, Heysen was willing to incur the Society’s one guinea annual subscription fee and “all packing & cartage expenses,” to ensure these works were exhibited and his accomplishment recognised in Melbourne. He also travelled over for the exhibition, strategically positioning himself alongside these works, which he regarded as his finest watercolours to date, at a time when he relied on commissions from Melbourne collectors.

---

76 Heysen to W. H. Gill, undated [October 1910], WHG Papers. It was not until 1921 that Heysen exhibited a watercolour with an actual price of more than £200. Heysen was subsequently allowed to show unpriced works at the 1911 and 1913 Federal Exhibitions, perhaps because the NGSA had already purchased three of his paintings.
78 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 8 July 1910, WHG Papers. Heysen had previously submitted works to the VAS under the auspices of the SASA, but advised Gill that “owing to the unsatisfactory way” that the pictures submitted by Adelaide had previously been hung he wished to exhibit as a member of the VAS. Gill made the necessary enquiries and Heysen was able to become a member after asking the prominent Melbourne artist Walter Withers to propose him. Heysen to W. H. Gill: 31 July [1910]; 21 August 1910, WHG Papers; Heysen to Walter Withers, 8 August 1910, Walter Withers Papers, ca. 1888-1966, MS 7976, SLV.
In addition to exhibiting with the established artists’ societies, Heysen showed works with some of the breakaway groups which operated during this decade. Unlike the various European successionists or later Australian groups in the 1930s and 1940s, these associations were not avant-garde. Instead they aspired to limit their membership to those regarded as serious artists. As Edward Officer, the founding president of the Melbourne-based Australian Art Association (AAA) explained, while “most of the existing Societies are dragged down by a large membership roll of inefficients & amateurs,” inclusion in the AAA would be by invitation based on “artistic capacity only.” Following its reconstitution in 1907, Heysen only exhibited once with the Sydney-based Society of Artists during the Edwardian era. Despite having friends on the council of the newer society, Heysen preferred to show with the more established RASNSW. However, he would show with Society of Artists on a regular basis from the late 1910s onwards, after he had ceased to exhibit with most other artists’ societies. Heysen was also invited to show with the proposed, but never established, Society of Australian Artists. Its instigator, the Sydney artist and architect William Hardy Wilson, hoped that the planned “representative collective exhibition will act mainly as an advertisement in establishing each artists’ position in regard to his fellows,” thus asserting their place in the field.

79 Edward Officer to Heysen, 25 February 1913, HH Papers.
80 The Society of Artists was formed in 1895 by a group of artists who separated from the RASNSW, disillusioned with “the preponderance of power that it placed in the hands of laymen and amateurs.” The two societies amalgamated in 1902 after the New South Wales government declared it would only provide a subsidy to one Sydney artists’ society. Following further disgruntlement, in 1907 several members again broke away and reconstituted the Society of Arts. It remained active, staging annual and seasonal exhibitions, until 1965. See, Julian Ashton, “The Society of Artists,” in Society of Artists Pictures, Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920), 1-7.
81 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, [annotated: about 1907; actually 1908], LF Papers.
82 W. Hardy Wilson to Heysen, 4 September 1912, HH Papers.
These newer societies did not always achieve their aspirations. Heysen contributed five pictures to the 1914 exhibition of the AAA and travelled to Melbourne for the occasion. He was gratified to discover his pictures “occupying the Place of Honour – facing the door – the explanation [is that] Officer must indeed be a very decent fellow – he said he did not feel justified in occupying the central position 2 years running & so extended it to me.” However, he was disappointed by the quality of other artists’ contributions, advising Sallie that it was “hardly an attractive show – there are few works of any size … sketches dominate with a disastrous effect.” He subsequently communicated these concerns to Officer, who replied agreeing that if “the show is to rank as the test and limit of capacity among Australian artists yearly, then members must send only work warranted to sustain the role. … On this matter I shall speak most strongly at the next meeting & will also quote your letter.” Heysen’s resignation from the AAA in 1915 is considered in the next chapter.

Following the success of Heysen’s 1908 Melbourne solo exhibition and his adoption of W. H. Gill as his agent, the majority of his sales were no longer made through artists’ societies. Indeed, a review of the SASA’s 1910 annual exhibition observed, “It is satisfactory to hear that pressure of commissions for water-colours has prevented him from sending in more important works.” However, between

83 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 3 June 1914, HH Papers.
84 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday Eve [c.12 June 1914], HH Papers. Heysen had been invited to contribute two works to the inaugural 1913 exhibition of the AAA, but was unable to complete his proposed contributions in time and conscious of how his work would appear beside that of his peers, “did not think it advisable to show anything smaller.” Heysen to W. H. Gill, Friday May 1913, WHG Papers.
85 Edward Officer to Heysen, 2 July 1914, HH Papers.
1909 and 1914 Heysen continued to exhibit regularly with artists’ societies, frequently borrowing the best examples of his work from their purchasers for inclusion in group shows. Many prominent artists continued to show with societies, even after these had been supplanted by solo exhibitions and dealer galleries. Johnson suggests that “artists sought something other than material benefits in belonging to the art societies … the prestige of having work selected in exhibitions” and “the companionship of colleagues.” During the early stage of his career, Heysen needed access to the networks which such societies provided. However, once he had established a national reputation and consolidated his own networks, he was no longer so reliant on their support. Nonetheless, he continued to show works as a means of establishing his “position in regard to his fellows.”

1.4. Solo Exhibitions: Pursuing Commercial and Symbolic Rewards

Heysen’s early solo exhibitions are typically presented as key milestones, representing turning points in his life and career: viz, marking his homecoming following his studies abroad (Adelaide, 1904); providing him with sufficient funds to move to Hahndorf and dedicate himself to art fulltime (Melbourne, 1908); allowing him to purchase The Cedars (Melbourne, 1912); and his first exposure to anti-German prejudice (Melbourne, 1915). While there is no disputing their immense personal significance for Heysen, these exhibitions also reflect broader shifts within the Australian art world. Greatest attention will be given to his 1908 and 1912 Melbourne exhibitions. These are of particular interest as they represent a significant expansion of his market, reputation and networks beyond Adelaide, are well documented in his surviving correspondence

88 W. Hardy Wilson to Heysen, 4 September 1912, HH Papers.
and are useful for situating Heysen’s experiences in relation to other artists. His 1915 Melbourne exhibition is considered in the following chapter.

In May 1905 Heysen held a second solo exhibition in his Steamship Company’s Building studio. In financial terms, this was only slightly more successful, earning £29 compared to £23 in 1904. Of the 104 works, 57 were monotypes and three drawings, suggesting that Heysen thought lower priced works would be more saleable to Adelaide buyers. Such meagre results indicated the need to look beyond Adelaide for potential collectors. He would not hold another solo exhibition in the city until 1922. In early 1907 Heysen held two solo shows in New Zealand during his three month visit there. He deposited a number of works with the McGregor Wright Gallery in Wellington and with H. Fisher and Son in Christchurch, while he embarked on a sketching trip of the South Island. Heysen approached these picture framers and dealers on the advice of James Fraser Scott, a New Zealand artist whom he met in Paris and who later moved to Australia. His letters to Sallie suggest that sales were poor, although Thiele’s assertion that he sold only one small watercolour is incorrect. The trip was saved from being a financial disaster thanks to the commission Heysen received from the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, which funded most of his travel expenses in exchange for “two oil paintings of comprehensive scenic views.”

---

89 Moore, Story of Australian Art, 2, 30. Heysen provided different sales figures during a 1960 interview, stating that his 1904 exhibition “realised £29 exactly” and “the next exhibition was £32.” Sir Hans Heysen interviewed by Derek van Abbe, Stewart Cockburn and Derek Jolley, 1960, ORAL TRC 99, NLA.

90 Catalogue of Hans Heysen’s Exhibition of Pictures, (Adelaide: s.n., 1905). The monotypes were priced between 12 shillings and sixpence and four guineas.

91 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 98-99, 103.
Heysen’s exhibitions to date had been modest affairs in makeshift surroundings. However, the influence of Arthur Streeton, who had resided in London since 1897, saw artists’ solo exhibitions in Australia reimagined as grander statements. Streeton later claimed that he had “initiated the one man shows in Australia in 1907” and that “Everyone since has followed suit.”\(^{93}\) While this was untrue, the success and scale of Streeton’s April 1907 Melbourne exhibition helped popularise such ventures amongst artists and served as a template which others imitated. Streeton booked the Hibernian Hall, subsequently renamed the Guild Hall, for his exhibition of 212 works, mainly depicting European subjects. This was accompanied by a sumptuous catalogue, illustrated with reproductions of eight works.\(^{94}\) His exhibition achieved sales of £2000, marking the start of an “art boom” in Melbourne. Several other artists followed his example, holding solo exhibitions of a similar format at the Guild Hall during 1907 and 1908.\(^{95}\) The two most significant of these for Heysen were Will Ashton and Emanuel Phillips Fox, who staged Melbourne exhibitions in July 1907 and March 1908 respectively.

Heysen and Ashton were friends and painting companions; they had been fellow students both at James Ashton’s Academy of Arts, a private art school run by Will’s father, and later in Paris. Although there are no references to Ashton’s Melbourne exhibition in Heysen’s surviving correspondence, he would doubtless

---


\(^{94}\) *A Catalogue of an Exhibition of Pictures by Arthur Streeton Prior to His Return to Europe* (Melbourne: s.n., 1907).

\(^{95}\) Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, 2, 28.
have taken an interest in his friend’s show, from which the NGV purchased a painting, and contemplated whether to undertake a similar venture himself.\textsuperscript{96} By contrast, Heysen only met Fox, an expatriate artist, in May 1908 (not April 1907 as Thiele mistakenly claims), when both were visiting Sydney.\textsuperscript{97} The two established an immediate rapport. Following his success in Melbourne, Fox was preparing for a Sydney solo exhibition and he and other artists strongly advised Heysen to hold a Melbourne show. Fox offered to help with the arrangements and the Guild Hall was booked for August, when Fox’s more modernist wife, Ethel Carrick Fox, was also holding a solo exhibition in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{98}

For someone like Heysen, with few contacts in Melbourne and little experience in organising such an event, Fox’s assistance was invaluable. He advised Sallie:

“Fox has been a good forerunner … We owe to him more than we can repay … He seems to have done everything for me – & without him poor Daddy [Hans] would have been entirely lost.”\textsuperscript{99} Heysen’s letters show that Fox contacted Melbourne newspapers, helped address invitations, lent him frames, advised on the hanging of the exhibition and wrote “to the Governor – the trustees of the Felton Bequest & Trustees of the Gallery.” However, his two most valuable services were generating “interest & curiosity” about Heysen’s exhibition, “for the main thing is to have it talked about beforehand,” and introducing Heysen to a wide circle of Melbourne artists and art lovers.\textsuperscript{100} Heysen’s social contact with

\textsuperscript{96} “Adelaide Artist – Painting Bought for Melbourne Gallery,” \textit{Evening Journal} (Adelaide), 1 August 1907.
\textsuperscript{97} Thiele, \textit{Heysen of Hahndorf}, 103-04.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid., 103-04, 09; Ruth Zubans, \textit{E. Phillips Fox: His Life and Art} (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1995), 138, 41.
\textsuperscript{99} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday [7 August 1908], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{100} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, undated letters [July and August 1908]; E. P. Fox to Heysen, Friday [July 1908, filed with letters to Sallie Heysen], HH Papers.
fellow artists is considered below. Fox also successfully invited the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, to open Heysen’s exhibitions, accomplished, as Thiele notes, “with the help of one or two of his influential friends.”¹⁰¹ Later that year Heysen was able to assist Fox by submitting three works to the Federal Exhibition on his friend’s behalf. The NGSA purchased Fox’s *Al Fresco* (c.1905), albeit after negotiating a substantially reduced price.¹⁰²

The catalogue for Heysen’s exhibition lists 136 works, although his letters indicate additional works were added. These included oils, watercolours, pastels and monotypes. At least forty of the works depicted overseas subjects, including eleven of New Zealand, although the majority were Australian. Sallie suggested that the exhibition invitation cards should read “*Australian and European paintings* instead of vice-versa: your show is mainly composed of Australian work and besides it is more patriotic!”¹⁰³ In its predominance of local over European subjects, Heysen’s exhibition differed from that of Fox and probably also Ashton.¹⁰⁴ Streeton’s trendsetting Melbourne exhibition had mainly featured views of Europe, but he had followed this with “Streeton’s Sydney Sunlight Exhibition” in October 1907. Like these artists, Heysen had an attractive catalogue printed featuring reproductions of four works and an art nouveau cover design by the artist (Fig. 6). These proved popular with visitors, with Heysen advising his wife: “The attendance yesterday was really good again & £1-7-0 of

¹⁰⁴ With Ashton’s exhibition it is not possibly to identify the geographical location from most of his titles.
catalogues were sold – this makes the total to £7/0/- many more than Fox sold.”

There are many other statements in his letters where he compares the success of his exhibition in terms of sales, attendance and media attention to those of other artists, as he seeks to gauge his newfound standing within the Melbourne art world.

Of the catalogued works, 34% were priced at five guineas or less; 51% between six and ten guineas; and 8% between 12 and 21 guineas. However, there were a handful of more expensive works, including two large oils, Timber Hauling, South Australia and A Lord of the Bush, priced at 150 guineas each. This distribution of prices was similar to Will Ashton’s exhibition, where 90% of works were priced at 25 guineas or less. Sales at Heysen’s exhibition reached over £750. Heysen advised Sallie that he had sold a total of 78 pictures, reputedly “a record as far as the number of sales is concerned in Melb.” If the two higher priced works purchased by the NGV for 200 guineas are deducted, then the average price paid by private buyers was between six and seven guineas. Baldwin Spencer believed that Heysen had been wise in putting “moderate prices” on his work. Spencer had assisted Streeton in organising his April 1907 exhibition, but had worried his works were priced too high for Melbourne.

105 Assuming Heysen’s catalogues were priced at sixpence, as Will Ashton’s had been, then he had sold 54 in a single day and 280 at the time of his letter. He later reported that “catalogue sales have amounted to £9.10.0,” or 380 sold. Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Sunday Morn [16 August 1908]; Thursday Eve [20 August 1908], HH Papers.

106 Of Ashton’s 118 works, 33% were priced at five guineas or less and 38% at between six and ten guineas. Four works were priced at 150 guineas. Illustrated Catalogue of Exhibition of English, French and Australian Landscape and Marine Pictures by Will Ashton, (Adelaide: Modern Printing Co., 1907).

107 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Saturday night [annotated 1910, actually 22 August 1908], HH Papers.

buyers.\textsuperscript{109} Half way through his exhibition, Heysen advised his wife that his sales were “the biggest since Streeton’s show – as we have already passed Fox’s sales – which were close on £600.”\textsuperscript{110}

One significant consequence of Heysen’s exhibition was his introduction to Spencer, who became an important friend and patron. Spencer was professor of biology at the University of Melbourne, an anthropologist, the honorary director of the National Museum of Victoria and a trustee of the NGV. He was also an inveterate collector who helped make the collecting of Australian art fashionable in Melbourne. Like Fox, he played an active role in promoting Heysen’s exhibition to his networks. Mulvaney and Calaby have described how he supported local artists he admired, both by purchasing their work and by urging others to buy.\textsuperscript{111} Spencer and Bernard Hall visited Heysen’s exhibition the day before its opening. Heysen recounted that:

\begin{quote}
Spencer came in unexpectedly – became very interested … & told me it is not often ‘they have anything like this in Melb.’ He seemed highly enthusiastic – & they say when Pro Spencer feels like this – the success of an Exh is practically assured – he is the man who made Streeton’s success – his patronage has a great following … he said – ‘I would like you to mark this for me & this & this’ – 6 in all 3 pastels 2 watercolours & 1 drawing.\textsuperscript{112}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{110} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday Eve [17 August 1908], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{111} Mulvaney and Calaby, ‘So Much That Is New’, 339, 42, 47.
\textsuperscript{112} Hall also purchased a pastel for his private collection, meaning the expenses of mounting the exhibition “had already been covered” prior to the opening day. Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday night [7 August 1908], HH Papers.

Heysen’s experience recall’s Streeton’s description of how Spencer “dived in & out” of the crates of Streeton’s pictures, “like a feverish prospector for nuggets. I gave him one he liked right off … & he bought 7 others.” Arthur Streeton to Tom Roberts, 19 December 1906, Galbally and Gray, Letters from Smike, 102.
Spencer’s enthusiasm for Heysen’s exhibition is attested by a letter he wrote to H. P. Gill, praising the work as “honest and genuine.” He and Heysen also subsequently become regular correspondents.

Although he had previously exhibited in Melbourne, it was this solo exhibition which really launched his reputation in the cultural field of the city. It served to introduce his work to a wider circle of potential collectors at a time when Melbourne art lovers felt a growing inclination to support Australian artists. There proved an ongoing demand for Heysen’s works in Melbourne. During his exhibition, Heysen made the acquaintance of William Henry Gill, a salesman and art adviser for the furniture importers and manufacturers Robertson and Moffat (Fig. 20). Gill was to act as Heysen’s principal Melbourne agent, as considered below. Writing to Gill a year after his exhibition, Heysen justified the increase in his prices as reflecting, “the better quality & more characteristically Aus work which I sent to you, they are nearly all complete pictures – not sketches – whereas at my Guildhall Exh nearly all the low priced things were either studies or sketches, the ‘complete things’ were priced almost on par with the prices I gave you.”

In April 1912, Heysen contacted W. H. Gill about the possibility of holding a second solo exhibition in Melbourne. His main reservation was “the loss of time it would mean for me, to see to it personally,” asking for an idea of Gill’s “charges to run such an Exhibition … & when you thought it a fit time.”

---

114 Ibid., 127.
115 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 12 August 1909, WHG Papers.
116 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 4 April 1912, WHG Papers.
same month Gill resigned from Robertson and Moffat and was seeking employment. He agreed to manage the exhibition for “a salary of £5.5.0 per week and a bonus of 5% on all sales.” Heysen reassured Gill that most of the required works were completed already and that he would send these in batches to allow adequate time for framing. The Athenaeum Hall, where Charles Wheeler, Walter Withers, Constance Jenkins and Ambrose Patterson had recently held solo exhibitions, was booked for July.

The exhibition proved a popular and financial success, achieving £1,544-11-0 in sales, with Gill earning £93-17-0 for his efforts. No works were purchased by the NGV, but by now Heysen enjoyed a prominent position in the Melbourne art world and no longer required such commendation to encourage private buyers. The following month Heysen was able to advise Gill of his purchase of a house and thirty-six acre property, christened The Cedars, which was “practically bought with 3 years work of painting – and I have to thank the people of Melbourne for this. I never could have done it in Adelaide.” Fox wrote from Paris congratulating Heysen. He was planning a solo show at the Athenaeum Hall for 1913 and enquired about Heysen’s experience with Gill, “how you found him to work with & if you don’t mind pecuniary arrangements.” Gill subsequently became Fox’s dealer and managed his exhibition of June 1913.
Unlike Heysen’s 1908 exhibition, his 1912 show consisted exclusively of watercolours, “complete cabinet pictures – & not sketches,” all with Australian subject matter (Fig. 12). The majority were smaller works (12” x 9” to 16” x 12”), priced between 20 and 35 guineas, although two works were priced at 100 guineas. Heysen demurred at Gill’s suggestion that he also include some drawings and “10 Guinea sketches,” as he was “not at all in sympathy with exhibitions of sketchy work – you must acknowledge there is a big gulf between a picture & a sketch.” Nothing was priced below 20 guineas, whereas in 1908 90% of the works were priced at less than this amount. Upon learning of Heysen’s upcoming exhibition, his friend, the collector Alfred McMichael, wrote informing him about recent Melbourne exhibitions, observing: “There is money in Melbourne for pictures, if not too high priced, there is a limited few for whom up to a £100 is not too much, but the great bulk range from £10 to say to £40 … of course under the £10 are most numerous, and none the less enthusiastic buyers.” This suggests that by sending mainly smaller, moderately priced works, Heysen was conscious of the amount Melbourne collectors were then prepared to spend on works by Australian artists.

Gill and Heysen’s correspondence regarding preparations for the exhibition is littered with contradictions and compromises, as they sought to make the best possible impression on Melbourne art lovers. Of the 63 watercolours, 56 were

---

124 Heysen to W. H. Gill, Monday [c.10 June 1912], WHG Papers.
125 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 16 April [1912], WHG Papers; *Exhibition of Watercolour by Hans Heysen*, (Melbourne: E. Whitehead & Co., 1912).
126 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 8 May 1912, WHG Papers.
127 A. S. McMichael to Heysen, 8 May 1912, HH Papers.
for sale. Gill had cautioned Heysen, “in my long experience I found it absolutely fatal … to put against a picture – ‘Not for Sale’! Every blessed buyer wants that picture and that picture only … and if they can’t get that one go away in a huff!”

However, he considered it “a wise policy” to include a recent commission lent by the wool broker and Austro-Hungarian consul George Stoving, because,

he is a persona grata here – with a large following of Melbourne Club friends & wealthy buyers – and further he is very proud of his picture – and … will bring everyone to see it – besides again I have got him most interested and already he is working hard for me – These are the little things that help to make an exhibition a success.  

Gill recognised Stoving’s social and cultural capital and felt that the prestige and free publicity within Stoving’s networks counterbalanced the risk of potential buyers coveting this watercolour at the expense of those offered for sale.

Gill sought Heysen’s “sanction to clinch the sale of any picture” prior to the exhibition’s opening. Heysen responded that, “honestly speaking I do not like the idea – it seems hardly fair to other buyers,” and recalled that at the time of his 1908 exhibition people objected to finding works already marked as sold “when they entered on opening day.” However, he consented to Gill selling a small number of works “under the condition that they are to be catalogued & shown with the rest – as I want the Exhibition – as a show, to be as complete as possible.”

Nearly a month before the exhibition opened, Heysen was glad to learn that Gill had already sold seven of the watercolours. In a further change of stance, he gave Gill permission, if he thought it advisable, to catalogue the six “not for sale” work with prices “and then mark them sold on opening day.”

---

128 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 23 May 1912, HH Papers.
129 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 23 May 1912, HH Papers.
130 Heysen to W. H. Gill, Sunday [May 1912], WHG Papers.
131 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 10 June [1912], WHG Papers.
However, in the published catalogue these were listed as “not for sale.” Heysen was willing to sell one of these works, *The Pomp of Parting Day* (1912, Fig. 13), “to a Public Gallery only for 100 Guineas – otherwise it has been promised at this end – and I cannot go back on my word.”  

This work was sold to the private collector, John Connell, who donated it, along with two other Heysen watercolours, to the NGV as part of a large bequest in 1914. Heysen presumably knew of Connell’s intentions and thus consented to the sale.

Having Gill take responsibility for organising and promoting the exhibition allowed Heysen to concentrate on completing works. Thus Gill falls within Howard Becker’s definition of art world “support personnel,” who by releasing the artist from the need to perform certain tasks allows them more time and energy to concentrate on their core creative activities. However, a letter from the artist William Blamire Young indicates that Heysen’s absence during the preparations led some in Melbourne to believe “that the affair, in Gill’s hands, has too much of a commercial flavour.” Perturbed by an untrue rumour that he was not visiting Melbourne for the exhibition, Young advised Heysen that solo exhibitions in Melbourne “have so far been given a rather homely character,” with both the artist and his wife present, to give an air of good faith to the proceedings. The buyers are by this assured that there are no middleman’s profits to be provided. They feel

---

132 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 10 June [1912], WHG Papers.
134 See, Heysen to W. H. Gill, 8 June [1913], WHG Papers.
136 William Blamire Young to Heysen, 2 July 1912, HH Papers.
themselves quite directly to be art patrons & they love to see themselves in this role. … I have no doubt Gill will do his best & no better man can be got … but if the press gets hold of this notion … they might put the public off.  

Both Hans and Sallie travelled to Melbourne for the exhibition, staying in accommodation organised by Gill. Heysen sometimes criticised the exhibitions of other artists, such as Streeton and Harold Septimus Power, for being too commercially motivated. However, his principal criticisms related to the character of the works shown rather than the involvement of a paid manager. 

By staging substantial solo exhibitions in Melbourne, Heysen was responding to a recently established trend. Following the precedent set by Streeton, such exhibitions came to signify serious professional aspirations and were necessary for asserting an artist’s position within the cultural field of the Melbourne art world. A few artists, including Streeton and Fox, also mounted solo exhibitions in Sydney, but experienced less interest and lower sales. Heysen contemplated such a venture, but would not hold a Sydney solo exhibition until 1920. Heysen’s letters to Gill feature numerous enquiries about the prices, total sales and critical or popular reception of other artists’ exhibitions, showing his desire to gauge his own position relative to his peers. Gill considered it “a fatal

---

137 William Blamire Young to Heysen, 2 July 1912, HH Papers.
138 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 14 June 1912, HH Papers.
139 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Thursday [annotated 11 December 1914], HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 30 June [1921]; 13 November [1921]; 28 December [1923]; 27 April [annotated “1944-45?” actually 1927], LF Papers.
140 “I certainly am thinking of Sydney but I intend to wait until I can get a good show together … I wonder what luck Fox will have in Sydney this time.” Heysen to W. H. Gill, 1 June [1913], WHG Papers.
141 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 9 September 1909; 2 May [1910]; 31 July [1910]; 21 August 1910; 16 July 1911; 7 December 1912; 6 March 1913; 1 July [1913], WHG Papers.
mistake” for artists to hold such exhibitions annually as they risked reducing the value of their work. He advised Heysen, “Once in three years would be ample or in five safer still. The barer the market the better for the man … to get his own prices. That is your policy – you stick to it & you will score – while the rest will be on the slump.”

However, the significance of such exhibitions was not only commercial. When the cultural field was strategically and successfully negotiated, as Heysen took pains to do, exhibitions enabled artists to accrue symbolic capital and enhance their reputations.

1.5. W. H. Gill, Commissions and Prestigious Clients

As noted above, Heysen first became acquainted with W. H. Gill during his 1908 solo exhibition, when Gill offered to exhibit any spare pictures on a sale-or-return basis. In April 1912 Gill resigned from Robertson and Moffat, apparently frustrated that the firm wished him “to be merely a figure head, with no power of independent action.” Upon learning the news, Heysen responded “it seems indeed strange after 31 years of service that you should be treated like this to compel you to send in your resignation … you may be sure I heartily sympathize with your position.”

After managing Heysen’s July solo exhibition, in August 1912 Gill opened a private gallery, the Fine Art Society, on the fifth floor of the Centreway building. As he explained to Heysen, “here I start my new venture in life – on my own and as my own master.” He planned to deal in “pictures, antique china, furniture and other things,” but had “enough wall

\[142\] W. H. Gill to Heysen, 16 August 1912, HH Papers.
\[143\] Thiele, *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 127.
\[144\] Walter Baldwin Spencer to W. H. Gill, 4 April 1912, WHG Papers.
\[145\] Heysen to W. H. Gill, 16 April [1912], WHG Papers.
space to hold small shows – especially of etchings.\textsuperscript{146} The present chapter is concerned with Gill’s role in helping to cement Heysen’s presence in the Melbourne art world prior to World War One. Their association from the mid-1910s onwards will be considered in Chapter Five.

From October 1908 until the early 1920s, Heysen exchanged more letters with Gill than any other correspondent. These show that the many services Gill provided for Heysen went well beyond selling his works and brokering commissions. Gill also arranged for the framing and transportation of Heysen’s work; sourced and supplied Heysen with artists’ materials that were unprocurable in Adelaide; organised Heysen’s accommodation for him when he visited Melbourne; and sometimes attended to his banking affairs.\textsuperscript{147} He served as the artist’s central source of information about the Melbourne art world, and often sent him newspaper clippings, photographs and exhibition catalogues. Heysen opened one letter by acknowledging: “Your two letters, the parcel with 2 drawings, also reproductions of your Streeton – my own, & catalogue of Withers’ show – all to hand, & for which I now thank you.”\textsuperscript{148} The many enquiries in Heysen’s letters about success of various artists’ exhibitions, together with which artists have had works acquired by the NGV, show Heysen seeking to gauge his own relative position within the cultural field of Melbourne. Gill also recognised Heysen as a potential customer and advised him about art books, antiques, reproductions and art works available for purchase.

\textsuperscript{146} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 6 August 1912, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{147} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 7 October 1909; Sunday Eve [1910]; February 1911; August 1913; 20 September 1913, WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen: 14 June 1912; 16 August 1912, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{148} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 21 August 1910, WHG Papers.
In addition to his abilities as a salesman and organiser, Gill was an asset to Heysen for his social capital. He was in regular contact with most major art collectors, gallery trustees and many other prominent people. Thiele described him as “a great talker and a persuasive salesman who studied each client’s idiosyncrasies.” The development of Gill’s extensive network of contacts was aided by his membership of the Melbourne Savage Club, a private gentlemen’s club popular with artists, professionals and businessmen. In 1912 he secured Heysen a commission designing the cover of the Club’s program. By having Gill as his principal Melbourne agent, Heysen gained access to his network of clients. Gill’s proactive social networking corresponds with Bourdieu’s description of the “transubstantiation” whereby “the immaterial form of cultural capital or social capital” are effectively converted into “material types of capital,” by helping to secure economic profits. While acknowledging this advantage, Heysen confided to Sallie that he did not enjoy Gill’s company, reflecting “perhaps I am expecting too much from a business man – I must say he has done what he could to ‘entertain’ me & to introduce me to people.”

149 Bourdieu has observed that: “The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected.” Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 249.
150 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 127.
152 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 20 July 1912, WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen, 26 July 1912, HH Papers.
153 Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 242–43. “A general science of the economy of practices, capable of reappropriating the totality of the practices which, although objectively economic, are not and cannot be socially recognised as economic, and which can be performed only at the cost of a whole labour of dissimulation, or more precisely, euphemization, must endeavour to grasp capital and profit in all their forms and to establish the laws whereby the different types of capital (or power, which amounts to the same thing) change into one another.”
154 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, undated [c. October 1910], HH Papers.
In response to repeated requests for examples of Heysen’s Australian landscapes, from 1909 Heysen began supplying Gill with composition studies for watercolours he was prepared to paint if commissioned by collectors.155 If a commission was attained, Gill advised Heysen what sized work the client had requested and returned the drawing to serve as a preliminary study. Writing in October 1909, Heysen felt “extremely glad to get all these commissions … but I must take my own time … for I fully recognise the great danger in repetition of subject – unless each fresh picture is governed by a fresh impulse & impression … otherwise picture making develops into a mechanical production.”156 Consequently, he was reluctant to send Gill a “table of dates” outlining when he anticipated completing each commission.157 In April 1910 he did supply a schedule of prices for different sized watercolours.158 However, by August 1913 Heysen had “come to the conclusion that pricing according to size – only, is hardly a fair thing, neither to the client nor to myself.”159

Despite having commissioned works himself, Spencer cautioned Heysen about the danger of this approach. He advised that if Heysen was “to develop naturally you must just paint perfectly freely … a picture that pleases you and no one else,” warning that if beholden to commissions for which he felt little inclination, he risked producing “merely very excellent ‘pot-boilers.’”160 Heysen defended the practice, as there was “no restriction” on him diverging from the original drawing

155 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 31 August 1909, WHG Papers.
156 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 7 October 1909, WHG Papers.
157 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 12 October 1909, WHG Papers.
158 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 1 April 1910, WHG Papers. Cf. Heysen to Gill, 12 August 1909, WHG Papers.
159 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 16 August 1913, WHG Papers.
160 Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 13 April 1911, HH Papers.
if his ideas changed. However, he also conceded “there is much truth in what the Professor says … too much commission work is not good – at least it is not good – in proportion to the extent it interferes with the free expression of the mind.”\textsuperscript{161} Four months later he instructed Gill not to accept any new commissions, “as I think I have already explained that injustice to myself & my work I feel that I have enough in hand and that to accept more … would be working against my conscience.”\textsuperscript{162} Subsequent letters refer to works sent to fulfil commissions, but the practice of sending preliminary drawings for preapproval appears to have ceased. If the collector was “not satisfied” with the completed work, they were under no obligation to purchase it.\textsuperscript{163}

Both Gill and Heysen’s broader art world networks helped facilitate his introduction to several prominent individuals. Heysen first met the newly appointed Governor of Victoria, Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael, during his 1908 solo exhibition.\textsuperscript{164} Through Gill’s agency, he secured commissions from him in 1909 and 1910.\textsuperscript{165} Prior to coming to Australia, Carmichael had been a trustee of the National Gallery, London and was the first chairman of the board of the National Galleries of Scotland.\textsuperscript{166} Consequently, Heysen was delighted to receive the patronage and praise of “one who has been so long connected with art in England & who (according to the Burlington Mag.) is a recognised & sane

\textsuperscript{161} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 2 May [annotated 1910, actually 1911]; for a commission which “developed into another picture,” see, Heysen to Gill, Sunday Eve [c. January 1910]; for an “unsatisfactory” commission painted “without first receiving a strong impulse direct from nature,” see, Heysen to Gill, 5 October 1910, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{162} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 24 August 1911, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{163} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 6 March 1913; 1 June [1913]; 16 August 1913, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{164} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 12 August 1908, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{165} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 12 October 1909; February 1910; 6 May 1910, WHG Papers.
Through the intercession of both Gill and the Governor, Heysen also received a commission from the internationally acclaimed soprano Nellie Melba. Heysen’s friendship with Melba and her role in introducing him to members of the vice-regency are discussed in the following chapter. Upon learning of Melba’s commission, Heysen wrote to Gill: “I recognise it as a splendid advertisement – apart from the fact that it is always good to have one’s work go into the possession of those who understand Nature & pictures.”

Both Heysen and Gill recognised the prestige and publicity value attached to selling works to prominent individuals. As their correspondence reveals, more prestigious collectors would be given first right of refusal on drawings that had originally been produced to fulfil a different commission. In December 1909 Heysen posted Gill drawings for Carmichael to view, writing “two of these I have really designed for a Commission received from a Sydney Gentleman … but I am sending you all four so as to give His Excel[lency] first choice.” Similarly, the order in which Heysen produced the proposed commissions was often determined by the status of the purchaser, rather than the order in which they had been received. In June 1910 Heysen wrote:

Re. the order of production – yes, the No. 1 will be my next object after His Excel’s second w. colour, but as to slipping … No. 3 in between I do not think I could manage it as practically this No. 3 & His Excel’s are the same in design, & I would require a spell with a different design of picture between.

---

169 Heysen to W. H. Gill, Sunday February 1910, WHG Papers.
170 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 7 December 1909, WHG Papers.
171 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 13 June 1910, WHG Papers. Cf. Friday May 1910; for reference to “a local Gentleman who has been waiting for his picture three years,” see, 7 August 1913, WHG Papers.
This shows that artistic considerations and the desire for “a fresh impulse & impression” also influenced Heysen’s decisions.\textsuperscript{172}

During this important transitional phase of Heysen’s career, Gill and Spencer were his most important contacts in the Melbourne art world. In the long-distance management of his career he relied on their guidance. Heysen greatly respected Spencer’s opinions and when sending new pictures to Melbourne, regularly asked Gill to show them to Spencer as he was “interested in the trend of his thoughts in regard to my work.”\textsuperscript{173} However, Spencer and Gill frequently offered contradictory advice. For example, Spencer encouraged Heysen to “attempt some other scheme of light effect” as he felt that viewers would “tire of the hot yellow light if too often repeated.”\textsuperscript{174} By contrast, when Gill learned of Heysen’s intention to concentrate on cooler colour schemes, he responded that “the public want the hot stuff” and “our Australian Summer has never been painted except by you & the man that does do it ‘increases his Bank balance.’”\textsuperscript{175} Heysen’s correspondence shows that Gill was more concerned with commercial imperatives, while Spencer’s views were guided by aesthetic considerations. Heysen occupied an ambivalent position between the two. While he felt a greater sympathy for Spencer’s views, as a professional artist with a family to support he also recognised the wisdom of Gill’s suggestions.

\textsuperscript{172} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 7 October 1909, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{173} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 17 October 1913, WHG Papers. Cf. 20 March 1910; 5 October 1910; 1 June [1913]; 27 October 1913, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{174} W. B. Spencer to Heysen, 28 September 1910, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{175} W. H. Gill to Heysen: 10 March 1913; 7 August 1913, HH Papers.
1.6. Visits, Visitors and Introductions: Heysen’s Expanding Art World Network

Concurrent with the expansion of Heysen’s reputation from an artist of provincial to national repute, was the enlarging of his network of art world friends and acquaintances. This occurred during a series of short visits, first to Sydney and later to Melbourne, where he was introduced to various artists and art collectors. Prior to his initial visits, Heysen had already exhibited in and sold paintings to the National Galleries of these two cities. Thus there was a pre-existing interest in and respect for Heysen amongst the local artists, which accounts for their readiness to meet him and introduce him to others. Nonetheless, these friendships in turn served to further expand the market for his work and enhance his standing within the cultural field. Towards the end of this decade art patrons began visiting Heysen in Hahndorf, taking an interest in his home environment and family life along with his art. Bourdieu has asserted that the “existence of a network of connections is not a natural given,” but is instead:

the product of an endless effort … to produce and reproduce lasting, useful relationships that can secure material or symbolic profits … of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term.\textsuperscript{176}

Consequently, even when perceived in terms of friendship, Heysen’s expanding circle or art world contacts must also be recognised as an integral part of his professional network.

In the five years following his return to Adelaide Heysen periodically made rural sketching trips in the company of other artists, either camping or lodging

\textsuperscript{176} Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 249.
together near their subject matter. His companions included Reginald Comley, Harold Septimus Power, James F. Scott and Will Ashton. This had also been his practice both prior to and during his studies in Europe. In addition to providing congenial company, such arrangements allowed the artists to share the expense and duties of such expeditions. While camping beside the Whanganui River in New Zealand, Heysen advised Sallie, “Scott is a good companion … we do equal shares towards the cooking and many odd little things – (lighting the fire etc. which is quite an art).”\textsuperscript{177} As in the Parisian ateliers, these trips allowed fellow artists to compare and critique one another’s work. Will Ashton later recalled, “Hans and I used to go sketching together once a week, and we rode our bicycles to different places in and around the city. I learned much from Hans who is a wonderful draughtsman.”\textsuperscript{178} The two also made longer excursions to Gumeracha and Narrabeen. However, Heysen was concerned that Ashton was copying his approach too closely, observing to Sallie, “our ideas are not our own as long as he is near … but I quite imagine it is quite unconscious with him.”\textsuperscript{179} Such sketching trips and the associated companionship became less common following Heysen’s move to Hahndorf, as henceforth his subjects were usually taken from scenery “ten minutes or quarter of an hour’s walk” from his home.\textsuperscript{180}

As Heysen grew in both renown and self-assurance he became increasingly disillusioned with the Adelaide art world. He advised Lionel Lindsay in around 1911: “Here Art is at a complete standstill – I see no one & hear of no one who is

\textsuperscript{177} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [January 1907], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{179} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [18 August 1908], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{180} “Hans of Hahndorf,” Mail (Adelaide), 3 May 1913.
coming along.”

Heysen’s disenchantment was primarily due to the dearth of support from local private collectors and the difficulties experienced by H. P. Gill, one of the few local figures whose opinions on art he respected, in his dealings with the Board of Governors. However, Heysen’s *bête noire* was his former teacher James Ashton. Through his privately-run Academy of Arts and service on the council of the SASA Ashton had achieved prominence in the Adelaide art world, which Heysen felt his talents did not justify. Following a visit to Ashton’s studio in 1904, he observed: “I never thought his work was so bad – may anyone be delivered from having to live amongst such Art … he & them are so utterly hopeless.”

Ashton wished to emphasise his links to successful former students as a means of attracting new pupils. Heysen by contrast sought to dissociate himself from Ashton. When Heysen neglected to acknowledge his former teacher in press reports of his 1908 Melbourne exhibition and in the catalogue of the NGSA, letters appeared in South Australian newspapers accusing him of ingratitude. The Gallery inserted an erratum slip amending Heysen’s biographical details, despite his assertion that, “I do not consider myself a pupil of anyone unless I have received material benefit from that teaching.” Although strongly worded,

---

181 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 19 December [c.1910-12], LF Papers.
182 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: undated [annotated 1907, probably 1908]; 5 September 1909, LF Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 29 January 1909, WHG Papers.
184 Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated [c. April-May 1904], HH Papers.
185 See: “Mr Ashton’s Exhibition,” *Advertiser*, 22 May 1902; “A Popular Artist,” *Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), 6 August 1904; “Mr. James Ashton’s Students,” *Advertiser*, 27 July 1907.
187 Heysen to H. P. Gill, 24 June 1908, Letters Received by the Hon. Curator of the Art Gallery, GRG 19/2, AGSA Research Library.
Heysen’s expressions of contempt for Ashton were restricted to private correspondence with individuals who shared his views. Their interpersonal contact appears to have been civil and Heysen’s antipathy did not affect his friendship with Ashton’s son Will.

Heysen first expanded his circle of art world friends beyond Adelaide through visits to Sydney. Familial ties were the primary motivation for these trips, following invitations from Sallie’s sister Lillian and her husband Rudolf Schneider who lived in Mosman. Nonetheless, during the Heysens’ visit of January 1905 he also met a number of Sydney artists including Lionel and Norman Lindsay, Julian Ashton and Norman Carter. He established a strong rapport with Lionel Lindsay with whom he corresponded regularly. During a brief visit to Sydney in April 1907, while passing through on his return from New Zealand, Heysen called upon the editor Frank Fox. This led to him securing work producing illustrations for the monthly magazine *The Lone Hand*, which proved a useful source of additional income. The Lindsay brothers were both contributors and Lionel was also a proofreader for the publication. It seems likely that they recommended Heysen to Fox as a prospective black-and-white artist. The following year the Heysens visited Sydney from April until July 1908, although Hans spent much of this time on a painting trip to Narrabeen.

---


189 Thiele, *Heysen of Hahndorf*, 102-03.


during this visit that he met E. Phillips Fox, whose encouragement and assistance led to Heysen’s Melbourne solo exhibition. Heysen’s subsequent success in Melbourne meant that it was nearly a decade before he returned to Sydney.

As Heysen’s letters to his wife document, he was made extremely welcome by the artists and art lovers of Melbourne at the time of his 1908 exhibition and during subsequent visits in October 1910, July 1912, and June and December 1914. In 1908 most of these introductions and invitations were facilitated by Fox and the tobacconist and art collector Lawrence Abrahams. The latter was the brother of the late Heidelberg School artist Louis Abrahams and had purchased two works by Heysen the previous year.

The magnanimity of these two new friends challenged Heysen to reconsider a prevailing ethnic prejudice of the era. He remarked to Sallie, “It’s a pity that one has that in born antipathy [sic] towards Jews – I only hope both Abrahams & Fox will overcome this in me.”

He was invited to many dinners, lunches and social gatherings, reporting in one letter: “On Saturday I am going to a big dinner giv[en] in honour of Mather … on Sunday I am invited out to Abrahams’s for dinner & in the Eve to Dr O’Hara. The following Sunday to Pro Spencer’s place.” Heysen also dined at Fasoli’s, a hotel frequented by artists, journalists and bohemians, “where they toasted your Hannes to all success & held a speech in his honour.”

The amiability he encountered led him to observe, “altogether the Melb Artists are an absolute

---

192 L. Abrahams to Heysen, 8 November 1907, HH Papers.
194 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Thursday Eve [13 August 1908], HH Papers.
195 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday night [7 August 1908], HH Papers.
contrast to the Sydney men – they are what one can really term – ‘brothers of the
brush.’” Heysen’s recent visits to Sydney had corresponded with the schism
between the RASNSW and the recently reconstituted Society of Artists, which
may have coloured his perception.

Interestingly, Heysen’s letter’s show that while he liked many of the
Melbourne artists as people, he did not always admire their art. Artists who he
enjoyed socially but criticised aesthetically included John Mather, Montague
Brown, Lindsay Bernard Hall and the recent works of Frederick McCubbin.

Although he criticised the treatment of light in Hall’s paintings, Heysen found
there was “no end to an educational fund of talk” in his company and visited him
on each of his pre-war trips to Melbourne. The only artist whose personality
Heysen disliked was Blamire Young who he initially perceived as supercilious,
but noted “perhaps he improves with acquaintance.”

By contrast, the great respect and enthusiasm the Melbourne artists and art lovers felt for Heysen’s work
accounts for their eagerness to make his acquaintance. In this regard, his warm
reception parallels that of Streeton during his visit of 1906-07, when he was fêted
by many of the same artists and collectors who later entertained Heysen.

Heysen’s letters suggest that the gatherings of Melbourne’s artistic confraternity
were predominantly masculine in character, although he did attend an evening

196 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Tuesday night, [11 August 1908], HH Papers.
197 Julian Ashton, “The Society of Artists,” in Society of Artists Pictures. Special Number of Art in
Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920), 6-7.
198 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Sunday Morn [annotated 11 August 1908]; undated [October 1910];
12 June 1914, HH Papers. Other artists Heysen met in Melbourne include: Walter Withers and
John Ford Paterson in 1908; Ambrose Patterson and Charles Wheeler in 1910; and Arthur
Streeton, Louis McCubbin and Edward Officer in 1914.
199 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, undated [October 1910], HH Papers.
200 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Thursday night [6 August 1908], HH Papers.
201 See, Galbally and Gray, Letters from Smike, 101-06.
held in honour of Ethel Carrick Fox “by the Lady artists.” The only other female artists he recorded meeting were Ruby Lindsay and Jane Sutherland.

Informal networks also appear to have existed amongst Melbourne art patrons. Heysen met and befriended the art collector Alfred McMichael during his 1908 exhibition. McMichael subsequently took him to see the private collections of John Connell and George Stoving in 1910, and Professor Felix Meyer in 1914, leading to him securing commissions from the first two. Heysen’s letters indicate that many Melbourne art collectors were medical practitioners, recording visits or introductions to Doctors John Springthorpe, Henry O’Hara, James Barrett and Meyer. As Professor of Biology, Spencer also had ties to medicine. Juliette Peers observed this correlation when discussing the collection of Dr Samuel Ewing, suggesting that the “advanced empirical skill base” of visual artists was aligned with that of senior surgeons. Ewing purchased works from Heysen’s 1908, 1912 and 1915 Melbourne exhibitions. Peers also identified the Melbourne Savage Club, mentioned earlier, as a space where male artists could meet business leaders and professional men. Heysen visited the club in 1912 and 1914.

---

202 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday night [10 August 1908], HH Papers.
203 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Thursday night [6 August 1908]; Monday 11.30 [October 1910], HH Papers.
204 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Friday 12.30 [October 1910]; Sunday [June 1914], HH Papers.
205 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Wed night [August 1908]; Thursday Eve [13 August 1908], HH Papers.
209 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 20 July 1912, WHG Papers; Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Thursday [10 December 1914], HH Papers.
Buoyed by the success of his Melbourne exhibition, Heysen and his young family moved to a rented cottage in Hahndorf in November 1908. Two years earlier the Adelaide Critic noted its popularity with painters: “The most attractive artists’ resort in our hills is the German-Australian village of Hahndorf. Thither most of our local artists journey at various times to seek inspiration.”\(^{210}\) This shift meant Heysen was closer to the rural subject matter preferred by many local artists, but increasingly detached from the affairs of the Adelaide art world. He advised Lionel Lindsay in February 1910 that he could convey “practically no art news from Adelaide,” as he had not been into the city since the previous October.\(^{211}\) Thiele describes how during this period travelling to Adelaide involved: “the harnessing of the two ponies in the buggy, the four-mile drive to the Aldgate Hotel, the unharnessing and stabling of the horses in the hotel yard, the walk to the railway station, the hour-long train ride to Adelaide,” followed by a return journey which frequently took place after dark.\(^{212}\) Consequently, it was more common for friends who enjoyed the freedom of automotive transport to visit the Heysens. Other friendships and professional contacts were increasingly maintained via correspondence. One exception was Joyner, who had moved to the neighbouring town of Bridgewater in 1906.\(^{213}\)

The Heysens’ relocation to the Adelaide Hills was made permanent by the purchase of The Cedars in August 1912.\(^{214}\) In the decades that followed,

\(^{210}\) “Art Notes,” Critic (Adelaide), 24 January 1906.
\(^{211}\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 3 February [dated 1900, actually 1910], LF Papers.
\(^{212}\) Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 187.
\(^{213}\) Noye, “Joyner,” 169.
\(^{214}\) As this was about two kilometres from Hahndorf, Heysen informed W. H. Gill: “You must not feel anxious if at any time an answer to your letters is much overdue – being further from the Post Office we do not get our letters every day … we are much inconvenienced also in the posting of letters.” Heysen to W. H. Gill, 6 August 1912, WHG Papers.
Heysen’s home and studio would be visited by numerous collectors, dignitaries, politicians, journalists and luminaries of the visual and performing arts. Certain parallels exist between The Cedars and Norman Lindsay’s idyllic rural retreat at Springwood in the Blue Mountains, which was also purchased in 1912. Both properties were lauded as Arcadian havens within commuting distance of the city and attracted high-profile visitors wishing to visit the artist in his creative environment. However, through his art and writing Lindsay styled himself as a bohemian provocateur, self-fashioning a very different public image from that of Heysen.

When living in the cottage a renovated cowshed served as Heysen’s studio (Fig. 17). While adequate to his needs, it was unsuitable for hosting the prominent collectors who were already travelling out to Hahndorf to see him. In February 1911 Heysen was visited by Lady Carmichael, her aide-de-camp Captain Vaux and the wealthy local pastoralists and financiers Tom and Mary Barr Smith. He commented to W. H. Gill, “I don’t know what they thought of my barn – but it’s a real ramshackle old place.” Following his purchase of The Cedars, Heysen commissioned a purpose built studio designed by Conrad and Conrad, architects suggested by Joyner. Gill advised him “don’t be afraid to

---

216 Mendelssohn, Letters & Liars, 1-3.
217 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 126.
218 Heysen to W. H. Gill, February 1911, WHG Papers. Other prominent visitors to Heysen’s cowshed studio included the Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher; the Governors of Victoria and South Australia, Sir Gibson-Carmichael and Sir Day Bosanquet; and Professor Spencer. “Mr Fisher Interested in Art,” Daily Herald (Adelaide), 4 September 1912; Heysen to W. H. Gill: 22 April 1911; 18 May 1911, WHG Papers.
plan it on the big side … for it is there you will show your big work to advantage & also when you have a number of people to entertain you will want the room.”

Like many artists of this period, Heysen’s studio served not only as a workplace, but also as a social and commercial space in which to showcase his work to prospective patrons. As Alex Taylor has observed, being granted access to the perceived “exclusivity … of the studio functioned as a powerfully persuasive promotional technique.”

Upon hearing the specification of the proposed building Gill remarked, “Evidently your Studio is going to be a swagger one.” The phrase ‘swagger studio’ describes the opulently furnished studios, artistically cluttered with exotic bric-à-brac, that were fashionable amongst society painters in the late nineteenth century. However, as Taylor and Sarah Burns have observed, by the turn-of-the-century ornate studios were viewed with suspicion, associated with consumerism, artificiality and the feminised space of the domestic sphere. Heysen’s studio instead reflects a trend towards the “simplification of the studio interior,” perceived as reflecting an artist’s sincerity and asceticism. Kristin Ringelberg argues that “the manner in which the studio represented the artist” was an important preoccupation during this period. Although conceived primarily

---

220 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 3 September 1912, HH Papers.
222 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 20 September 1912, HH Papers.
to facilitate his working needs, the style of his studio corresponded closely to Heysen’s public image. It was built on a gentle slope surrounded by pine trees and had a chalet-like appearance with rusticated masonry and exposed timber rafters. Its form, location and materials all combine to suggest an artist close to nature. In 1908 Heysen had admired Montague Brown’s “ripping” studio “with fine cedar rafters & doors – left in their natural colour,” which may have inspired this feature in his own studio.\textsuperscript{226}

Beginning in the 1910s, Heysen’s persona as a family man featured with increasing prominence in the public image of the artist. In addition to viewing Heysen’s latest paintings in the sanctum sanctorum of the artist’s studio, visitors to The Cedars were interested in seeing his home, garden and family.\textsuperscript{227} Reflecting on such visitors during the 1920s and 1930s, Michael Heysen, the second-youngest of Hans and Sallie’s eight children, laughed when recalling that “we, the children, were just brought in as an exhibit I think.”\textsuperscript{228} Sallie Heysen’s social and culinary abilities helped ensure such visits were a success. Allison Reynolds and Thiele have described her skill as a hostess, particularly renowned for her lavish afternoon teas featuring freshly-brewed coffee, German baking, scalded cream and homemade jams.\textsuperscript{229} Thiele suggests that Sallie’s presence helped “the word-bound and self-conscious” Heysen to relax, as it was easier “to

\textsuperscript{226} Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Sunday Morn [annotated 11 August 1908], HH Papers. Montague Brown (1870-1942) was a Melbourne artist who exhibited with the Victorian Artists’ Society. See, “Landscape Artist Dies,” \textit{Herald} (Melbourne), 26 December 1942.
\textsuperscript{228} Michael Heysen, interview by Ralph Body, Adelaide, 9 July 2014.
make animated conversation when both the artist and his wife were present.”

Michael also emphasised Sallie’s ability as a conversationalist: “she was very well read and she could converse about art or any subject really.”

Ringelberg has observed that, like many “seemingly leisured women,” artists’ wives helped “their husbands’ businesses by maintaining the family status and connections … both representing the appropriate bourgeois lifestyle and working to maintain that image because it helped them in business.”

As the Heysens’ ostensibly private home life became a spectacle for selected, high profile visitors, Sallie’s unpaid domestic labour entertaining guests contributed to furthering her husband’s popular and professional reputation, in what was increasingly managed as a family business (Figs. 22-24).

As demonstrated, Heysen’s social links to the Australian art world took place in a variety of spaces and circumstances. Despite remaining in South Australia, during the course of this decade he increasingly withdrew, both socially and commercially, from Adelaide. He instead established stronger ties to the artists and art lovers of Melbourne, maintaining these connections via letters and sporadic visits. However, as will be considered in the following chapter, during the First World War Heysen experienced anti-German attitudes from some in the Melbourne art world. His attachment to the city was further weakened when a number of his friends, including Fox, Abrahams, Mathers and McCubbin, passed away during these years. Although he continued to exhibit regularly in

---

230 Heysen of Hahndorf, 141.
232 Ringelberg, Redefining Gender, 56.
Melbourne, during the interwar period Heysen enjoyed stronger social ties with Sydney artists.

1.7. Competing and Coexisting Criteria: European Credentials and Australian Characteristics

Traditionally, discussion of Heysen’s art has positioned him under the rubric of Australian nationalism, emphasising his pursuit of subjects and pictorial qualities deemed to be quintessentially Australian. However, Heysen’s development and rise to prominence also corresponded with an era of intense reverence for the art of Europe. Like many Australian artists of his generation he travelled to Europe to further his studies, an experience which proved of significant practical benefit to him, allowing Heysen to develop and refine his technique and examine firsthand the works of current and historic artists. However, in this chapter Heysen’s time abroad is considered less for its undoubted educational value, than for the status it bestowed. In this regard it corresponds with Bourdieu’s notion of embodied cultural capital, whereby the “cultural competence” that Heysen had attained “derives a scarcity value … and yields profits of distinction to its owner.” Heysen and key members of his networks drew upon both the prestige conferred by European attainments and the burgeoning Australian nationalism of the period, in order to further Heysen’s reputation and position within the cultural field. Although prima facie these would appear like contradictory grounds for praise, Heysen’s experiences reveal many overlaps and slippages between the two concerns.

---

233 Andrews, Hans Heysen, 24-43; Robinson, Hans Heysen, 3-5.
Beginning in the late nineteenth century, many Australian artists travelled to Europe, especially Paris and London, either in the hopes of advancing their careers or to pursue further education. Two other South Australian artists, Richard Hayley Lever and Will Ashton, undertook European studies at the same time as Heysen, while McPherson and Bessie Davidson departed for Europe soon after his return. Both Lever and Ashton studied at the Cornish School of Landscape, Figure and Sea Painting in St Ives. Ashton moved to Paris in 1902, where he worked alongside Heysen at the Académie Julian. Lever also briefly studied in Paris. Upon their return, the catalogue for the 1905 SASA Annual Exhibition proudly credited an “advance in craftsmanship” to “the return to this state of three South Australian Artists,” suggesting that Heysen was regarded as one member of a talented troika.

Similarly, during their time abroad the South Australian press regularly reported on the progress of all three artists. The newspapers frequently based their reports on letters the artists had sent back to friends of family. Thus, members of their Adelaide networks were proactively utilising this correspondence to help maintain the artists’ profiles within the local art world. In

---


236 For a consideration of the significance of their studies in St Ives for Ashton and Lever’s artistic development, see: Jonathan Wyville Thomson, ”From Aestheticism to the Modern Movement: Whistler, the Artists Colony of St Ives and Australia, 1884-1910” (M. Phil thesis, University of Hong Kong, 2003), 126-49.


August 1900, a letter Heysen wrote to James Ashton was reprinted in its entirety by the *Quiz*. On another occasion a letter sent to James Ashton by Julius Olsson, his son’s teacher in St Ives, was quoted praising Will’s diligence and improvement. In circulating these letters, which publicised the achievements of his former students, James Ashton was simultaneously promoting his own standing as a local art teacher. Upon his return, Heysen utilised the prestige conveyed by his European studies when advertising for pupils, describing himself as a former student of “L’Ecole Julienne [sic], Paris” and “Pupil of Jean Paul Laurens and Benjamine [sic] Constant.”

The experience of studying abroad had different implications for the careers of Lever and Will Ashton than for Heysen. Following their return, both artists had paintings purchased by the NGSA from the 1905 Federal Exhibition, although unlike Heysen’s *Mystic Morn* these depicted European subjects. After remaining in Adelaide for a year, Lever left permanently in November 1905. He initially lived in England, but in 1914 moved to the United States where he enjoyed a successful career. Will Ashton’s oeuvre included Australian land and seascapes, but he discovered that local collectors preferred his paintings of European subjects. Bernard Smith suggests that Streeton’s 1907 Melbourne exhibition, “not only made the purchase of Australian paintings fashionable; it also stimulated a taste for paintings of European subjects by Australian painters.”

---

242 “South Australian Society of Arts – Annual Exhibition,” *Register*, 4 July 1901.
244 The NGSA purchased Ashton’s *Boulevard Montparnasse, Paris* (1905) and Lever’s *The Last Glow, St. Ives Fishing Fleet* (1905), with the Elder Bequest Fund.
He identifies Will Ashton’s picturesque, impressionistic depictions of “spots hallowed by generations of tourists” as archetypes of this trend. Following subsequent visits to Europe in 1912-14 and Britain in 1915-17, Ashton settled in Sydney but continued to make regular painting trips abroad. Heysen, by contrast, found that the greatest popular and critical interest was in his Australian works and ceased exhibiting European subjects after 1908.

Status was also conferred upon Australian artists if their work was chosen to hang in a prestigious ‘old world’ exhibition. Achieving this recognition satisfied the prevalent belief, discussed by Alison Inglis, that Australian art “must always measure itself against a higher European standard.” In 1901 Heysen’s Dutch landscape Les pins de marais (The marshland pines), was selected for exhibition in the conservative ‘Old’ Salon. This accomplishment was reported in newspapers around Australia and Joyner wrote a letter to The Advertiser, expounding upon the significance of this achievement. Following Heysen’s return to Adelaide, his London-based friend Gustave Barnes encouraged him to submit a painting to the Royal Academy, offering to have it framed upon arrival to reduce the cost of postage. Barnes wrote, “I believe it very valuable to you from a public view, the Academy is looked upon by them as the Hall Mark.” He also reflected on, “Bill & Dick [Will Ashton and Lever] being hung, & your work so many miles above theirs.”

---

251 Gustave Barnes to Heysen, 1 September 1904, HH Papers. During this period Will Ashton had works selected for the Royal Academy in 1904, 1905, 1913, 1914, 1915 and 1916; Lever exhibited works in 1904, 1906, 1907, 1909, 1911 and 1913.
Interior of St. Marks, Venice, but it was rejected by the Academy. He had strategically chosen a European subject, anticipating this would be more likely to find favour with the British selection committee than an Australian landscape. Heysen’s British-based friends William Hoggatt and F. R. Reynoldds also offered to submit examples of his work to London exhibitions. While desiring the esteem conveyed by selection for European exhibitions, Heysen questioned the validity of this honour. Upon learning that Marie Tuck and James Ashton, artists whom he regarded as “hopeless,” had works selected for the 1911 Old and New Salons respectively, he wrote to Lionel Lindsay, “I cannot understand that such pictures are hung – why will artists still make such a fuss – about being hung in these places?”

Like the colonial reverence attached to the Royal Academy, the popular British art periodical The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art also served to maintain Imperial ties. The magazine had an international circulation and in addition to its coverage of British art published reports and articles from correspondents in Europe, the United States, Japan and throughout the British Empire. Heysen regularly read the The Studio, which he borrowed from the SASA’s library. Ann Brothers has observed that for “artists in Australia,

252 Gustave Barnes to Heysen, 30 March 1905, HH Papers.
253 This painting was subsequently included in the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch of 1906-07, where it was hung “on the line,” while two of his Australian landscapes were “skied.” Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Monday Morn [February 1907]; 8 February 1907, HH Papers.
254 William Hoggatt to Heysen: 17 May 1908; late November 1911; F. R. Reynolds to Heysen: 14 February 1911; 9 June 1912, HH Papers.
255 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Sunday Eve [May-July 1911], LF Papers. Will Ashton and Lever also had paintings accepted for the 1911 Salons. “Concerning People,” Register (Adelaide), 9 May 1911.
256 Heysen to Selma Bartels, [annotated: 13 April 1904], HH Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 20 October 1909, WHG Papers.
recognition by *The Studio* meant automatic credibility.”^257^ It conveyed the double esteem of both British and domestic recognition, positioning them within the field of international contemporary art (as delimited by the magazine’s editors), through a medium that was also consumed by an Australian readership. During this period examples of Heysen’s work were reproduced by *The Studio* in 1905, 1909 and 1914.^258^ However, in 1912 he politely declined to have his paintings included in an article James Ashton was writing on Australian landscape painters.^259^ Heysen complained to Lionel Lindsay, that evidently the editor was unaware of Ashton’s “enormous inabilities … to write with any authority on matters of art. I wish such an article could be written for the *Studio* but to have it done by a man of Ashton’s knowledge would be a calamity.”^260^ Heysen’s misgivings meant he preferred to forgo the international exposure than risk appearing in an article he feared would be inept.

For local artists, one of the negative consequences of this colonial reverence for European art was that many collectors purchased such works rather than those by Australian artists. Heysen complained that “people seemed to give any price for English work,” but “they would not even look at a Colonial’s work – its colonial – & that’s enough to lower its value – as a work of art.”^261^ Although asserted while visiting the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch, prior to the Melbourne ‘art boom,’ his observation was equally applicable to

---


^259^ James Ashton, “Notes on Some Australian Landscape Painters,” *ibid.*61, no. 251: 47-52. Heysen is mentioned but not illustrated in Ashton’s article.

^260^ Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 20 March [annotated 1911, actually 1912], LF Papers.

^261^ Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [c. February 1907], HH Papers.
Australia. However, as his enthusiastic descriptions of some European works show, Heysen did not object to the acquisition of foreign art per se, but rather what Sydney Long described as “potboilers by mediocre English artists imported for trade purposes.”262 As documented in Appendix Seven, Heysen enthusiastically assisted H. P. Gill in selecting British paintings from the Christchurch Exhibition for the NGSA. He also took great interest in the European works purchased by the NGV.

In his discussion of art patronage during the Federation period, Ron Radford suggests that the overseas landscapes and pastoral subjects purchased by Australian art museums conditioned the taste of local art lovers to favour depictions of similar themes by Australian artists.263 The belief that judiciously selected examples of overseas art would educate the public and thus benefit local artists is reflected in Heysen’s assertion of 1906 that,

> our picture-dealers cannot help the artist, they do not advance art a step beyond the merely pretty-pretty and commonplace – their windows are filled with reproductions of this class of work. Whereas for the same money they could show copies … of the finest works of art and so introduce a more highly cultured taste amongst the people.264

However, by suggesting the display and sale of reproductions, Heysen was reducing the competition to local artists selling original works of art.

Concurrent with the ongoing colonial reverence for Britain was a self-conscious desire to assert a distinctive Australian national identity. Indeed, Jim

263 Radford, Our Country, 130-32.
Berryman has argued that: “Nationalist attitudes in support of a distinctive Australian art also perpetuated an ethnic kinship with Britain and the empire.”

Nationalistic sentiments had first emerged during the 1880s, but gained more widespread recognition following the federation of the six Australian colonies into a nation, albeit within the dominion of the British Empire, in 1901. Ann Galbally has placed Australian nationalism within a broader “rise of nationalist visual aesthetics” during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, observing that with the development of nation-states and the establishment of national art galleries “the urge to identify terrains, subjects, even physical types, with particular countries intensified.”

Anne-Marie Willis similarly asserts that to “have a significant body of art and literature that can be seen as distinctive has become one of the requirements of modern nationhood.” Furthermore, she claims that as the act of Federation “did not represent a moment of national unity against the colonial power” in the interests of political autonomy, the “construction of national culture” instead came to assume “disproportionate importance” as an assertion of Australian nationhood.

The main subject through which this was explored in Australia was the local landscape. Willis has observed that the “coding of the ahistorical ‘natural order’ (that which has been around for aeons),” allows nation states, “which are modern phenomenon” to evoke a similar sense of timelessness and continuity.

---

268 Ibid., 16-17.
Radford has considered the landscape imagery produced in Australia during the period 1900-1914, coining the term “Federation Landscape” to describe its prevailing characteristics. He argues that such paintings convey a sense of confidence and attachment to place, “a kind of spiritual participation in a landscape of generalised significance,” and are variously optimistic or reflective in tone, depending upon the treatment of light. Many works were concerned with “bigness,” either through the scale of the canvas, the expansiveness of the vista or, as in the case of Heysen’s gum trees, via the monumentality of the forms depicted. Radford observes that the “size and robustness of many Federation landscapes and the vigour with which they were executed, were seen as masculine attributes. Similarly the preferred subjects, giant mountains, giant gums, were seen as masculine.” During this same period, many Australia-based women artists and expatriates of both genders depicted people and domestic interiors. However, such imagery was not seen as conveying national characteristics, which were typically framed in masculine terms. Margaret Plant has nonetheless identified affinities between the figure subjects and landscapes of the Federation era, mischievously describing the “statuesque women” painted by Rupert Bunny as “the robust female equivalents to Heysen’s gum-trees.”

Heysen shared the view that landscape was the most appropriate subject for Australian painters, asserting in a 1913 interview:

I do not think we will ever have a school of figure workers equal to those in the old world. Australia is purely a landscape country … and upon those lines I think the Australian school will tend … As to the dominant

269 Radford, Our Country, 18, 34, 40-42, 50-56, 76.
note, it will be expressed in the out of doors, in movement, light, and sunlight, and in the freedom of opens spaces. 272

This statement is one of many in which Heysen defines a quintessentially Australian art in terms of the characteristics of his own paintings, thus positioning himself as the Australian landscapist par excellence. A year earlier, an article in The Advertiser rapturously described Heysen as,

the most sympathetically Australian painter this continent has … He produced no hybrid work in which Australia was made to assume more or less the forms and coloration of the old world … He is not a maker of pictures, but an interpreter of Nature; and a realist in the highest and best sense. 273

Willis has reflected upon this enduring myth, in which the Australian landscape “is endowed with an unquestionable truth” and artists must learn to leave “behind their European aesthetic frameworks” and see “with Australian eyes,” when such supposedly authentic Australian scenes are themselves a cultural construction. 274

Nonetheless, for Heysen and artists of his era there was a prevalent belief that Australian light, colour and vegetation had distinctive characteristics that they should endeavour to capture.

Although widely praised for their Australian qualities, Heysen’s landscapes did not meet with universal acclaim. Writing in the Sydney magazine Art and Architecture in 1905, Sydney Long discussed the tendencies which he felt were impeding the development of a distinctively Australian art. He suggested that were it not for its subject matter, Heysen’s Mystic Morn “might have been produced in a French studio … the feeling is not Australian. This Australian feeling is not to be got by sticking in a gum tree.” Long condemned the “greyer

274 Willis, Illusions of Identity, 62.
key” of this and other works as less Australian than the “brilliant sunlight” that characterised the works of Streeton and his own circle of Sydney associates.\textsuperscript{275}

As Bernard Smith has shown, in this prescriptive and nationalistic article Long is effectively defining his own position in the cultural field as a Sydney-based, “native-born-Australian” painter, concerned with symbolism and the imagination as leading the way forward in Australian art.\textsuperscript{276}

An anonymous article published in \textit{The Age} newspaper in 1906 similarly criticised Heysen’s \textit{Sunshine and Shadow} (1904-05) which had recently been purchased by the NGV. It was described as “an ordinary minor work,” its merits lying, “entirely in some effective painting of tree trunks, fallen bark and withered grass as still life – certainly the lowest branch of the pictorial art … From the landscapist’s point of view the painting is weak.” However, the article’s chief purpose was to criticise Hall and the Felton trustees for their failure to acquire McCubbin’s triptych \textit{The Pioneer} (1904), which the author regarded a more successful expression of “national sentiment.”\textsuperscript{277} Thus, the disparaging of Heysen’s painting was primarily a pretext for praising the McCubbin. Following

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{275} Long, "Trend of Australian Art," 263-66. Long also criticised the art of Conrad Martens and Walter Withers as “unAustralian,” while praising works by Benjamin Minns, A. H. Fullwood, Henry S. Hopwood, William Lister Lister, Charles Conder, Julian Rossi Ashton, Frank Mahony, George Lambert and himself as expressing “something individual about [the] Australian landscape.”
\item \textsuperscript{276} Bernard Smith, ed. \textit{Documents on Art and Taste in Australia 1770-1914} (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1975; reprint, 1990), 233-36.
\item \textsuperscript{277} “Australian Art and the Felton Bequest,” \textit{Age} (Melbourne), 27 March 1906.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
a concerted campaign in the Melbourne press, *The Pioneer* was purchased through the Felton Bequest later that year.\(^{278}\)

A preoccupation with the establishment of a characteristically Australian school of painting was a recurring theme in art criticism during this period. This topic also figures prominently in the letters Heysen received from Baldwin Spencer. In October 1909 Spencer confidently asserted, “Australia is bound soon to produce a distinctive school of landscape painting quite as characteristic in its work as was that of the Barbizon school & I seriously think that you are going to found this school.”\(^{279}\) However, aware of the erratic support for artists in Australia, he feared Heysen may travel abroad in pursuit of greater recognition and income.\(^{280}\) Mulvaney and Calaby imply that Spencer presented Streeton as “an expatriate cautionary example,” designed to encourage Heysen to remain in Australia.\(^{281}\) In a letter of 1910, Spencer described Streeton’s *Sydney Harbour* (1907, Fig. 15), which the artist had commenced in Australia but completed in England. He felt that despite its great merits, Streeton “had imported into it a feeling that is more English than Australian” and presented “Sydney seen through English eyes.”\(^{282}\) Heysen shared the view that foreign conventions sometimes prevented artists from conveying an Australian atmosphere. He regarded the later works of Frederick McCubbin, which reflect the influence of Turner, Monet


\(^{279}\) Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 9 October 1909, HH Papers.

\(^{280}\) Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen: 2 March 1910; 26 March 1910, HH Papers.


\(^{282}\) Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 28 September 1910, HH Papers.
and Whistler, as less “characteristic of Australian Landscape” than his earlier paintings.  

Although Spencer valued the careful observation of atmospheric effects in Heysen’s art, he occasionally worried that the intense sunlight depicted made some pictures too Australian in character. In 1911 he praised the more subdued palette of a recent watercolour as, “something which is at once intensely Australian & also cosmopolitan & can be understood as well by English people as by Australians … Corot, Constable, Turner & all of the great landscape artists can be appreciated by Australians … but no European could appreciate fully your hot drawings.” Mulvaney and Calaby observe that Spencer’s diaries reflect his interest in “the interplay of light, heat and distance,” and suggest that his description of Uluru as “dome shaped, and brilliant venetian-red in colour, it stands out in strong contrast to the green scrub and the bright blue sky,” foreshadows Heysen’s images of the Flinders Ranges. However, Spencer’s unenthusiastic descriptions of Central Australia in letters to Heysen do not suggest he recognised the artistic potential of such scenery and may have even caused Heysen to delay visiting the Flinders. In 1912 Spencer wrote from the Katherine River in the Northern Territory, “This is a country of wide expanses but though it has a queer kind of fascination it is hard & crude & unlovely … I am dead tired of brilliant sunlight & dried up grass and would give much to see one of our real gum trees down south.”

---

283 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 22 April 1911, WHG Papers.
284 Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 16 November 1911, HH Papers.
286 Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 2 November 1912, HH Papers.
It was during this trip that Spencer collected 38 Western Arnhem Land bark paintings for the National Museum of Victoria. Heysen owned one such painting, *Wambiddyer Anteater* (c.1912, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra), which he is through to have acquired from Spencer, who sometimes exchanged Aboriginal artworks or artefacts for paintings by artists he admired.²⁸⁷ Radford rather optimistically suggests that by doing so Spencer established, “the equality of Indigenous and non-indigenous art among artists.”²⁸⁸ However, while recognising the aesthetic properties of indigenous artworks, Spencer’s Edwardian ethnocentrism meant that it was the landscapes of Streeton and Heysen, rather than the works of Aboriginal artists that he promoted as the foremost school of Australian painting. Although he regularly shared his opinions of recent Melbourne exhibitions and gallery acquisitions, Spencer never discussed Aboriginal art in his letters to Heysen, recognising that the subject was unlikely to interest his friend.

Between 1908 and 1914 Heysen made numerous references to Streeton in his letters. On more than one occasion, he describes Streeton as “the originator of the Aus light.”²⁸⁹ However, he also regarded him as an extremely uneven artist and consequently his observations varied considerably depending upon which paintings he was viewing. Heysen credited Streeton with possessing “a deeper insight into the colour & character of the Australian sunlight – than anyone else,” but considered his draughtsmanship was often unsound.²⁹⁰ Thus Streeton

²⁹⁰ Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Sunday Eve [August 1908]; 10 June 1914, HH Papers.
excelled in one of Heysen’s chief pictorial concerns, but was found wanting in the other. Like Spencer, he felt Streeton’s Australian works were “more sincere & so the more original,” while his European works had “a taint of illustration about them.” Nonetheless, he was able to recognise the merits of some of Streeton’s overseas works, praising *Venice: Bride of the Sea* (1908, Carrick Hill), which was then in Spencer’s collection, as “full of beautiful quality.”

Heysen preferred Streeton’s earlier paintings, such as *Still Glides the Stream* (1890, Art Gallery of New South Wales), believing these were produced when “he was most intimate with Nature” and that their “technique is less evident than in his later work.” Heysen complained that Streeton’s recent pictures had “great charm” but “not a great deal of character,” suggesting he tried to hide this “by over forcing … the composition.”

Beginning in the mid-1890s Streeton frequently painted scenes on elongated quasi-oriental panels. Knowing their popularity, in 1910 W. H. Gill asked Heysen to consider utilising this format for a commission. Heysen declined, responding that “the charm of a Streeton lies ‘in its being a Streeton,’ what Streeton has done had best remain his own.”

On numerous occasions Heysen sought to assess his own work and reputation in relation to Streeton’s. Prior to his 1908 solo exhibition Heysen observed to Sallie, “The name of Streeton has a firm hold here - & our Pickies [pictures] will

---

291 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 9 November [1909], WHG Papers.
292 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, undated [c. October 1910], HH Papers. *Venice: Bride of the Sea* was at that time owned by Spencer.
293 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 20 May 1910; 21 August 1910, WHG Papers.
294 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 10 June 1914, HH Papers.
295 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 21 August 1910, WHG Papers.
have to battle hard” for recognition. He would have been aware that many in the art world were making comparisons between the two artists. At the time of Heysen’s 1908 exhibition, Spencer wrote in a letter to H. P. Gill, which Gill subsequently forwarded to Heysen:

Streeton & Heysen are the two colourists that Australia has yet produced & the two men who understand light … Streeton is perhaps the greater genius but Heysen strikes me as being so entirely sincere & as possessing perhaps even more individuality than Streeton … less influenced than Streeton is by other workers.

Nora Heysen believed that such comparisons caused her father to feel a sense of rivalry towards the more established artist.

During his June 1914 visit to Melbourne, Heysen viewed Streeton’s exhibition at the Victorian Artists’ Society Gallery multiple times, “to see if the work would stand the test of repeated visits.” He advised Sallie,

although I admire his skill & management of a picture I would not care to follow in his footsteps … I looked at our own work very carefully & formed mental comparisons – & feel that we have something just as definite to say as has Streeton – & yet there is absolutely nothing that would remind you of Streeton.

On a subsequent visit he reported that Streeton’s exhibition had taught him, “if not exactly what to do certainly it has pointed out many dangers … the main thing is to paint with directness what you see & feel – all the best work here points to that.” Heysen’s conditional admiration for Streeton lessened as the decade progressed with his attitude increasingly suggesting professional jealousy. He

296 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday Eve [15 August 1908], HH Papers.
298 Nora Heysen, interviewed by Denise Hickey, 1971, Dr Denise Hickey Oral History Project, ORAL TLC 191/19, NLA.
299 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday [13 June 1914], HH Papers.
300 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 10 June 1914, HH Papers.
301 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Friday [13 June 1914], HH Papers.
remained preoccupied with his rival’s success and sought to identify the aesthetic grounds for Streeton’s popularity and stronger position in the cultural field.

Heysen complained to W. H. Gill that most works in the 1909 Federal Exhibition lacked “anything Australian” in their qualities, reflecting, “One would have thought that the influence of Streeton would have set the ball rolling in some direction.”

A detailed account has survived of Heysen’s opinions of this exhibition, after Lionel Lindsay asked him to review it for the Lone Hand. Heysen lacked the confidence to write such a review himself, but was willing “to go & give you my notes & you could perhaps put it into readable language.”

The resulting collaborative review appeared anonymously in April 1910 as part of a larger account of Australian art exhibitions from the previous year. An annotated transcript is included in Appendix Five. While Heysen’s notes have not been preserved, there are enough similarities between the sentiments expressed in the published review and in Heysen’s letters to confidently claim it was based on his opinions and observations.

Heysen and Lindsay’s criteria of quality appear to be a “feeling for light and atmosphere,” specifically the ability to capture “the marvellous translucency of the Australian light,” sound drawing and a “genuine love of nature.” Just as the norms defined in Long’s 1905 article favoured its author, these were all characteristics that Heysen’s work was regularly praised as epitomising.

---

302 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 9 November [1909], WHG Papers.
303 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [annotated: about 1910; actually November 1909], LF Papers.
304 “The Art of the Year,” Lone Hand, 1 April 1910: 663-78.
305 See, Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [November 1909], LF Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 9 November [1909], WHG Papers.
306 “The Art of the Year,” 673-78.
The first exhibitor discussed is Heysen, who is praised as the “most original watercolourist Australia has produced,” and an “inexorable draughtsman.” A watercolour by Gustave Barnes is admired for its “fine decorative arrangement imbued with a charming realism.” However, a work by J. J. Hilder is criticised for the “friction between convention and realism – it partakes of both and suggests artificiality.” Long’s paintings are more severely condemned as “entirely lacking in sympathy with nature – they are painty, and leave us cold. In manner and design they remind us of Streeton’s; but … the result is unconvincing.”

In his 1906 talk Heysen asserted that artists must learn to reconcile the imitative and the decorative in art. However, his definition of the latter refers to compositional structure rather than the decorative stylisation of artists like Long.

Interestingly, the landscapes of Will Ashton, which depict typically Heysenesque subjects (Fig. 16), are critiqued as,

Australia painted with a half-open heart. His four large canvases show patches of strong painting; but the painter has been quite unable to enter the essential characteristics of his subjects. The gum tree has revealed none of its mysteries – its strength, its delicate refinement of colour – so his work remains cold and unconvincing.

Heysen perhaps felt bitter after Ashton was awarded the 1908 Wynne Prize for Noontide, Burnside (1908, Private Collection), a landscape with eucalypts, when he had hoped to win this accolade himself. Like many other reviewers of this...
period, Heysen and Lindsay give greatest attention to landscape painting, presenting this as the genre best able to convey feelings of Australian nationalism. However, McPherson’s still lifes were praised as technically accomplished, but suffering from the “defect” of coldness: “Perhaps as paintings they are the most perfect things in the exhibition. Each tone is put on with precision, exactly in relation to its color value; in other words, she is a splendid painter of surfaces, a beautiful painter of paint.”

Lindsay subsequently wrote the article “Hans Heysen: A Great Water-Color Painter,” for *The Bulletin*, in 1911. In a practice he would repeat in many of his later publications, Lindsay quotes directly from Heysen’s letters to convey his friend’s fascination with the Australian light. Despite *The Bulletin* being a chief organ of nationalist sentiment, Lindsay also acknowledged Heysen’s debt to European art, writing: “He has swallowed tradition wholesale – Poussin, Millet, Turner. He has served an apprenticeship to the analytical methods of the impressionists … and upon this double foundation his art has developed.” However, he qualified this by asserting that Heysen’s “fine powers of observation and love of nature” had ensured that his work was original and “intimately Australian.”

Lindsay was well-read and knowledgeable about Western art history. His criticism frequently situated the achievements of Australian artists in relation to those of earlier European figures, thus championing what Anne Gray

---

311 “The Art of the Year,” 676. The NGSA purchased her *The Tea Urn* (c.1909) from the exhibition for £21.10.0 (its catalogue price was £26.5.0).
termed “an aesthetic of the Continuing Tradition.” Ian North has similarly considered the manner in which Heysen’s art was founded upon European models.

Such observations are consistent with Heysen’s beliefs regarding the appropriate aesthetic development of the art student. In 1906 he asserted that,

To know how much to conventionalise and yet to retain the truthful appearance of nature can only be realised and learnt gradually by close study and comparisons between nature and the works of the best masters … the greatest genius has not been able to dispense with the assistance given him by the work of masters before him.

However, Heysen cautions, “before taking anything from a master compare it well with nature – to imitate blindly – is to wear another man’s clothes.” He regarded the example of earlier artists as “stepping stones” which “should help us in time to search for ourselves and perhaps to find fresh truths.” Heysen believed it was thus possible to resolve the dialectic between a reverence for European models and the prioritising of Australian characteristics. Heysen’s statements from this period show that he regarded European training and artistic conventions as offering the armature upon which a distinctive Australian school of painting would be established. He actively sought to position his work in a manner which capitalised upon the sentiments of both the Australian nationalism and Eurocentrism which were prevalent during the Edwardian era.

314 North, “Gum-Tree Imperial,” 140.
315 Heysen, “Observations on Art.”
316 Heysen, “Observations on Art.”
The eleven years between 1903 and 1914 were an important transitional phase in Heysen’s career. While his preferred subject matter remained provincial, largely confined to his immediate environs in the Adelaide hills, he rapidly developed a national reputation. During the first half of this decade, his finances were heavily dependent upon selling a small number of high-priced paintings to public collections, supplemented by teaching and illustrative work. These purchases by municipal galleries helped legitimise his reputation amongst the art buying public. Following the success of his 1908 Melbourne solo exhibition he was able to concentrate upon his art fulltime, selling a greater number of moderately priced works to private collectors. This exhibition resulted in a significant expansion of Heysen’s market, reputation and art world networks beyond Adelaide. Indeed, following his move to Hahndorf and his adoption of William H. Gill as his Melbourne agent, Heysen increasingly withdrew from the Adelaide art world.

Although his popularity drew upon the burgeoning Australian nationalism of the Federation period, he and many other Australian art lovers retained a reverence for the art of Europe. Similarly, with his newfound market success, Heysen frequently had to negotiate the opposing pressures of commercial imperatives and artistic considerations. His ambivalent feelings about these are reflected in his letters to his expanding circle of art world friends and acquaintances. Although the majority of Heysen’s sales were no longer made through artists’ societies, he continued to exhibit in group shows as a means of presenting the best examples of his works alongside those of his peers. At the same time his solo exhibitions signified his serious professional aspirations. In
addition to their commercial success, they allowed Heysen to accrue symbolic capital within the cultural field of Melbourne. Through his correspondence with members of his networks, both there and in Sydney, he closely monitored the careers and activities of other artists as he sought to gauge and advance his own relative position within the Australian art world.
Chapter Two: Suspicion and Support: Heysen during the First World War

Heysen’s popular, critical and commercial success in the decade following his return from Europe owed a great deal to the growing national consciousness of the recently federated Australia. Ironically, during the First World War, the same patriotic sentiments which had helped bolster his career, contributed to the prejudice and discrimination he experienced due to his German heritage. As Colin Thiele has observed, the fact that Heysen “was already a national figure when war broke out both helped and harmed him.” ¹ He enjoyed the support of influential friends, but was also the target of rumour and suspicion. This chapter will consider the implications of the war for Heysen’s career, both with regard to the formal institutions of the art world, such as municipal galleries and artists’ societies, and in terms of his informal networks. It will examine the discrimination he encountered, Heysen’s changing responses to and strategies in dealing with this, and the help and encouragement he received from a small but significant group of supporters. Although fighting ceased in November 1918, many wartime security regulations remained in force and the state of war was not officially declared ended until 31 August 1921.² Consequently, this chapter considers Heysen’s experiences during the period 1914 to 1921.

¹ Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 154.
2.1. Wartime Security Measures and their Effect on German-Australians

Immediately after the declaration of war, Oscar Herman Duhst, the German-born MP for Woororra and Heysen’s brother-in-law, proclaimed that German-Australians “were, always had been, and ever would be, loyal and devoted to the land of their adoption – Australia.” However, less than six months later, Duhst failed to secure enough preselection votes to stand as a candidate in the 1915 election. This unprecedented rejection of a conscientious sitting member almost certainly related to his German heritage. During the First World War many German-Australians were negatively affected by both wartime security legislation and societal prejudice. Experiences included harassment, dismissal from employment, the boycotting and closing of German-owned businesses, the suppression of German-language publications, the closure of German schools and in extreme cases, internment and post-war deportation. Michael McKernan has argued that due to their geographical distance from the conflict, many Australians, “so heavily committed to the war emotionally,” felt the need “to manufacture threats and crises to make the war real and immediate.” Consequently, it was alleged that Australia too was directly under threat from Germany, with the local German-Australians the object of this paranoia (Fig. 25).

---

Despite growing reservations about German militarism, during the Federation era many German-Australians had enjoyed a “pleasant duality of loyalty and affection,” identifying as German in terms of ethnic identity and Australian in their political allegiance. Gerhard Fischer has used their experiences during the war to question the existing paradigm, which presents attitudes towards non-British migrants as progressing “from assimilation through integration to multiculturalism.” Instead, he maintains that prior to the war the German-Australian community “can be seen as an autonomous socio-cultural entity,” which had nonetheless successfully integrated into Australian society. However, social and political pressures during the war forced such migrants to assimilate, with “British-Australianism” as the prevailing “state ideology.” This helps explain why, despite never voicing disloyal sentiments, Heysen faced accusations of “pro-German tendencies.” Following the war, Lindsay Bernard Hall accused him of previously having boasted: “of being a German, of living in a German village, of having married a German wife, and talked German in his home. This, after naturalization, and in the light of the war, is significant.” In the prevailing social climate, such an overt display of ethnic difference was regarded as unacceptable.

---


9 “A Difference Between Artists: Mr Heysen Insulted,” Herald (Melbourne), 3 December 1921.
Heysen was granted a Certificate of Naturalization by the Governor of South Australia in 1899, which conveyed “all the rights and capacities within the Province of South Australia of a natural-born British subject.”

However, through amendments made to the War Precautions Act in 1915 he fell within the progressively widening definition of an ‘enemy alien.’ This Act was proclaimed in October 1914 with the purpose of ensuring the security of Australia and its allies during the war and remained in place until December 1920. Its regulations and subsequent amendments had significant implications for the lives of German-Australians. In another marker of his diminished status of citizenship, under wartime legislation Heysen was excluded from voting in elections and referenda between 1916 and 1919. As Ann Elias has observed, despite Heysen’s reputation as the “pre-eminent Australian landscape painter,” his “alienation as a citizen” during the war may have led him to feel that “he lived on top of Australia rather than in it.”

During the war years Heysen was the subject of rumours and suspicion. In response to requests from his superiors in 1914 and 1917, Constable Robert Birt of the Mt. Barker Police Station twice arranged for Heysen and The Cedars to be kept under surveillance, “with the assistance of reliable residents of the locality.” Although it was believed that “the situation of his Home [was] an ideal one for the

---

12 Stock, "South Australia's 'German' Vote," 255-63.
13 Elias, "‘Art Has No Country’," 04.2.
purposes of Wireless Telegraphy,” nothing was “ascertained which could confirm the complaint of disloyalty.” Birk reported that “although Heysen’s sympathy may be with the Germans he is too clever & cunning to show any sign of disloyalty therefore the Police do not look upon him as dangerous.” Thiele notes that during the war Heysen was also visited by members of the All British League, a virulently anti-German organisation only open to those “of British lineage.” They wished to inquire into allegations that he had made derogatory remarks about the late monarch, Edward VII and ascertain “that he had no wireless transmitters in the pine trees and no arms in the cellar.” Similarly, at the time of Heysen’s March 1915 exhibition, the Military Intelligence Section made “quiet and confidential enquiries” about him. No evidence was found against Heysen and when an anonymous letter accusing him of “strong pro-enemy sentiments” was received the following year, the Intelligence Section did not take it seriously.

However, other German-Australians within his family and social circles experienced more severe treatment from the authorities. In December 1915 his wife’s brother-in-law, Rudolf Schneider, was interned in the ‘German Concentration Camp’ at Liverpool, despite sharing Heysen’s status as a

---

16 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 164.
17 World War I Intelligence Section Case File, NAA: MP16/1, 1915/3/349, National Archives of Australia, Victorian Archives Centre.
naturalised British subject. He was not released until December 1919 and then had to report weekly to the police until July 1920. The Melbourne art collector Walter Schmidt, managing director of the Australian Metal Company, was interned in July 1915. Like Schneider, he was targeted as his company had been involved in trade with the enemy. After the war Heysen wrote to Gill that:

I am sure very few people know of the scandalous conditions and most unjust treatment these poor German internees have had to suffer. Through the case of my brother in law I have had my eyes opened to their intense mental sufferings & the indignities they were subjected to. The Australian public do not realise the very refinement of cruelty meted out to these unhappy men.

Heysen visited Schneider at the Liverpool camp and provided drawing materials to Stefan Pokora, an internee who ran art classes for his fellow inmates. Pokora concludes one of his letters with the postscript, “Mr Preston of Adelaide … and Leo Ebner ask to be remembered,” indicating that Heysen had further acquaintances amongst the interned men. Fischer has argued that such internments had the effect “of intimidating and keeping in check the rest of the community.” Although he was never detained by the authorities, the threat of possible internment must have preyed upon Heysen’s mind.

---

18 Special Intelligence Bureau, NSW, Case File, NAA: ST1233/1, N59/22/107, National Archives of Australia, Sydney Office.
20 Heysen to W. H. Gill, undated [1920], WHG Papers.
23 Fischer, Enemy Aliens, 100.
The war and resulting security measures also had important implications for letter writers. Under wartime legislation, even letters sent within Australia could be read by the postal censors who operated in all chief post offices. By the end of the war the letters of around 15,000 people were being systematically scrutinised by the censors. It is not known whether as a German-Australian Heysen’s correspondence was routinely subject to inspection and censorship. However, the letters he exchanged with Pokora and Schneider would have been read by censors as a matter of course. The letters received from Sgt Bert McMichael, son of Heysen’s friend the art collector Alfred McMichael, along with one from Elioth Gruner following his enlistment, would also have been the subject of military censorship.

The Heysens’ address was also changed from Hahndorf to Ambleside, when under the Nomenclature Act (1917) geographical place names of German origin were replaced. In total 69 names were changed in South Australia, although the committee acknowledged that such changes could not “be undertaken without temporary confusion in the postal and railway departments.” Even following

---


25 Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1936), 82-83, 85-86.

26 Stefan Pokora to Heysen: 31 January 1918; 26 March 1918; Rudolf Schneider to Heysen, 18 December 1919, HH Papers.

27 It was originally proposed to replace ‘Hahndorf’ with the Aboriginal name ‘Yantaringa,’ but the decision was ultimately made in favour of ‘Ambleside.’

the armistice, when anti-German feeling began to subside, each time Heysen
inscribed his address at the top of his letters it would have served as a reminder of
wartime discrimination. After Hahndorf had its name reinstated in 1935, Heysen
wrote joyously to his daughter Nora, “As you can see from the above, Hahndorf
has now been officially restored together with Lobethal (Tweedvale) and Klemzig
(Gaza).”

In the majority of letters written or received by Heysen during the war years,
neither the overseas conflict nor local anti-German prejudice features as the main
theme. Instead, they are primarily concerned with the practical side of life as an
artist, such as the materials, techniques, delivery, sale and framing of art works, or
news about mutual friends and discussion of art exhibitions. While there are a
number of noteworthy episodes where references to the war and its implications
for German-Australians become the central focus of his correspondence, more
frequently these themes are interspersed amongst discussion of the art world. In
a letter advising Heysen of a sale, his Melbourne dealer, William H. Gill, also
mentions that Schmidt “seems to be in great trouble with the Military Authorities
once more his place has been raided.” Similarly, when discussing the framing
of watercolours Heysen had submitted to the Society of Artists in Sydney, Julian
Ashton advises him of the difficulty in procuring quality glass as “the best and
whitest glass was made in Belgium” and even inferior glass had “gone up 50%
over pre war prices.” Although it might not be the main impetus for writing a
letter, the effect of the war was a constant background presence.

30 Hans Heysen to Nora Heysen, 10 February 1936, in Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 54.
31 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 9 November 1914, HH Papers.
32 Julian Ashton to Heysen, 31 October 1917, HH Papers.
A study of Heysen’s wartime correspondence provides fascinating insights into his experiences and the important support provided by members of his networks. However, it fails to convey those opinions that associates may have expressed about him without his knowledge. For example, Walter Baldwin Spencer advised his wife in June 1916 that he had asked “Heysen and Mrs Heysen … to lunch on Sunday – hope you won’t mind. I don’t think that he is really a German at heart and at least his children speak only English.” His comment does not suggest any personal suspicion or hostility towards Heysen, but he was clearly aware that such feelings existed and felt the need to excuse his actions. During the First World War Spencer actively supported patriotic causes and pressured male university students to enlist. His biographers note that his “correspondence was soured by frequent expressions of anti-German xenophobia.” However, no evidence of his Germanophobia or jingoism appears in his letters to Heysen, demonstrating how letter-writers tailor their sentiments in response to their correspondents. Incidentally, Nora Heysen believed that her parents did not want their children to learn German because of the “prejudice and intolerance against the Germans in the First World War.” She expressed regret at not having learned this language.

2.2. Multiple Conflicts: The NGV’s Decision to Renege on a Purchase

During the early months of the war there were few overt displays of hostility towards the German-Australian community, with many newspaper editorials

34 Ibid., 318-23.
35 Nora Heysen, interviewed by Heather Rusden, 25-26 August 1994, ORAL TRC 3121, NLA.
calling upon Australians to deal “fairly and honourably” with “these respected fellow citizens.”

Heysen’s first direct exposure to anti-German prejudice occurred during his March 1915 solo exhibition at the Melbourne Athenaeum Hall, organised and managed by W. H. Gill. In most respects the exhibition was a commercial and critical success, achieving an impressive £1086.15.0 in sales and displaying a greater range and versatility in subject matter. It had been hurriedly organised in the space of two months so that it could be officially opened by the internationally acclaimed soprano Nellie Melba, before her departure for the United States.

In her speech at the exhibition opening Melba declared that:

Australians had every reason to be proud of Mr. Heysen. Though not born in the Commonwealth — being a Dane by birth — he had been brought to Australia when only 5 years old [sic]. Having been brought up in the Australian atmosphere, it was only natural that his work should be truly representative of Australian art.

Speaking seven months after the declaration of war with Germany, Melba sought to not only emphasise the Australian character of Heysen’s subject matter, but also to misrepresent his country of origin. It is not known whether Melba made this factual revision on her own initiative, or at the request of Gill or Heysen. However, it is unlikely to have fooled many in the Australian art world. As Thiele observed, by the outbreak of war Heysen’s prominence meant that his biographical details, including his birthplace, were already widely publicised.

---

36 Fischer, "Integration, 'Negative Integration,' Disintegration," 7-9.
39 Melba’s error was commented on by at least one newspaper. “Art Notes,” *Mail* (Adelaide), 27 March 1915.
One newspaper report of 1912 described him as “a full blooded Teuton, with many of the characteristics of that strong race.”

Twice in the months prior to the exhibition’s opening, Gill had expressed concerns that the war could impact upon its success. However, he was more worried that negative war news may make visitors disinclined to spend money, rather than fearful of it causing prejudice against Heysen. On the first occasion he invoked the possibility of “some big disaster” happening to the Allies during the exhibition, in an attempt to persuade Heysen to include a greater number of drawings and pastels. He reasoned that people were more likely to purchase such lower-priced works during a time of uncertainty, whereas it would be “difficult to get buyers with £30 to £40 to spend” on Heysen’s watercolours. Gill later expressed concern about the possibility of a “Commercial raid,” an attack upon merchant shipping, interrupting foreign trade and frightening buyers.

At the exhibition opening Heysen’s painting *The Rainbow* was purchased for 100 guineas for presentation to the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery. However, the issue of his German heritage emerged when representatives of the two committees responsible for acquiring works for the National Gallery of Victoria considered purchasing a work. In early March the Felton Bequest Committee endorsed the recommendation of the Gallery trustees to purchase

---

42 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 15 January 1915, HH Papers.
43 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 20 February 1915, HH Papers. Other letters from Gill refer to the difficulty of selling art during wartime. See, W. H. Gill to Heysen: 6 November 1914; 28 March 1915. HH Papers.
44 Falaise, “Mr Heysen’s pictures,” *Australasian*, 6 March 1915; “Western Australian Art Gallery – Recent Additions,” *West Australian*, 13 May 1915. The painting was donated by Sir John Winthrop Hackett.
Heysen’s large oil *In Sunset Haze* (1914, Fig. 26), priced at 400 guineas, on the proviso that Heysen’s *A Lord of the Bush* (1908), be returned to the artist at its purchase price of 150 guineas in part payment.\(^{45}\) This arrangement was presumably agreeable to Heysen, as he had advised Sallie the previous year that he disliked the earlier painting, asserting: “I wish I could exchange it before very long.”\(^{46}\) The board’s resolution was communicated to Gill by two trustees and confirmed by the treasurer, who showed him the minute book; Gill in turn conveyed the news to Heysen.\(^{47}\)

One week later, Dr Charles Bage, chairman of the Felton Bequest Committee, contacted Gill, asking if *In Sunset Haze* could be hung “in juxtaposition” with Heysen’s other large oil *White Gums* (also priced at 400 guineas), as he was “endeavouring to have the selection for the Gallery reconsidered” in favour of the latter work (Fig. 27).\(^{48}\) While the two highest-priced works remained under consideration by the Gallery, Gill was unable to sell either to private buyers.\(^{49}\) A combined meeting of the two committees was called at the Athenaeum Hall to consider which work should be purchased. However, no resolution was reached and “the meeting was adjourned for the purpose of ascertaining further information regarding the artist’s nationality.”\(^{50}\) At a subsequent meeting it was noted that the Gallery trustees had withdrawn their recommendation to purchase

\(^{45}\) Meeting of the Felton Bequest Committee, 9 March 1915, Minutes of the Felton Bequest Committee, Records of the Felton Bequest, MS 14852, SLV.

\(^{46}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 8 June [1914], HH Papers.

\(^{47}\) W. H. Gill to Heysen, 28 March 1915, HH Papers.

\(^{48}\) Charles Bage to W. H. Gill, 14 March 1915, HH Papers.

\(^{49}\) W. H. Gill to Heysen, 13 March 1915, HH Papers.

\(^{50}\) Meeting of the Felton Bequest Committee, 18 March 1915, Minutes of the Felton Bequest Committee.
In Sunset Haze.\textsuperscript{51} The minutes do not specify whether this was due to the disagreement over which work to acquire or Heysen’s German birth.

Upon learning that no purchase was to be made Gill wrote Heysen a detailed eight-page letter expressing his outrage and outlining in chronological order “the facts” as he knew them.\textsuperscript{52} This and previous letters also document the pains Gill had taken to try and facilitate a purchase and secure information about the committees’ decisions, demonstrating his social contact with various trustees who provided him with information “in confidence.”\textsuperscript{53} Gill did not believe anti-Germanism was a significant factor in the decision not to purchase. Instead, he saw the main issue as the failure of the two boards to agree in their choice, together with the preference of the Felton Bequest committee to purchase the new painting outright, without “giving up a work” already in the collection. The committees frequently disagreed over purchases and members of the Bequest committee had expressed concerns in 1913 that a similar proposed exchange was not permitted by Felton’s will.\textsuperscript{54}

Dr Bage admitted to Gill that the question of Heysen’s nationality and “pro-German tendencies” was raised, but “he did not think that it influenced the Board in their final consideration!” Gill responded that “if it did it would be most unjust & un-British”, but counselled Heysen, all “the same you must endeavour to read

\textsuperscript{51} Meeting of the Felton Bequest Committee, 29 March 1915, Minutes of the Felton Bequest Committee. While this debate is documented in the minutes of the Felton Committee, there is no mention of Heysen in the 1915 Minutes of the Trustees of the Public Library, Gallery and Museum, MSF 12855, SLV.
\textsuperscript{52} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 28 March 1915, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{53} W. H. Gill to Heysen: 22 March 1915; 16 March 1915; 28 March 1915, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{54} Poynter, \textit{Mr Felton’s Bequests}, 304-05.
between the lines and consider if it had an influence? My personal opinion is that with the majority it did not – with one or two it may have!"\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, Dr Alexander Leeper, one of the Gallery trustees, is known to have been ardently anti-German and campaigned for the dismissal of two German academics from the University of Melbourne.\textsuperscript{56}

When Gill first advised Heysen, in confidence, that “the question of [his] nationality” had caused the Committees to delay reaching a decision, Heysen’s reaction was one of incredulity, declaring “surely what you have heard cannot have been expressed in all earnestness – the excuse for nonpurchase would be an unBritish despicable one – I cannot believe it, nor do I wish to think that such a damnable mean action could possibly be taken by the board of a Public Art Gallery.”\textsuperscript{57} Heysen’s reaction in a letter written a fortnight after the gallery’s final decision suggests a more complex and somewhat confused reaction:

> I have & shall retain a grievance against the Trustees for their unjust action or at least against the individual members – that the question of nationality (if that question was raised) influenced the committee I have little doubt, and under the present day circumstances I cannot altogether blame them – but I do assuredly blame them if that question influenced them after they had practically given us the word that the picture had been bought.\textsuperscript{58}

He simultaneously expresses certainty that this issue was a factor, while casting doubt on whether the matter was in fact raised. Heysen’s earlier comment about an “excuse for nonpurchase” suggests he may have viewed his German heritage as

\textsuperscript{55} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 28 March 1915, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{57} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 22 March 1915, HH Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 23 March 1915, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{58} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 14 April 1915, WHG Papers.
something invoked as a pretext, rather than the primary reason for the gallery
reneging on a decision to purchase that had all but been confirmed.

2.3. Heysen’s Resignations from Artists’ Societies

By mid-1915 attitudes towards German-Australians had hardened considerably
in response to growing casualty lists and increasingly graphic war reports.59 The
role of international news in the formation of such attitudes is attested by a letter
Heysen received from Edward Officer, president of the Australian Art
Association. Heysen is asked to,

give us an avowal of your allegiance to the British cause in this great
conflict and at the same time disclaim the very terrible manner in which
Germany is conducting the war. Such things as are disclosed in [the]
Report of the Bryce Commission on the Belgian atrocities, the French
report on the same, the sinking of the Lusitania & very many other
unarmed passenger boats, must I feel sure be as repugnant & horrifying to
you as to us.60

Heysen was deeply offended and resigned from the association, feeling that if his
“work has not shown sufficient guarantee of this love [for Australia] nothing that I
may now say will explain away that feeling of mistrust or lack of confidence in
me evidently held by members of your society.”61 To add to the insult, just
months earlier, Heysen had withdrawn from sale two of the watercolours in his
1915 Melbourne exhibition, with catalogue prices of 30 guineas apiece, for
inclusion in an art union organised by the AAA to raise funds for the Red Cross.62

Media Eyes: Australia and Germany 1913-1919, Comparative Press Perspectives ” Journal of
Australian Studies, no. 60 (1999): 43-44.
60 Edward Officer to Heysen, 26 August 1915, HH Papers.
61 Heysen to Edward Officer, [draft] 1 September 1915, HH Papers.
62 Heysen to W. H. Gill, undated [March 1915], WHG Papers. This fundraising exhibition opened
at the Athenaeum Hall directly after Heysen’s exhibition. See, “Artists’ Interesting Display,” Age
(Melbourne), 25 March 1915; “Red Cross Work – Art Union of Pictures,” Argus, 26 March 1915;
Heysen was subsequently approached by other art organisations, asking him to address rumours of his disloyalty. Affronted that they should give credence to such unfounded allegations, he resigned from the Royal Art Society of New South Wales in October 1916, the South Australian Society of Arts in November 1916 and in June 1917 he “regretfully decline[d]” to have his work included in a loan exhibition of Australian art at the NAGNSW. The most interesting of these exchanges is the correspondence between Heysen and Herbert Edward Powell, honorary secretary of the SASA, which spanned more than four months. Heysen was covertly advised and assisted by his friend, the lawyer Ronald Finlayson, and actively challenged the allegations made against him. Heysen’s friendship with Finlayson dated back to 1904 and he later fondly remembered his “generous and loyal nature, always willing to help.” He first approached Finlayson for assistance in early September 1916, when he forwarded him one of Powell’s letters, lamenting that “the list of my enemies is indeed formidable and that such assertions have come from a Society of grown people to say devotees of Art is beyond my comprehension.”

Powell had written to Heysen in early August, advising him that “repeated reports” had been received of Heysen “giving expression to disloyal sentiments,”

---

63 Heysen to E. H. Oxnard Smith, [draft] 2 October [1916]; Heysen to H. E. Powell, [draft] 8 November 1916, HH Papers; Heysen to G. V. F. Mann, 26 June 1917, Art Gallery of New South Wales – General Correspondence Files, 99a/1917, Capon Library.
64 Powell had a lengthy involvement with the council of the SASA, serving as its honorary treasurer from 1891 to 1896, then as the honorary secretary from 1898 to 1921. He was made an honorary life member in 1922. See, Adam Dutkiewicz, A Visual History: The Royal South Australian Society of Arts 1856-2016, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Adelaide: Royal South Australian Society of Arts, 2016), 297.
65 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 31 December [1945], LF Papers.
66 Heysen to Ronald Finlayson, [draft] c.7-11 September 1916, HH Papers.
assertions Heysen denied.\textsuperscript{67} In response to a request from Heysen, Powell relayed the statements he was accused of having made:

1. At the time of the death of the late King Edward you said you would as soon put on mourning for your pig as for him.
2. In allusion to the war you stated that naturally your sympathies were with Germany.
3. You said that you were neutral when alluding to your attitude in respect to the war.
4. You said … that you thought we would probably be as comfortable under the Kaiser as under the King of England.

The individuals who have made these assertions are prepared to substantiate should you deny them.\textsuperscript{68}

In this time of anti-German paranoia, it was clear that allegations had been circulating about Heysen. A year earlier, when acknowledging Heysen’s resignation, Officer cautioned him, “I do not think you can be aware of the fact that many rumours of your lack of sympathy with the British cause have existed and that you have probably lost good sales thereby.”\textsuperscript{69} However, Heysen’s correspondence with the SASA is the only record of what these rumours may have been.

The reply sent by Heysen, dated 15 September 1916, was in fact written by Finlayson. Finlayson suggested that he should not “openly come into it” as it would “embitter matters if they know you have gone to the lawyers,” and advised Heysen to copy the drafted letter “in your own handwriting.”\textsuperscript{70} In this ghost-written response, Heysen reiterates his denial and asks that if the “disseminators of the assertions will not retract them,” that he be provided with “their names, the

\textsuperscript{67} H. E. Powell to Heysen, 4 August 1916; Heysen to H. E. Powell, [draft] 12 August 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{68} H. E. Powell to Heysen, 6 September 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{69} Edward Officer to Heysen, 26 September 1915, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{70} Ronald Finlayson to Heysen, 12 September 1916, HH Papers.
dates when, the places where, and the persons to whom they assert I made these statements.”\textsuperscript{71} Heysen was dissatisfied with Powell’s reply, simply stating that the Council of the SASA accepted his denial.\textsuperscript{72} He again consulted with Finlayson who composed another letter asking the Council to write “stating, either that these persons are not prepared to substantiate their assertions, or, that your Council is satisfied that they are without foundation.”\textsuperscript{73} Further correspondence was exchanged, but without Heysen receiving “either of the assurances” he requested and consequently he tended his resignation (Fig. 30).\textsuperscript{74}

Although scripting such requests in the letters he drafted, Finlayson advised Heysen that “I’m afraid it is plain that we can’t compel the board to disclose the name[s] of the informants nor can we \textit{compel} the board to compel them to retract.” This was due to,

certain Federal Regulations which provide that any … club such as the Soc. of Arts can determine the membership during the war of any person who is or has been a subject of an enemy state, and secondly no person in the Commonwealth whether British born or not can bring an action against any one for accusing him of being German or connected with Germans … with that possibly covering such references as have been made to you.\textsuperscript{75}

Here Finlayson is referring to amendments made to the War Precautions Act just months earlier.\textsuperscript{76} On a subconscious level, the actions of the SASA also reflect Bourdieu’s assertion that members act as the “custodian[s] of the limits of the group” and “must regulate the conditions of access to the right to declare oneself a

\textsuperscript{71} Heysen to H. E. Powell, [draft] 15 September 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{72} H. E. Powell to Heysen, 27 September 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{73} Heysen to H. E. Powell, [draft] 2 October 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{74} Heysen to H. E. Powell [drafts]: 14 October 1916; 16 November 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{75} Ronald Finlayson to Heysen, c.30 September 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{76} These were Statutory Rules, No. 112 – Powers of Clubs to Suspend or Cancel Membership; No. 122 – Libel and Slander Proceedings by Persons Alleged to be Enemy Subjects, &c; No. 135 – Power of Proprietary Clubs to Suspend Membership. See, \textit{Statutory Rules Made under Commonwealth Acts During the Year 1916}, (Melbourne: Government Printer, 1917), 588-90.
member of the group and, above all, to set oneself up as a representative … thereby committing the social capital of the whole group.”

Heysen’s growing prominence during the Edwardian period had meant that the SASA accrued symbolic capital through having him as a member. However, with the wartime stigmatisation of German-Australians, Heysen risked becoming a liability to the organisation.

Certain parallels exist with the case of the German-born musician Hermann Heinicke, who resigned as conductor and violin teacher at the Elder Conservatorium in April 1916. A year and a half earlier, Heinicke had been assaulted by a group of students who mistakenly believed him to be disloyal. When the matter was investigated by the Board of Discipline of the University of Adelaide, they were initially just as concerned with questioning Heinicke about the allegations of disloyalty as with identifying and securing an apology from his assailants. It is likely that Heysen would have been aware of Heinicke’s experience, as the two men shared a number of mutual acquaintances.

The minute books of the SASA show that between 1914 and the revocation of the War Precautions Act in 1920, Heysen was the only member questioned about allegations of disloyalty. They also reveal the information that was withheld from him, the names of his accusers. The Society was contacted by Charles

---

79 These included Gustave Barnes, Nora Kyffin Thomas, Jethro Brown and Hermann Homburg.
80 SASA Minute Books, SRG 20/2/3 and SRG 20/2/4, RSASA Records.
Edwin Owen Smyth, who requested that the President “take action in reference to the alleged disloyalty of a member.” The minutes also mention the British artist Walter Follen Bishop, who was presumably named by Smyth as a source of his allegations. Smyth was the Superintendent of Public Buildings, and also an ardent Imperialist and patriot, actively involved with the South Australian branches of the Royal Society of St George, League of Empire, Navy League and All-British League. During the First World War he was fanatically prejudiced against German-Australians as the “enemy within our doors.” Significantly, his responsibilities included the maintenance, letting and rent of public buildings in Adelaide, including the Institute Building where the Society had its rooms. As such, they would have felt obliged to act on his information, despite his reputation as a hysterical zealot. While Smyth is unlikely to have objected to Heysen being told his name, Bishop may have felt more reticent, particularly if his social and professional networks overlapped with Heysen’s.

It is interesting to note that the president of the SASA at this time was Heysen’s former teacher, James Ashton, whose problematic relationship with Heysen was discussed in the previous chapter, while his good friend and former

---

81 Council Meeting, 6 June 1916, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3. See also, Council Meeting, 1 August 1916, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/4.
painting companion Gustave Barnes was a member of the council.\textsuperscript{85} It is significant that Heysen had friends or acquaintances on all the boards and councils discussed above. It is not known whether they argued in his favour during the various meetings of councillors and trustees, or instead felt their principal role was to act on behalf of the public interests of these associations. In 1917 the Sydney editor Bertram Stevens advised Heysen regarding the proposed loan exhibition that,

\begin{quote}
the position here is due to the Gallery Trustees & not to [G. V. F.] Mann. It is unfortunate … but it is not surprising that Trustees who are Govt officials should view the matter from the popular point of view. Mann, I believe, would be only too glad to have your work, but he could not stand up against the commonplace persons who form the Board.\textsuperscript{86}
\end{quote}

While many of his friends provided both practical and emotional support during the war years, they were less effective when part of collective associations. This situation was reversed during an incident in 1921 considered below, when despite his personal antipathy towards Heysen, Bernard Hall nonetheless recommended one of his works for purchase in his “official capacity” as Director of the National Gallery of Victoria.\textsuperscript{87}

In the eventual letter of resignation from the SASA, in which Finlayson provided an outline of the exchange supported by quotations from previous letters, the final sentence states, “I hold myself at liberty to use this correspondence as I think fit.”\textsuperscript{88} After the matter was concluded, at Heysen’s request Finlayson arranged to have typed copies made of the letters.\textsuperscript{89} He promised to send a copy

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{85} Another council member was the second generation German-Australian Adolph Wilhelm Rudolph (Rudi) Büring (1872-1950).
\textsuperscript{86} Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 19 September 1917, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{87} “A Difference Between Artists: Mr Heysen Insulted,” \textit{Herald} (Melbourne), 3 December 1921.
\textsuperscript{88} Heysen to H. E. Powell, [draft] 16 November 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{89} Ronald Finlayson to Heysen, 14 November 1916, HH Papers.
\end{footnotes}
to Gill, “so that you may see for yourself, how they have treated me & what their accusations have amounted to.”

Heysen clearly felt vindicated by the exchange, believing that the refusal of his accusers to substantiate their claims demonstrated the spurious nature of their allegations. Furthermore, he probably felt that his firm yet politely phrased letters, largely written by Finlayson, presented him in a gentlemanly manner, in contrast to the “spiteful disingenuous correspondence” of the SASA.

At the time of his resignation from the AAA, Heysen had written to Gill that the association had “practically forced” him to resign. However, writing a year later he expressed regret at having “resigned from the AAA on the spur of the moment, as a consequence of wounded feelings – I should have seen it through as I am doing with our Society of Arts & could then have resigned.” Had he so chosen, Heysen need not have resigned from any of the artists’ societies, but simply provided the requested avowal of loyalty. His decision to resign after he felt he had been insulted and his good name baselessly besmirched reflects Edwardian notions of honour.

This is apparent in Gill and Heysen’s comments about the “un-British” conduct of the Melbourne trustees, along with Finlayson’s assertion that the SASA was “not playing the game” by “sheltering” Heysen’s accusers. As he felt affronted by such behaviour, Heysen preferred to sacrifice

---

90 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 4 October 1916, WHG Papers.
91 Ronald Finlayson to Heysen, 13 November 1916, HH Papers.
92 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 12 October 1915, WHG Papers.
93 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 4 October 1916, WHG Papers.
95 Ronald Finlayson to Heysen, 12 October 1916, HH Papers.
his involvement with the organised networks provided by these artists’ societies, in favour of his own informal yet supportive networks.

2.4. Heysen’s Finances and Place in the Field

By this time Heysen was no longer so reliant on artists’ societies for sales. His letters from this period, particularly those exchanged with Gill, show that contrary to Officer’s threat of Heysen losing “good sales,” there remained a great demand for his work. He was kept busy working on private commissions, many brokered by Gill who received a 20 percent commission on the sales price. Heysen’s network of wealthy and influential friends also assisted in introducing his work to new collectors and he frequently sold works directly to visitors to his studio. Significantly, Heysen does not appear to have experienced financial difficulties during the war years. The success of his 1915 exhibition allowed him to pay off the remainder of the mortgage on The Cedars and soon after the war the Heysens were able to renovate and remodel their home. Although incomplete, Heysen’s cashbook from the war years shows his annual income increasing from £455-13-0 in 1914 to £1281-3-2 in 1918. As his correspondence with Gill demonstrates, it was during this period that he commenced collecting art and purchasing expensive illustrated books. Despite being one of Heysen’s most steadfast supporters, Gill also benefited from wartime policies that led to the closing of German clubs. In late 1916 he began renting the building formerly

---

96 W. H. Gill to Heysen: 16 December 1914; 22 December 1914; 31 December 1914; 30 March 1915; 7 May 1915; 1 June 1915; 12 July 1916, HH Papers.
99 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 20 April 1915; 15 September 1916; 4 October 1916; 20 November [1918], WHG Papers.
occupied by the Deutscher Verein von Victoria, opening his new gallery there the following year.\(^{100}\)

As observed in the previous chapter, Heysen had continued to exhibit with artists’ societies even when his pictures were not for sale, as he wished to display the best examples of his recent work alongside that of his peers. By resigning from these societies Heysen temporarily reduced the visibility of his work in the Australian art world and risked weakening his position in the cultural field. This was most evident in his decision not to include his paintings in a substantial loan exhibition held by the NAGNSW after taking exception to the request by its director, G. V. F. Mann, for confirmation of his loyalty.\(^{101}\) The exhibition was a major survey of Australian art produced during the last 30 years, featuring 568 works by 126 artists. It was probably the first retrospective exhibition of recent Australian painting.\(^{102}\) Heysen’s reply to Mann suggests he recognised the significance of this exhibition. Despite declining to be included, he congratulated Mann “upon the conception and leadership” of the project and hoped “that the undertaking will meet with all the approval and success it deserves.”\(^{103}\) Many in the art world felt that his absence undermined what was otherwise a “ripping exhibition.” As Gruner remarked, “the only flaw, one feels is the omission of your own stuff, to my mind no representative show of Australian art could be complete without it & I am glad that the press have remarked upon it.”\(^{104}\)

\(^{100}\) W. H. Gill to Heysen, 27 October 1916, HH Papers.
\(^{101}\) G. V. F. Mann to Heysen, 19 June 1917, HH Papers.
\(^{102}\) Loan Exhibition of Australian Art, (Sydney: National Art Gallery of N.S.W., 1918).
\(^{103}\) Heysen to G. V. F. Mann, 26 June 1917, AGNSW – General Correspondence Files, 99a/1917, Capon Library.
\(^{104}\) Elioth Gruner to Heysen, [annotated: 9 April 1918], HH Papers. Cf. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, [postmark: 2 December 1918], HH Papers.
When writing to Mann, Heysen enclosed a copy of his correspondence with the SASA discussed above, “as the best answer I can think of to your question re. my loyalty.”

Upon learning this, Finlayson told Heysen that he, “ought to have exhibited & asked him if he would do so in case the Board in view of the correspondence again requested him.” Heysen agreed, so Finlayson then wrote to Bertram Stevens, asking him “to use your influence with the powers that be to ask him to reconsider his decision … he made a mistake, I think, in resigning at first. He has his future to consider.” However, when Heysen’s letter was brought before the July board meeting, it was decided that “Works offered by persons of enemy origin are to be declined,” depriving Heysen of the right to exhibit had he changed his mind.

Heysen advised Gruner, “I too am sorry at not being represented but as I disliked the approach of the Gallery Board, on the question of nationality I must take the consequences of what I thought right to stick up for.”

Significantly, at their previous meeting, the board had formally expressed its sympathy to two of its members, John Sulman and John Lane Mullins, following “the death of their sons whilst on active service.” While this does not justify their discrimination, it serves as a reminder of the broader social and emotional context in which it originated.

105 Heysen to G. V. Mann, 26 June 1917, AGNSW – General Correspondence Files.
106 Ronald Finlayson to Bertram Stevens, 14 July 1917, Bertram Stevens Papers, 1906-1920, A 2437-2459, SLNSW.
107 Monthly Meeting, 27 July 1917, Minutes of the Board of the NAGNSW, Capon Library.
108 Heysen to Elioth Gruner [undated draft, verso of Gruner to Heysen, 9 April 1918], HH Papers.
109 Monthly Meeting, 29 June 1917, Minutes of the Board of the NAGNSW, Capon Library.
Following a visit to Sydney in early 1917, Heysen thanked Stevens “for making my reception amongst the artists so cordial.”\(^\text{110}\) It was during this visit that he met Stevens, Gruner and the publisher Sydney Ure Smith for the first time. Later that year, following his disaffection with the Gallery board, he was invited to exhibit with the Society of Artists.\(^\text{111}\) Gruner assured Heysen that the proposal “to ask you met with absolutely no opposition.”\(^\text{112}\) This ready welcome was doubtlessly aided by the presence of Heysen’s friends Gruner, Ure Smith, and Lionel and Norman Lindsay on the Society’s committee.\(^\text{113}\) Interestingly, Mullins was also a committee member, but evidently he was more accepting of Heysen as an exhibitor with the Society than in the Loan Exhibition. It is likely that the invitation was also motivated by the desire to recruit a prominent and popular artist to their association, with Ure Smith advising Heysen, “I feel that the Society is fortunate in securing your work to hang on its walls.”\(^\text{114}\) Heysen would continue to show with the Society of Artists during the following decades, long after commercial galleries had supplanted artists’ societies as his main outlet for selling work. This was largely due to his friendship with Ure Smith, who was president of the Society from 1921 to 1948.\(^\text{115}\)

\(^\text{110}\) Heysen to Bertram Stevens, 28 April [1917], Bertram Stevens Papers.
\(^\text{111}\) Julian Ashton to Heysen, 16 October 1917, HH Papers.
\(^\text{112}\) Elioth Gruner to Heysen, 22 October 1917, HH Papers.
\(^\text{113}\) Another reason why Bertram Stevens and Lionel and Norman Lindsay were less inclined to participate in bigoted wartime attacks on German-Australians was their longstanding admiration for German cultural figures, including Albrecht Dürer and Ludwig van Beethoven. This was evident when Stevens lent Heysen his copy of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing’s *Laokoön* (1766). Heysen to Bertram Stevens, 28 April [1917], Bertram Stevens Papers; Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 47, 199.
\(^\text{114}\) Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 3 October 1918, HH Papers.
\(^\text{115}\) Heysen also exhibited with the short-lived Australian Arts Club (1918-20), which was founded by Sydney Ure Smith. “Exhibition of the Australian Arts Club,” *Leader* (Melbourne), 13 April 1918.
As considered in the following chapter, Ure Smith and Stevens did not hesitate to include reviews or reproductions of Heysen’s work in *Art in Australia* during the later years of the war. Indeed, Heysen’s drawings featured in the magazine’s inaugural issue, while its second issue included an article on Heysen written by his friend and lawyer Ronald Finlayson.\(^{116}\)  Significantly, in his commentary on the aforementioned NAGNSW loan exhibition, Lionel Lindsay dedicated a paragraph to praising Heysen’s contribution to Australian art.\(^{117}\) This ensured, at least textually, that Heysen maintained a presence in the cultural field, even if his works were absent from the show under discussion. Similarly, in 1916 Frederick McCubbin wrote to Heysen, asking to include his work in a series of articles he was writing for *The Christian Science Monitor*.\(^{118}\) McCubbin’s brother had been killed in the bombing of the R.M.S. Lusitania and two of his sons were serving with the Australian army.\(^{119}\) Lindsay’s younger brother Reg had also been killed while stationed in France.\(^{120}\) However, neither man allowed these family bereavements to diminish their personal affection or professional respect for Heysen.

Following his break with the AAA Heysen also received an invitation to exhibit with the Victorian Artists’ Society in Melbourne.\(^{121}\) When Heysen showed a group of watercolours with the VAS in September 1916, the reviewer

\(^{117}\) Lionel Lindsay, “Twenty-Five Years of Australian Art,” ibid., no. 4 (1918).
\(^{118}\) Frederick McCubbin to Heysen, 16 October 1916, HH Papers. These articles do not appear to have been published.
\(^{120}\) Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 135-37. Reginald Graham Lindsay was killed on 31 December 1916, aged 29. Another Lindsay brother, Ernest Daryl Lindsay, served as a driver in the Australian Army Service Corp.
\(^{121}\) W. Nicholls Anderson to Heysen, 7 September 1916, HH Papers.
for *The Argus* made no mention of his work. Gill, who posted a newspaper clipping to Heysen, interpreted this as a deliberate snub, declaring “What I hear is that it all goes back to the efforts of a would-be artist! named E – O –.” Unlike his ongoing involvement with the Society of Artists, Heysen only exhibited with the VAS once more in 1917. Henceforth, the display of his recent works in Melbourne would be confined to group and solo exhibitions staged by dealer galleries. Although there continued to be a steady demand for Heysen’s work from Melbourne collectors, during the post-war period he felt a closer affiliation with the artists and art lovers of Sydney. This may in part be accounted for by the rapid growth of the Sydney art market during the 1920s and the sunlight-infused aesthetic embraced by many Sydney artists in contrast to the darker, tonalist approach of Melbourne. Nonetheless, despite encountering anti-German attitudes in both centres, the greater support he experienced in Sydney helped create a stronger sense of allegiance to the art world of that city.

### 2.5. Nellie Melba’s Support

During the war years Nellie Melba was one of Heysen’s most steadfast supporters. She was an international celebrity, staunch Australian patriot and without doubt the most famous living Australian of her era. She supported Heysen with words of encouragement and by buying his pictures, spending £507-10-0 on his works between 1914 and 1918. Melba also introduced him and his works to other collectors. Perhaps the most significant of these in terms of insulating him against rumours of disloyalty were the members of the vice-

---

123 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 27 September 1916, HH Papers.
125 Heysen, Cashbook, 1902-1923.
regency. She was also actively involved with raising funds for patriotic charities during the war, earning the nick-name the “Queen of Pickpockets” and the title Dame of the British Empire. Melba once declared that she wished she was a man “and could go to the front and kill some Germans.” However, as her friendship with Heysen demonstrates, unlike many of her era she was willing to regard German cultural heritage as distinct from political affiliation.

Melba and Heysen first met in August 1911, when she visited Adelaide. However, she had been introduced to his work more than two years earlier, thanks to the efforts of Gill and others, awarding him a widely publicised commission in 1910. This came at a time when she was beginning to develop stronger links with her homeland, after a prolonged period abroad. She was to become a firm friend, visiting The Cedars any time that she passed through Adelaide, frequently accompanied by other visitors. However, it was during Heysen’s first visit to Coombe Cottage, Melba’s property at Coldstream, in December 1914, that it was proposed she open his next exhibition. She would subsequently open exhibitions of his work in Melbourne in 1921 and Adelaide in 1922. Heysen was not the only Australian artist she supported in this manner. Indeed, at the time of Heysen’s visit to Coombe Cottage, Melba opened an exhibition of his rival, Arthur Streeton. She alluded to the war in her opening address, declaring: “It is a

126 Blainey, I Am Melba, 283-95.
129 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 156-58.
130 Other artists who had exhibitions opened by Melba include: Mary Cecil Allen (Argus, 2 September 1921); Hilda Rix Nicholas (Argus, 10 August 1922); Norman Lindsay, (News (Adelaide), 9 March 1925); Thea Proctor, (Argus, 11 October 1927); and Ida Rentoul Outhwaite (Sydney Morning Herald, 26 July 1928).
fine thing for Australia to be creating new masterpieces, when so many of the old masterpieces in Europe are being destroyed by a ruthless enemy.”

While the prestige associated with having one’s works owned by Melba was immense, she was not always an easy patron. A month prior to Heysen’s 1915 Melbourne exhibition, Melba visited Gill’s rooms and selected Heysen’s watercolour, *A Willow Copse*, as a gift for Lady Margaret Stanley, wife of the Governor of Victoria. However, when Lady Stanley expressed a preference for a different work, *At Sunset*, Melba allowed her to select this instead. Unfortunately, Melba had not realised that the latter watercolour was priced at 40 guineas, 15 guineas more expensive than her original choice, a matter it was not appropriate for Gill to raise in front of the gift’s recipient. When this was subsequently communicated to Melba, she “sent in her Secretary to say that she had no idea it was such an expensive work and hoped under the circumstances & what she is doing for you & taking into consideration what she has already purchased that you would reduce the price to 30 guineas.” Gill advised Heysen, “I am afraid there is no way out but to agree. I look upon it as a deliberate move to take advantage to beat down your price – but what can you do – Nothing.”

On another occasion she wrote to enquire about the price of a painting she had bought, with the plea “be kind as the income tax man is bothering me so much I have to think before I leap.” However, she was also capable of great generosity. Thiele recounts how Melba presented Heysen with a package of gold sovereigns, advising him: “Times are going to be bad … You may have need of

---

131 “Mr. Streeton’s Pictures,” *Argus*, 11 December 1914.
132 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 8 February 1915, HH Papers.
133 Nellie Melba to Heysen, 28 September [probably 1917], HH Papers.
this … Put them away for a rainy day.” Heysen kept them, unspent, until the end of the war.\textsuperscript{134}

Although Gill had previously advised Heysen against showing anything listed as “not for sale” in his 1912 exhibition, they both recognised the cultural capital of exhibiting works loaned by Melba. Heysen originally envisaged including a panel of five such works. Melba, however, elected to show all eleven works by Heysen in her collection.\textsuperscript{135} Gill also encouraged him to produce some works depicting the surrounding area, as Streeton had done for his exhibition, noting that “Melba will naturally expect to see the outcome of your visit and if you fail I am sure you would hurt her.”\textsuperscript{136} The critic for \textit{The Age} observed that, with one exception, the “studies made at Coldstream are among the less interesting things in the collection,” whereas “The Ladies Letter” in \textit{Punch} paid special attention to those works loaned by Melba.\textsuperscript{137} These differing priorities of exhibition visitors were reflected by the latter columnist when discussing the opening of Streeton’s show, observing that: “What with people who went to stare at the pictures, and those who ‘dropped in’ to stare at Melba, there was quite a large gathering.”\textsuperscript{138}

Melba further supported Heysen by purchasing three oil paintings from his exhibition, but received one of them at a significant discount. While \textit{Zinnias}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{134} Thiele, \textit{Heysen of Hahndorf}, 156.
\item \textsuperscript{135} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 19 January 1915, WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen, 5 February 1915, HH Papers.
\item \textsuperscript{136} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 2 February 1915, HH Papers. Cf. Gill to Heysen: 25 January 1915; 15 February 1915, HH Papers.
\item \textsuperscript{137} “Art Notes – Mr Hans Heysen’s Pictures,” \textit{Age}, 4 March 1915; “The Ladies Letter,” \textit{Punch} (Melbourne), 11 March 1915.
\item \textsuperscript{138} “The Ladies Letter,” \textit{Punch} (Melbourne), 17 December 1914. They also described how Melba, “commandeered artist Hans Heysen as he strolled in … to admire her very own picture, “Bush Fire, Coldstream,” which she bought from Mr. Streeton for sixty guineas.”
\end{itemize}
(1914, Fig. 28) had a catalogue price of 80 guineas, Heysen advised Melba that his price, “in its present frame is 60 Guineas,” or 50 guineas if she wished to take it unframed and “secure an (antique) frame in London.”

Even with Heysen’s discounts, her purchases of February and March totalled £220-10-0. However, it was August 1915 before she posted a first cheque of £100 and not until April 1916 that she paid the balance of £110. Presumably this further reduction indicates that she took Zinnias unframed. Such discounts were gestures of friendship and gratitude for the assistance Melba had provided. However, Heysen would have also recognised that her purchases had a publicity and prestige value that far exceeded their sales price. The following year, Gill wrote that a friend of Melba’s was interested in one of Heysen’s watercolours, but first wished the grande dame “to see it and approve of it.” Melba gave her assent and Gill secured a sale.

No doubt her well-publicised patronage also encouraged collectors outside her immediate social circle.

Melba’s support of Heysen continued as the war progressed. In late 1916, she arranged to take two of his watercolours to Honolulu with the intention of selling them to wealthy Americans. However, she only managed to sell one as “water colours are difficult to sell there because a worm or an ant eats them.” Melba also sought to provide moral support, offering words of encouragement and attributing his troubles with the art societies to the “petty jealousies” of lesser artists. In one letter she wrote, “no matter how many enemies you have never

---

139 Heysen to Nellie Melba, 21 March [1915], Reg. No. 10123, Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Lilydale.
140 Heysen, Cashbook, 1902-1923.
141 W. H. Gill to Heysen: 2 September 1916; 13 September 1916, HH Papers.
142 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 8 November 1916, HH Papers.
143 Nellie Melba to Heysen, [12 May 1917], HH Papers.
lose heart because you are a genius – They are not jealous of you as a man; but as an artist & all they want is to take you down to their level which can never be.”

Significantly, she wrote in her postscript, “This letter is private but very sincere.”

In the pervading climate of anti-Germanism she was happy for her support of Hans Heysen as an artist to receive publicity, acknowledging her patronage of him in interviews, but exercised greater discretion in her support of Heysen the man.

During these difficult years, letters expressing sympathy or support were also received from others, including John Shirlow, Gruner, Stevens, Albert Collins and Norman Lindsay.

In 1921 Melba played a significant, yet frequently unacknowledged role in the best known instance of anti-German contempt encountered by Heysen. The insult occurred a day prior to the opening of Heysen’s retrospective exhibition at the Fine Art Society in Melbourne, when Bernard Hall refused to acknowledge Heysen after Gill had attempted to facilitate an introduction. As noted in Chapter One, the two men had previously been on friendly terms, but became estranged during the war. Hall subsequently recommended Heysen’s still life Fruit (1921, Fig. 29) for purchase by the NGV. However, rather than reserving it while the approval of the Gallery and Felton committees was secured, Heysen instead wrote to Dr Alexander Leeper, President of the Gallery trustees, stating that due to

---


146 John Shirlow to Heysen, 4 October 1916; Elioth Gruner to Heysen, 5 September 1917; Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 19 September 1917, Albert Collins to Heysen, 17 March 1919, HH Papers.

147 Colin Thiele, Ann Elias and Gwen Rankin have all discussed this incident, but make no mention of Melba’s involvement. Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 166. Elias, “‘Art Has No Country’,” 04.2-04.3. Rankin, L. Bernard Hall, 188-90.
Hall’s “deliberate insult” he had “decided to withdraw my picture from your consideration, and have reserved … the right of selling it privately.” Elias describes Heysen as achieving a “momentary sense of triumph at regaining his dignity” through this protest, after the “humiliation” of Hall’s behaviour.

The incident gained widespread publicity after *Fruit* was ostensibly purchased by Melba “at the catalogued price of 125 guineas,” more than twice what she had paid for *Zinnias* in 1915. The story was first reported by the Melbourne *Herald*, before reappearing in newspapers around the country. Significantly, however, Heysen later advised Lionel Lindsay that the painting had in fact been sold to Mrs Anthony Horden, with Melba purchasing it on her behalf. Her much publicised, ersatz purchase appears to have been a deliberately staged gesture in support of her friend.

This episode forms an interesting contrast to Heysen’s experience with the National Gallery committees in 1915. Following the earlier incident Gill had written to Heysen: “I am positive that if the very large numbers of the public who came to your exhibition could know that the Trustees have refused to purchase either picture there would be a very very strong protest made through the press.” However, given the context of increasing anti-German hostility and wartime legislation, neither man considered it advisable to publicise the matter. By contrast, six years later, Heysen felt sufficiently secure in his professional,

148 Heysen to Dr A. Leeper, c. 24 November 1921, cited in “A Difference Between Artists: Mr Heysen Insulted,” *Herald* (Melbourne), 3 December 1921.
149 Elias, “‘Art Has No Country,’” 04.3.
150 “A Difference Between Artists.”
151 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 18 December 1921, LF Papers.
152 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 28 March 1915, HH Papers.
legal and financial circumstances to not only spurn the possibility of a gallery purchase, but also to supply the *Herald* with an interview and allow them to reproduce his letter to Dr Leeper. Although Heysen claimed that “he did not wish public notice being given to an incident annoying personally but having nothing to do with his reputation as a painter,” it appears that either he or his supporters approached the papers.153 Indeed, Heysen was criticised in *The Australian* for “giving publicity to what was after all a matter of private concern.”154 Gwen Rankin claims that the publicity surrounding the exchange “accounted to a large extent for the exhibition’s record attendance and sales in excess of 2000 guineas.”155 However, as Heysen had already earned more than 2000 guineas from sales in both 1919 and 1920, there is no reason to believe the controversy contributed to the exhibition’s success.156

2.6. **Wartime Patronage from the Vice-Regency**

Just as Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael and Lady Bosanquet had taken an interest in Heysen’s work prior to the war, he continued to enjoy support from the Australian vice-regency during the war years. In 1921 Heysen’s friends pointed out to the *Herald* that, “in the war period his works were sought after” by the Governor General, Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson, and the Governors of Victoria and South Australia, Sir Arthur Stanley and Sir Henry Galway.157 Clearly they felt that patronage from the local representatives of the Crown was evidence of

---

153 “A Difference Between Artists.”
154 “Topics of the Week,” *Australasian* (Melbourne), 10 December 1921.
155 Rankin, *L. Bernard Hall*, 189.
157 “A Difference Between Artists.”
both Heysen’s loyalty and respectability. However, contrary to the newspaper’s description, it was largely the wives of these three men, Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, Lady Margaret Stanley and most significantly, Lady Marie Carola Galway, who actively collected Heysen’s work and with whom Heysen had the greatest social and epistolary contact.

The three women were in close contact with one another and with Melba. They took an interest not only in Heysen’s art, but also in his home and family. Melba appears to have been responsible for introducing Lady Galway to Heysen. Following the diva’s example, the vice-regal couple became regular visitors to The Cedars, frequently accompanied by visiting dignitaries. As with Melba, it was the esteemed visitors who proposed the date of the planned visit. One note concludes, “Unless I hear from you I propose motoring … down on Saturday morning! I hope you may not find our frequent visitations a nuisance. I snatch every excuse for a treat!”

During the First World War, Heysen’s family home was the front line of a charm offensive. As considered in the previous chapter, entertaining visitors at The Cedars helped create a particular image of Heysen, both as an artist close to nature and a family man. However, as Elias has argued, it was also in Heysen’s domestic environment that his “unconcealed pleasure in German culture,”

---

158 Elioth Gruner congratulated Heysen on selling works to the Governor-General and Lady Helen, remarking, “It was quite splendid selling in that quarter after your troubles with the Victorian and Adelaide Societies.” Gruner to Heysen, 22 October 1917, HH Papers.
159 When advising Heysen of her forthcoming visit, Melba suggested that “perhaps Lady Galway would be interested” in seeing his paintings. Nellie Melba to Heysen, [postmark: 12 November 1914], HH Papers.
160 Marie Carola Galway to Heysen, [postmark: 26 July 1917], HH Papers.
expressed through clothes, food and freshly-brewed coffee, was most evident.\textsuperscript{161} Sallie Heysen’s abilities as a hostess, particularly renowned for afternoon teas featuring traditional German baking, helped ensure such visits were a success.\textsuperscript{162} Bourdieu has described food as a “mode of self-presentation adopted in ‘showing off’ a life-style … a very good indicator of the image [that hosts] wish to give or avoid giving to others.”\textsuperscript{163}

Following a visit to The Cedars in July 1916, Lady Stanley wrote to her family, “I believe that his father was a German settler and it is rumoured that he is German in his sympathies. Anyhow, he is living there as a peaceful and law-abiding citizen and I think works of art should be put above the bitterness of the feeling[s] of war.”\textsuperscript{164} Her comment shows how widely rumours about Heysen had circulated, but that her personal contact with him in a congenial domestic setting served to reassure her. She concluded a letter the following year by asking him to give her “many remembrances to Mrs Heysen – and your delightful family – I hope the guinea-pigs are flourishing!”\textsuperscript{165} While this may appear a trivial nicety, it also indicates how the reception of guests at The Cedars foregrounded Heysen’s role as a father and husband, helping to allay suspicions and present his German heritage as something benign.

\textsuperscript{161} Elias, “‘Art Has No Country,’” 04.11.
\textsuperscript{162} Reynolds, “Cake - More Than a Still Life,” 184-86; Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 171-72.
\textsuperscript{163} Bourdieu, Distinction, 79.
\textsuperscript{164} Adelaide Lubbock, People in Glass Houses: Growing up at Government House (West Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1977), 100. Lubbock quotes from her mother’s letter, but does not identify the recipient or date.
\textsuperscript{165} Lady Stanley to Heysen, 8 November 1917, HH Papers.
Heysen’s correspondence and cashbook from the war years show that his works found favour with some unexpected patrons. It is surprising that Sir Henry Galway should have thought so well of Heysen, given his freely voiced antipathy toward South Australians of German heritage. He once asserted that, “it is not easy to discriminate between the sheep and the goats … in a State possessing a German population of over 30,000.” Clearly he counted Heysen amongst the former. At an exhibition opening in 1919 he proudly declared that he and his wife owned 13 works by Heysen, all “worthy to be hung in the very best room.” In February 1916 Heysen sold a watercolour to Lady Creswell, wife of Rear Admiral Sir William Creswell, the government’s naval adviser. Despite two of her sons having been killed fighting the Germans in the interim, she purchased a second work from Heysen in August 1919.

Unlike Melba, the vice-regency and other prominent visitors paid the standard price for his works. Lady Galway was the conduit by which many of these dignitaries were introduced to Heysen and his art. She wrote that, “We really flatter ourselves that we have forced a few people to open their eyes and look and admire.” Prior to her return to England in early 1919, Heysen gave her a watercolour and wrote expressing his gratitude for her support.

166 Significantly, Lady Galway was half-German, had been educated in Bavaria and lived for three years in Heidelberg. P. A. Howell, "More Varieties of Vice-Regal Life," *Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia*, no. 9 (1981): 16-18, 33-35.
167 "‘Australia for Artists!’ – MacPherson-Reynell Exhibition,” *Register*, 16 September 1919.
169 Marie Carola Galway to Heysen, 25 November [or December?] 1918, HH Papers.
170 Marie Carola Galway to Heysen, 2 January 1919, HH Papers.
and very intelligent and one who has done a great deal to further the interests of Aus artists,” noting that he lost “a very good friend in her going.”\footnote{171}

Like Melba, Lady Galway was actively involved with patriotic causes, helping to raise over £1,200,000 for such funds in South Australia. She founded and directed the operations of the South Australian branch of the Red Cross Society and a Belgian Relief Fund until her departure in 1919.\footnote{172} On more than one occasion, Heysen donated works for such causes. In November 1914, Heysen gave works to be sold by art union to the Melbourne Savage Club and in connection with 17\textsuperscript{th} Federal Art Exhibition, with the proceeds going to patriotic funds.\footnote{173} As noted above, in 1915 he contributed two watercolours for an art union organised by the AAA in support of the Red Cross. Later that year he donated several works to a fair held at Government House, the home of Sir Henry and Lady Galway, raising funds for the Red Cross and Belgian Relief Funds. Two of his pictures were sold by art union, raising £14/6/-, less than the price they would have realised if included in one of his exhibitions.\footnote{174} However, it appears Heysen had mainly donated older and perhaps less saleable works, painted while in Europe.\footnote{175} In September 1917, Heysen donated £100 from the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{171}{Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 30 December [1918, incorrectly annotated 1916], LF Papers.}
\footnotetext{172}{Howell, "More Varieties of Vice-Regal Life," 37-40.}
\footnotetext{173}{Heysen to W. H. Gill, 3 November [1914, letter incorrectly annotated 1913], WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen, 6 November 1914; D. M. Dow to Heysen, 27 November 1914, HH Papers; “South Australian Art – An Eloquent Display of Pictures,” \textit{Register} (Adelaide), 13 November 1914.}
\footnotetext{174}{“War Funds – South Australian Soldiers’ Fund,” \textit{Advertiser}, 7 October 1915; “War Funds,” \textit{Advertiser}, 8 October 1915.}
\footnotetext{175}{“Social World by ‘Cousin Kate’ - Exhibition of Pictures,” \textit{Mail} (Adelaide), 30 October 1915; “The Ladies – The Week – Australian Pictures,” \textit{Observer} (Adelaide), 6 November 1915.}
\end{footnotes}
sale of a painting toward the South Australian Wounded Soldiers’ Fund, the largest single contribution towards the £350 raised at Hahndorf’s Australia Day celebrations. The “prominent part” taken by Heysen and his family in these proceedings was acknowledged by Senior Constable Birt, when asked to investigate allegations of Heysen’s disloyalty.

Heysen’s motivations for supporting these funds presumably stemmed from a mix of patriotism, charity and a desire to match the actions of his art world peers. However, as anti-German prejudice began to intensify from mid-1915 he may also have felt obliged to make such donations as a public demonstration of loyalty. On one occasion his German heritage appears to have led to his charitable contribution being declined. To raise money for the Belgian Relief Fund, Lady Galway published a Belgium Book (1916) featuring contributions from artists, writers and public figures. Although Heysen loaned a watercolour for reproduction, Lady Galway regretted, “that we cannot manage to reproduce it … No more need be said in proof that I am an amateur-editor and that my ambition soars much higher than my capability.” She does not elaborate on the reason why, but it is almost certain she, or her advisers, felt it would be inappropriate to reproduce the work of a German-born artist in a publication raising funds for the victims of German militarism. The previous year a colour reproduction of

179 Marie Carola Galway to Heysen, 28 January 1916, HH Papers.
180 The book featured contributions from a number of Heysen’s friends, including Gustave Barnes, Will Ashton and Ronald Finlayson, along with a Heysenesque watercolour by his former pupil Gwen Barringer.
Heysen’s *Bush Giants* was included in *Melba’s Gift Book* (1915), also designed to benefit the Belgian Relief Fund.\(^{181}\) However, in the interim attitudes had hardened. Although this exclusion did not sour their friendship, it would have served as another subtle reminder of his stigmatised status.

### 2.7. The Impact on Heysen’s Emotional Life

While this chapter is primarily concerned with the impact of the war upon Heysen’s social and professional networks, the stresses it produced also had implications for his emotional life. Jürgen Tampke is correct in his assertion that “verbal or written abuse, temporary dismissals … threatening resolutions or the changing of German placenames cannot be ranked among the real tragedies of the war.”\(^{182}\) Nevertheless, such experiences had a significant impact upon the mental wellbeing of the German-Australian community.\(^{183}\) In June 1918 the writer Leon Gellert described Heysen’s “misery caused by the mistaken idea that he paints in German,” and suggested that his “colouring seems to be getting colder with the world’s lack of charity.”\(^{184}\)

Two years earlier, during the period of his dispute with the SASA, Heysen wrote to Gill that he was finding it “so very difficult to work ‘under present circumstances’ with a feeling of uncertainty & unrest” and complained of “feeling very disturbed in mind as far as my painting goes, & it is difficult for me to stick

---


\(^{182}\) Tampke, *The Germans in Australia*, 126.

\(^{183}\) For other examples of the impact of wartime prejudice upon the mental health of German-Australians, see McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War*, 154-55.

at the work.”\textsuperscript{185} Impatient to supply the requested works to clients, Gill chided him, “What is the good of you worrying over the war – drop it you cannot do anything … I should recommend you to go away camping & never look at a blessed newspaper.”\textsuperscript{186} Elias has suggested that the anti-German prejudice of the war years caused Heysen a “crisis of identity … particularly a loss of certainty about home and belonging.”\textsuperscript{187} This is undoubtedly true, but Gill’s admonition not to read news reports suggests that he was also upset by the more distant horrors of war.

In a draft letter to Gruner the following year, Heysen states: “My only hope is that this useless waste of human life with its millions of tragedies will soon be over – it’s a constant prey on one’s mind – no force of will will fade the colour of it from one’s mind.”\textsuperscript{188} Catherine Speck has suggested that Heysen may have been a pacifist.\textsuperscript{189} This seems plausible. During the Second World War he did not experience any of the prejudice or discrimination he encountered during the earlier conflict. However, in 1939 he still lamented that “this senseless war so upset me that I could not collect my thoughts & concentrate … The thought of painting again has entirely left me and any desire or wish to touch a brush lies completely dormant.”\textsuperscript{190} This expression of mental unease predates the direct involvement of his children in the war, when two of his sons, Michael and Stefan,

\textsuperscript{185} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 22 September 1916; 15 November 1916, WHG Papers.
\textsuperscript{186} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 21 November 1916, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{187} Elias, “‘Art Has No Country’,” 04.3.
\textsuperscript{188} Heysen to Elioth Gruner, [undated draft, verso of Gruner to Heysen, 9 April 1918], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{190} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 December [1939], LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 19 August [c.1942-43]; 14 February [1944]; 18 October [1945], LF Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 18 March [1940]; 28 October 1947, SUS Papers.
joined the Royal Australian Air Force, and his daughter Nora was appointed an official war artist, thus giving him greater reason to feel anxious. Instead it suggests a more generalised antipathy towards violence and destruction.

Without disputing Ian North’s assertion that a “detailed appreciation of the great political and social issues of the 20th century” is lacking in Heysen’s work, his experiences during the war years may have obliquely influenced his choice of subject matter. Elias has observed that Heysen’s still lifes of exotic fruit and flowers, which “are consistently non-Australian in character,” were mainly painted either during or in the decade following the First World War. While a nationalistic discourse surrounds Heysen’s landscapes, Elias suggests that his still lifes are cosmopolitan and “defiantly mark out an identity both European and German.” Although the flowers Heysen depicted frequently came from his own garden, the style and format of his paintings recall traditional European still lifes, with their vanitas connotations. Through their associations with the passing of time and the domestic interior, Elias argues they evoke melancholy, introspection and the reassuring “psychological stability” of “everydayness,” characteristics which perhaps reflected Heysen’s emotional response to the war and its attendant discrimination.

Like his still lifes, Heysen’s watercolours and drawings of agricultural labourers take on a different resonance in light of the war. While he began

---

193 Elias, “‘Art Has No Country,’” 04.2.
194 *Useless Beauty*, 61; “‘Art Has No Country,’” 04.7.
depicting the local farmers following his move to Hahndorf in 1908, such imagery achieved greater prominence in his oeuvre from 1915 until the early 1920s. Stylistically, these works reveal Heysen’s debt to the French Barbizon painters, but the figures he depicted were of German heritage. The most celebrated of these, *The Toilers* (1920, Fig. 31), depicts a local farmer called Kramm, who has paused his two plough horses while he bends forward to clear earth from the harrow. Margaret Plant describes this watercolour as “a classic image of nostalgia and reconsolidation, expressive of the yearning for the simple return to the soil, bred of the European conflict.”

When it was awarded the Wynne Prize for 1920, Heysen wrote to Gill that he felt particularly gratified, given the Sydney trustees’ treatment of him in 1917. However, he also “noticed that in the past when Mr Mann wrote, he congratulated me upon the event – but this time it was purely an ‘Official!’ letter,” something Heysen interpreted as a snub.

It is unlikely that many in the Sydney or Melbourne art worlds would have recognised Heysen’s farm labourers as specifically German. However, this would have been personally significant to the artist, who felt a great affinity with the local farmers and spoke with them in German. Heysen’s images of peaceful bucolic labour are a panacea both to Harold Septimus Power’s celebratory images of horses as beasts of war, and to the caricatures of German troops as brutish and bloodthirsty ‘Huns’ by Norman Lindsay and others.

---

197 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 12 December [1920], WHG Papers.
199 Humphrey McQueen has suggested that Heysen’s depictions of the local German community provided “an alternative source of consolation” in response of wartime and post-war pressures. Humphrey McQueen, *The Black Swan of Trespass: The Emergence of Modernist Painting in Australia to 1944* (Sydney: Alternative Publishing Cooperative, 1979), 117.
Indeed, in one cartoon Lindsay depicts the god of war wearing a Prussian helmet and whipping the overworked figure of Death who ploughs the barren earth (Fig. 33). Lindsay’s recruiting posters and cartoons for *The Bulletin* were produced at the behest of his employer and their iconography does not appear to have compromised his friendship with Heysen.

Following the end of the war, images of the pastoral landscape came to symbolise peace, presenting an antithesis to the scarred and blasted landscape of the Western Front. In 1919 Heysen’s friend Charles Reade wrote quoting Thomas Hardy’s “In Time of ‘The Breaking of Nations’” (1916), as verse “worthy of one of your pictures.” This poem contrasts the timelessness of rural life with the destruction of modern warfare. Similarly, as Plant has observed, the iconography of Heysen’s *The Toilers*, parallels that of Harold Cazneaux’s photograph *Peace After War, and Memories* (1918, Fig. 32).

However, as the image’s symbolically loaded title indicates, here the farmer’s head is bowed in memory of those who died.

As his correspondence documents, the members of Heysen’s art world networks responded in a variety of ways when the First World War rendered his

---

200 Norman Lindsay, “‘On, On!’ – ‘The German offensive will last all summer.’ – Cable.” *The Bulletin*, 16 May 1918, 12.
202 Charles Reade to Heysen, 20 November 1919, HH Papers.
German heritage a subject of contention. While he was the subject of malicious
rumours, possibly motivated by personal or professional jealousy, he also received
private support from several individuals who in their public capacities expressed
hostility towards Germans. During this period his ties to some sections of the art
establishment were broken, sometimes severed by Heysen himself. However,
through the support of loyal friends or admirers, other channels emerged through
which his works could be displayed, promoted and sold. Two of the most
significant developments, the increasing importance of dealer galleries and the
promulgation of his work by *Art in Australia*, form the subjects of later chapters.
Heysen was fortunate to have achieved such prominence and popularity during
the decade prior to the war. This helped ensure that there was an ongoing market
for his work during the war years, in spite of the widespread anti-German
prejudice. While Heysen found the hostility and mistrust he and his family
encountered upsetting and at times threatening, the advice, encouragement and
patronage of a select group of key associates helped him through these difficult
years and with the support of his networks he was able to rapidly re-establish his
pre-war prominence during the 1920s.
Chapter Three: On the Same Page: Heysen and *Art in Australia* Magazine

This chapter considers the significance of Heysen’s representation in *Art in Australia* magazine and his links to individuals and groups associated with the publication. Particular attention is given to Heysen’s social and professional association with the artist-publisher-administrator Sydney Ure Smith and the artist-critic Lionel Lindsay, both of whom were influential tastemakers and cultural gatekeepers in the interwar Australian art world. The period under consideration, from 1916 to 1938, corresponds with Ure Smith’s time as principal editor of the magazine. These years witnessed a significant growth in art patronage, particularly in Sydney, which came to rival Melbourne as a major art centre, together with the increased practice and greater visibility of modernist tendencies in the visual arts. Both these developments affected the manner in which Heysen’s art was positioned and discussed within the magazine’s pages.

*Art in Australia* is an important example of what Howard Becker has termed art world “distribution systems which integrate artists into their society’s economy, bringing art works to publics which appreciate them.”¹ These are not limited to disseminating original art works, but may instead circulate them “in mediated form as text and reproduction,” to facilitate awareness and appreciation of an artist.² Similarly, Pierre Bourdieu has described the cultural field as consisting not only of individual practitioners and art works, but also such institutions as “journals, magazines, galleries, publishers.”³ Although this

---

1 Becker, *Art Worlds*, 93.
3 Bourdieu, “Field of Cultural Production,” 32.
chapter predominantly focuses upon members of Heysen’s networks in the Sydney art world, the published products of their collaborative effort were disseminated throughout Australia, helping to establish and shape Heysen’s reputation as an artist of national significance.

3.1. **Sydney Ure Smith and *Art in Australia***

Unlike its short-lived or regionally focused predecessors, the Sydney-based *Art in Australia* was the first Australian art magazine to achieve a national scope and sustained duration.⁴ First published in December 1916, initially in association with the publishers Angus & Robertson, from June 1921 it was released by the formally constituted company Art in Australia Ltd. In November 1934, when struggling to remain viable during the Depression, this was bought by Fairfax & Sons Ltd. who continued to publish the magazine until June 1942. *Art in Australia* utilised the latest developments in printing technology, enabling the inclusion of between 4 and 8 colour plates and several monochrome images in each issue. Nancy Underhill has observed that its colour illustrations allowed readers throughout the recently federated nation “to share a painting” in the same way that earlier periodicals had circulated stories and poetry, thus allowing the visual arts to “rival literature as a vehicle to define Australianness.”⁵ This made it an expensive magazine to produce and its high cover price, which was more expensive than the imported English monthly *The Studio*, limited its circulation.

---

but enhanced its prestige.\textsuperscript{6} Throughout the magazine’s existence its editors also produced other fine art and more commercially focused publications.

\textit{Art in Australia}’s appearance coincided with and helped encourage the market boom in collecting Australian art. This promotional function is clearly indicated in the “Introduction” to its inaugural issue, which stated:

‘Art in Australia’ hopes … to bring the artists into closer association with one another and with the picture buying public. It also hopes to enlarge the number of those interested in the artistic productions of Australia. Many people who can afford to have good pictures in their homes need only to be made acquainted with the fine quality of some of the local work in order to become purchasers of it instead of imported pictures. … The best cannot be done by artists here … until the public interested in Australian art is much larger than it is.\textsuperscript{7}

This signals from the outset both its links with the art market and the nationalist sentiments which guided \textit{Art in Australia}’s editorial selection and critical discourse. Sam Cameron has observed that in the arts, “reputation is often established and built up by critics,” and that one of the primary functions of criticism is to influence higher-order preferences, thus validating “the self-image of the consumer” through notions of correct taste.\textsuperscript{8} Consequently, positive and regular representation within \textit{Art in Australia}, such as Heysen enjoyed, better enabled an artist to accumulate cultural capital, thus increasing the demand for their works from private collectors.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{6} Ibid., 156. However, as publications were frequently passed around or held by libraries and other institution its readership was probably greater than its circulation figures indicate. Cf. Brothers, \textit{A Studio Portrait}, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{7} “Introduction,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 1, no. 1 (1916): unpaginated.
\end{itemize}
Although neither the magazine’s sole instigator, nor its sole editor, the figure most closely associated with *Art in Australia* is Sydney Ure Smith, who was its principal editor from 1916 until his forced retirement in 1938. In divergence from “the legend that Ure Smith personally controlled every aspect” of this publishing venture, Underhill has examined the manner in which “he was dependent on his co-editors and fellow-directors.”

*Art in Australia* was jointly founded by Ure Smith, Bertram Stevens and Charles Lloyd Jones, who are credited as co-editors for the first nine issues of the magazine. Lloyd Jones was a co-owner and director of the retailer and manufacturer David Jones Ltd., Ure Smith’s brother-in-law and a dedicated amateur artist. This combination of friendship, aesthetic interests and personal wealth encouraged Lloyd Jones to provide the bulk of the capital needed to establish *Art in Australia*. His involvement as a co-editor ceased in June 1921, but he remained a company director until 1934.

Concomitantly, Stevens was able to contribute his expertise as a critic, editor and anthologist, whose experience included editing *The Lone Hand* from 1912 until 1919. Following Stevens death in February 1922, Leon Gellert, a poet and journalist, was employed as co-editor of the magazine until 1938. Despite the significant contributions of these colleagues, to the broader

---

11 Lloyd Jones was appointed chairman of the Board of Directors of David Jones Ltd. in October 1920, a responsibility which undoubtedly precipitated this decision. Ibid., 139.

As Underhill has described, between 1922 and 1934 several others men briefly served as co-directors of *Art in Australia* Ltd, typically joining at a time when the company was in need of further capital to remain solvent. Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 156-57.
13 Gavin Souter, “Gellert, Leon Maxwell (1892-1977),” *ADB*, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gellert-leon-maxwell-10288 Additional editorial support was provided by Basil Burdett, who is listed as an associate editor from June 1931 until May 1934.
Australian art world Ure Smith remained the figure most closely identified with *Art in Australia* and its affiliated publications.

In addition to his work as a practising artist, publisher and advertising agent, Ure Smith progressively enhanced both his social standing and influence as president of the Society of Artists from 1921 until 1948; as a trustee of the NAGNSW between 1927 and 1947; and through his involvement with several other projects and committees.\(^{14}\) Underhill has observed that the “Australian art world had never experienced such a complex of interlocking directorships combined in one person” who “exercised such national influence in the visual arts.”\(^{15}\) Many of the magazine’s key contributors similarly held multiple roles within the art world, leading Caroline Jordan to describe *Art in Australia* as “a microcosm of the conservative Sydney art scene, ruled by a tiny clique who frequently occupied several positions of power at once.”\(^{16}\) During the interwar period most Australian art world institutions, such as municipal galleries and artists societies, were controlled by an oligarchy of male artists and patrons who had come to prominence during the late Victorian or Edwardian periods. As they were “often unconsciously prejudiced in favour of art that resembles their own,” these official and unofficial cultural gatekeepers sometimes had a stifling effect upon which art received institutional recognition.\(^{17}\)

\(^{14}\) Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 42.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 53.


Underhill’s detailed biography of Ure Smith closely examines the development and shifting focus of *Art in Australia* under his editorship, situating it in relation to the many other roles he occupied. She identifies Ure Smith as an important art patron, not in the traditional sense of providing direct financial assistance, but more broadly as an administrator, advocate and publicist, describing him as someone who actively “filled the four roles of maker, purveyor, promoter and also client of art.”\(^\text{18}\) In addition to arguing that Ure Smith’s “most lasting contribution to Australian culture was his help in redressing the imbalance between literature and the visual arts,” Underhill also acknowledges his “support for a diversity of art practices.” These included photography and the commercial and applied arts, mediums in which he was more open to stylistic innovations than in the traditional fine arts.\(^\text{19}\) However, she also recognises his shortcomings, including his haphazard business practices, the conflicts of interest that existed between his various roles and his lack of interest in art theory, which limited his appreciation or understanding of modern art.\(^\text{20}\)

Despite its important promotional role, several art historians have suggested that under Ure Smith *Art in Australia* had a stultifying rather than stimulating effect upon the development of Australian art. The magazine has been criticised for the predominant conservatism of its writing and selection of illustrations, its

\(^{18}\text{Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 7, 180.}\)
\(^{19}\text{Ibid., 6, 41; David Carter, *Always Almost Modern: Australian Print Cultures and Modernity* (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly, 2013), 51.}\)
\(^{20}\text{Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 8, 25, 146-47, 51-53, 63, 82, 201.}\)
under-representation of women artists and its marginalisation of modern art.\textsuperscript{21} Heysen’s art corresponded with the nationalist preferences which guided Ure Smith’s editorial selection. This particularly favoured pastoral landscape imagery, which was regarded as the most appropriate visual metaphor for Australian nationhood and implicitly coded as masculine, both through the subject’s association with rural masculine labour and because the genre was more widely practised by male artists.\textsuperscript{22} Indeed, during the period of Ure Smith’s editorship, Heysen’s pictures were reproduced in the magazine 129 times, making him the third most frequently illustrated artist after Margaret Preston (152 images) and Lionel Lindsay (140), ahead of George Lambert (112), Norman Lindsay (107) and Elioth Gruner (95).\textsuperscript{23} Significantly, all of these artists were actively involved with the Society of Artists. By contrast, Arthur Streeton, who rarely exhibited with the Society, only had two works reproduced in the magazine between 1922 and 1930.\textsuperscript{24} 

Notwithstanding Margaret Preston’s status as the most frequently illustrated artist, the works of many other significant modernist and women artists were overlooked.\textsuperscript{25} Becker observes the need to consider the effect of “built-in professional biases” in art world distribution systems, such as \textit{Art in Australia}, due to the circular process whereby art that is “not distributed is not known and


\textsuperscript{24} Galbally and Gray, \textit{Letters from Smike}, 173. Streeton’s works were illustrated 61 times under Ure Smith.

\textsuperscript{25} Grace Cossington Smith only had four works included during Ure Smith’s editorship, while Clarice Beckett was never represented.
thus cannot be well thought of,” but equally that which “does not have a good reputation will not be distributed.”

Preston and Thea Proctor were the only two women to have special issues of the magazine dedicated to their work, while 16 of their male colleagues received this honour. Heysen had four special numbers of *Art in Australia* dedicated to his work, more than any other artist. Jordan has suggested that Preston and Proctor’s images “were chosen as a striking contrast to the endless stream of realist landscape paintings, invariably done by male artists.”

She has argued that more decorative manifestations of modernism were tolerated, particularly when these could be positioned as a commercial or feminine practice, thus establishing them “as marginal and inferior to the masculine domain of professional fine art.”

Ure Smith’s attitude towards modernism, which is considered in Chapter Four, was more progressive than that of either Heysen or Lionel Lindsay. However, under his editorship the magazine rarely illustrated anything more advanced than Australian or British manifestations of Post Impressionism. The avant-garde and internationalist character that *Art in Australia* assumed in 1941 and 1942 under its final editor Peter Bellew has further reinforced perceptions that Ure Smith’s editorial selection was insular and conservative.

While most historians of Australian art have concentrated upon the rise of modern art during the interwar period, Ian Burn has argued that it was instead academic landscape painting that represented the dominant tradition in Australian art.

---

28 Ibid., 37.
art during those years. However, Jeanette Hoorn has suggested that Burn’s “own discourse became caught in that of the period he was studying.” Hoorn’s assertion is a salient caution of the risks inherent in treating a publication like *Art in Australia*, which favoured particular imagery and aesthetic qualities, as a fair artistic barometer. Conversely, David Carter encourages consideration of what the cultural field looked like during that era, “before we knew who the winners were in the competition of artistic movements and before the victors’ histories had been written.” Therefore, any assessment of *Art in Australia* under Ure Smith’s editorship must endeavour to navigate between the biases of the publication’s own predominant traditionalist sympathies and an art historical presentism which positions the ascendency of modern art as inevitable.

Carter has approached *Art in Australia* from the discipline of periodical studies. He emphasises the “heterogeneity” of the magazine “within individual issues and across multiple issues,” with its various contributors encompassing a range of different and sometimes contradictory opinions and aesthetic standpoints. Indeed, because *Art in Australia* sought to present the art under discussion in a positive light, Ure Smith endeavoured to pair artists with writers who were sympathetic to their approach. Thus traditionalist critics like Lionel Lindsay and James MacDonald were engaged to write on Heysen or Gruner, while writers with modernist sympathies, like Basil Burdett, were assigned articles about more progressive artists. Carter observes that although *Art in Australia* positioned “a pastoral landscape tradition” as the central lineage of

---

30 Burn, “Popular Landscape Painting,” 38-40.
33 Ibid., 47-48.
Australian art, other subjects were also represented and the majority of art works illustrated “had no obvious connection to the nation.”\textsuperscript{34} Utilising Bourdieusian terminology he describes:

the range of positions contained within the magazine: the fact that for its editors and, one assumes, for most of its readers Preston could sit more or less comfortably alongside Lambert, Streeton, Gruner, Heysen and Norman Lindsay in the magazine’s pages. Despite the radical differences between these artists … at least provisionally, between the magazine’s covers, they constituted a field of interrelated positions … that could be grasped coherently under the sign of … the Australian contemporary.\textsuperscript{35}

 Nonetheless, he acknowledges that \textit{Art in Australia} was a major force in the “retardation” of Australian modern art, as it sought to present “the mainstream not the avant-garde margins.”\textsuperscript{36}

 Ure Smith’s letters to Heysen frequently made reference to the publication’s precarious financial position. Indeed, in 1920 its publishers launched the upmarket women’s magazine \textit{The Home} to counteract the slender returns realised by \textit{Art in Australia}, helping to ensure its survival.\textsuperscript{37} \textit{The Home} aspired to be the local equivalent of such publications as \textit{Vogue}, \textit{Vanity Fair} and \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}.\textsuperscript{38} It was clearly aimed at an affluent readership, bearing a price of two shillings at a time when most other women’s magazines sold for between three and five pence.\textsuperscript{39} Its content was primarily focused upon domestic architecture, interior decorating and fashion, but it also discussed the visual and performing

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 49.
\textsuperscript{35}Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 50, 57.
\textsuperscript{37}Underhill, \textit{Making Australian Art}, 153, 58-59.
arts. In doing so it positioned the arts as an essential part of a fashionable modern lifestyle, thus promoting them to a broader audience than the more niche readership of *Art in Australia.*40 *The Home* typically featured bold cover designs by such Sydney artists as Thea Proctor, Adrian Feint and Hera Roberts and commissioned images by innovative photographers including Bernice Agar, Harold Cazneaux and Max Dupain. In contrast to the national focus of *Art in Australia*, it was concerned with informing its readers about the latest overseas trends and its emphasis on contemporary design makes a striking contrast to the paucity of modern art in *Art in Australia* (Fig. 44). However, reflecting upon the diversity of their content, Carter cautions against oversimplified dichotomies. He observes that *The Home* also reported on antiques and stately homes and that both magazines “were governed by regimes of ‘good taste.’”41

Both *Art in Australia* and *The Home* were severely impacted by the Great Depression.42 The magazines managed to increase their subscription rate by reducing their prices, but were also hard hit by a significant drop in advertising revenue.43 In 1930 Ure Smith confided to Heysen that the company had “weathered the storm, so far. We’ve had to economise and put the knife in everywhere.”44 These tighter margins inevitably meant that *Art in Australia*
assumed a less lavish character, as evidenced by its 1932 issue on Heysen’s art which only featured three colour plates. Even so, Ure Smith advised Heysen:

> Unfortunately we all have to lose money on it – that’s what hurts – However well it sells – there can be no profit. The expense of printing, cost of paper, ink etc. and all the taxes and the absolute lack of advertising support combine to make the finances – impossible.

> We are losing adverts every issue – and you will notice that we are the only people using it for advertising – with the exception of a few faithful supporters.

After years of struggling to remain viable, in November 1934 Art in Australia Ltd. was sold to John Fairfax and Sons for £8750. This media conglomerate were primarily interested in acquiring The Home, but also wished to obtain Ure Smith’s editorial and advertising expertise.

It is frequently assumed that it was Ure Smith’s failure to engage with more advanced contemporary art that led to his forced retirement as editor in November 1938. This view is reinforced by the greater modernist emphasis Art in Australia assumed under its subsequent editors Kenneth Wilkinson (1939-1940) and Peter Bellew (1941-1942). However, Underhill has credibly argued that the real reasons for his departure were financial rather than aesthetic. Gavin Souter has identified friction between Ure Smith and Rupert Henderson, the company’s

---

45 *Art in Australia*’s “Heysen Number” (March 1926) had featured six colour and 24 monochrome plates; and “Recent Watercolours by Hans Heysen” (June 1928) featured 14 colour and 25 half-tone plates. By contrast “Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen” (June 1932) only featured 3 colour and 16 monochrome plates.


48 For accounts of Warwick Fairfax’s interest in modern art and its presumed influence upon the character of *Art in Australia*, see: Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 191, 93, 202; Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 114, 255.

general manager, as a further contributing factor. Significantly, Ure Smith confided to Heysen that when asked to resign from his management role Fairfax & Sons had offered him “£250 per annum, to edit *Art in Australia* for them, or a year’s salary, and no connection with them at all – which latter I prefer to take *sic*.” This indicates they did not object to the editorial or aesthetic focus of the magazine. Nonetheless, many of Ure Smith’s friends considered his treatment by Fairfax grossly unfair. Norman Carter, writing after the magazine’s demise, emotively suggests that Ure Smith “had accepted reasonable assistance to bring up the ‘child,’ so to speak, in a manner worthy of its parentage, then they stole the kid from him, turned out the parent and later smothered the kid.”

### 3.2. Heysen and Sydney Ure Smith

Heysen’s inclusion in *Art in Australia*’s inaugural issue of December 1916 predates his acquaintance with its editors. He first met Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens during his April 1917 visit to Sydney and his friendship with both men was gradually nurtured via correspondence. Initially there was a strong element of mutual self-interest in this alliance, as Heysen endeavoured to increase his presence in the Sydney art world and Ure Smith sought to enhance the standing of his art magazine, and later the Society of Artists, by representing an already prominent and popular artist. Nonetheless, their shared interests and admiration of one another’s dedication and abilities helped establish a genuine affection between the two. As with W. H. Gill in Melbourne, Ure Smith was an asset to

---

50 Souter, *Company of Heralds*, 156.
51 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 11 November 1938, HH Papers.
52 See, Norman Carter to Heysen, 4 February 1950, HH Papers. Gavin Souter has explained that the cessation of *Art in Australia* in 1942 was the result of wartime paper shortages and a dispute between Peter Bellew and the news editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Souter, *Company of Heralds*, 229-32.
Heysen for his social capital, serving as a link to an extensive network of contacts in the Sydney art world.

In July 1924 Ure Smith visited Adelaide for the city’s inaugural Artists’ Week. He and Lionel Lindsay stayed with the Heysens and this visit played a key role in consolidating their friendship (Fig. 35). Ure Smith also established a close rapport with Sallie, who Underhill has described as “his one real confidante.” He became a regular visitor to The Cedars, sometimes accompanied by his children. During their visits Ure Smith and Lindsay sketched the same subject matter as Heysen, frequently reworking their drawings into etchings or wood engravings. The resultant works offer visual evidence of their close association and aesthetic preferences (Figs. 36-43). Ure Smith and the Heysens discussed the possibility to travelling to Europe together in 1926, but financial and business pressures delayed their plans and ultimately they made separate visits. However, in 1929 they accompanied one another on a trip to Tasmania.

The intersection of their friendship and professional concerns is reflected in their correspondence, where the boundaries between a private and a business letter are frequently blurred. Individual letters from Ure Smith frequently combined family news and art world gossip with information regarding the Society of Artists and Art in Australia. Ure Smith concluded one letter requesting Heysen’s permission to reuse images of his work, “I am not going to write a personal letter

---

54 Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 56. Leon Gellert described Ure Smith as the sort of man that women “wanted to mother.” Leon Gellert, interview by Katherine Campbell Harper, 22-26 August 1975, ORAL TRC 2111, NLA.
55 Sydney Ure Smith to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 11 June 1926, HH Papers.
56 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 27 January 1929, HH Papers.
at the moment, as I am very busy … I send you all my love and good wishes.”

These already multifarious letters are further complicated when Ure Smith is writing to both Hans and Sallie, such as when he advised them: “This will have to be a joint effort. I have a lot to say and Sallie’s part will be mixed up with S[ociety] of Artists details – but if you don’t mind sorting it out – I’ll go ahead.”

Nonetheless, his correspondence offers valuable insights into the operations and changing fortunes of Art in Australia Ltd. Underhill has described Ure Smith’s letters to Heysen as providing the only indication of his personal reasoning for making certain changes to the content and format of Art in Australia.

The early years of Art in Australia corresponded with an important juncture in Heysen’s career, when wartime anti-German sentiments placed his position in the cultural field at risk. Heysen’s frequent representation in Art in Australia helped him to rapidly re-establish his pre-war prominence during the 1920s. In addition to being the magazine’s third most frequently illustrated artist and the subject of five articles in general issues, Heysen had four special numbers of Art in Australia dedicated to his work. The first of these was published as an expensive standalone monograph, considered below. Significantly the publication dates of the remaining three were designed to correspond with solo exhibitions of his work in Sydney, thus helping to promote his shows.

---

57 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 4 June 1927, HH Papers.
58 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 27 January 1927, HH Papers.
59 Underhill, Making Australian Art, 161.
60 For Heysen’s representation in Art in Australia, see Appendix Six.
61 These were his exhibitions at Farmer’s Exhibition Hall, May 1926 and the Grosvenor Galleries, June 1928 and July 1932.
Between 1929 and 1935 Heysen also contributed four articles to *Art in Australia*. The most substantial of these was a series of notes outlining his views on art. The others comprised an appreciation of the works of Will Ashton, a tribute to the late George Lambert, and a consideration of five English paintings recently purchased by the NGSA. The Ashton special issue was produced at a time when the artist was experiencing poor sales, suggesting an effort on the part of Ure Smith and Heysen to bolster their friend’s career. Similarly, Heysen’s appreciation of the NGSA’s recent acquisitions was far from disinterested, as he was responsible for selecting the works during his 1934 visit to Europe.

Heysen also featured in *Art in Australia*’s sister publications, *The Home* (1920-1942), *Australia Beautiful* (1927-1931) and *The Home Annual* (1932-1941). Carter describes *The Home* as “directly engaged in the construction and circulation of celebrity.” This encompassed not only visiting international luminaries and local fashionable society, but also included artists due to the perceived “consonance between art, taste, and social aspiration.” As a prominent Australian artist Heysen was regularly mentioned in the magazine. He and his home environment were twice the subject of double-page spreads. The 1936 photospread featured the work of Cazneaux who stayed with the Heysens and was so charmed by his visit that he christened his Sydney home “Ambleside”

64 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 24 May 1928; 1 April 1929; Will Ashton to Heysen, 2 June 1928, HH Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton: 1 July [1928]; 23 May [1929], WA Papers.
65 His choices are considered in Appendix Seven.
Lambert and Norman Lindsay received similar coverage in *The Home*. Preston and Proctor also featured prominently, although they were more often the authors of articles, positioned as arbiters of taste and style rather than artistic celebrities.

In a reflection of the magazine’s non-specialist readership, the 1921 article by Freda Sternberg, with photographs by Alfred Wilkinson, is equally concerned with Heysen’s personality, home, family and rural surroundings as with his art (Fig. 24). She describes the Heysens’ living room as combining “elegance with comfort,” and praises “the most wonderful coffee ever brewed.” Typical of this “classic celebrity genre,” the effect is both to “familiarize and ‘exceptionalize’ the artist-personality.” Complementing Heysen’s public image as a family man *The Home* published photographs of Sallie and three of the couple’s children.

Surviving correspondence indicates that Sallie was a regular reader of the magazine. In 1926, following her complaint that it contained insufficient advice on household management, Ure Smith invited her to write a column “from a housewife’s point of view.” Sallie declined the offer, but continued to share her opinions of the magazine with him.

In addition to reproducing examples of Heysen’s work and mentioning him in its “Art Notes,” Heysen featured in *The Home*’s social pages. These included

---

68 Carter, “Conditions of Fame,” 182.
70 Freda Sternberg, “A Visit to Heysen,” *Home* 2, no. 4 (December 1921): 16-17, 97.
71 Carter, “Conditions of Fame,” 182.
72 See Appendix Six.
73 Sydney Ure Smith to Sallie Heysen: 29 January 1926; 18 February 1926; 12 February 1928; 24 July 1928, HH Papers.
references to Dame Nellie Melba, Anna Pavlova and Dame Sybil Thorndike visiting The Cedars. Similarly, in articles about the homes of prominent Australians, mention is made of works by Heysen in their private collections. Photographs show a Heysen painting hanging above a serving table in Melba’s dining room, while two Heysens flank the mahogany writing desk in Mrs C. H. Reading’s drawing room (Figs. 47 & 48). This parallels Art in Australia’s practice of identifying the owners of works illustrated in its captions, thus enhancing the cultural capital of both the artist and collector.

Heysen’s involvement with the Society of Artists was another context in which his friendships and professional career moves intersected within Art in Australia’s nexus. He commenced exhibiting with them on a regular basis in 1917, when Ure Smith and Lionel Lindsay were both members of its committee. Heysen’s correspondence demonstrates his active interest in the reception of his works and how they appeared alongside those of his contemporaries at the Society’s annual exhibitions. Writing to Ure Smith in 1918 he wondered “what some of the other boys will say – I must confess it is always very nice to hear enthusiastic remarks – from one’s fellow artists.” Six years later he requested Lionel Lindsay’s impressions “of the work I sent when seen in relation with that of the best … It is always an education to see one’s own production in a mixed Exhibition.” His enquiries demonstrate his desire to gauge his position in the cultural field, as during the 1920s the Sydney art world grew in importance. Although their

74 “Personal and Social (South Australia),” Home 8, no. 12 (December 1927): 8; S.U.S., “Pavlova,” ibid.12, no. 3 (March 1931): 56; “Personal and Social - Sydney,” ibid.13, no. 10 (October 1932): 4.
76 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, draft [October 1918], HH Papers.
77 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Tuesday [September 1924], LF Papers.
appraisals were usually positive, both Ure Smith and Lindsay were sufficiently well liked that they could also offer frank criticisms of Heysen’s work without fear of compromising their friendship.\textsuperscript{78}

Heysen was also interested in knowing which artists had sold works to the NAGNSW. As Heather Johnson reports, both the Society of Artists and RASNSW enjoyed strong connections to the trustees of the NAGNSW, who regularly purchased works from their annual exhibitions.\textsuperscript{79} During the 1920s, five of Heysen’s works were purchased by the Gallery from the Society’s shows.\textsuperscript{80} Ure Smith’s dual roles as President and editor created another incentive for artists from throughout Australia to send their best works to the Society’s annual exhibition in the hope of being represented in \textit{Art in Australia}.\textsuperscript{81} Nonetheless, the emergence of dealer galleries and popularity of solo exhibitions proved a source of competition. In his letters Ure Smith regularly complained that many of the more prominent members could not be relied upon to exhibit, or could only “lend us works ‘not for sale’”\textsuperscript{82} Heysen’s personal loyalty and affection for Ure Smith were major factors in his continuing to exhibit with the Society of Artists. However, on occasions Ure Smith had to implore him to save works for its exhibitions.\textsuperscript{83} Ure Smith recognised that the inclusion of works by

\textsuperscript{78} Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, [6 October 1925]; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 19 October 1925; 9 September 1928, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{79} Johnson, \textit{Sydney Art Patronage System}, 39-42, 233-34.
\textsuperscript{80} The NAGNSW purchased works in 1921, 1922, 1924, 1928 and 1929.
\textsuperscript{82} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 26 August 1928, HH Papers. Cf. Smith to Heysen: 19 October 1925; 9 September 1928, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{83} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 9 August 1926; 20 August 1935; 27 April 1937, HH Papers.
celebrated artists like Heysen helped improve the attendance at the Society’s annual shows, thus benefiting all exhibitors.\textsuperscript{84}

Ure Smith and the Society of Artists were also responsible for initiating and organising the exhibition of Australian art in London, which was held at the Royal Academy in October 1923. Heysen was closely associated with this, both because he had twelve works included, the second highest number after Norman Lindsay, and through his role as an official selector (Fig. 34). The project encountered opposition from Melbourne artists and rival art societies who resented the Society of Artists perceived control of the venture.\textsuperscript{85} Similar tensions later arose in relation to the Australian Academy of Arts (1937-1946), with which Heysen and Ure Smith were both involved, as considered in the following chapter. John S. Watkins, a member of the RASNSW council, criticised the suitability of Ure Smith who “does not paint” and Heysen, whose pictures “resemble Australia as much as they do the Fatherland,” an undisguised attack on his German heritage.\textsuperscript{86}

When Ure Smith published an illustrated record of the London exhibition Heysen had the largest number of works reproduced in colour and was exorbitantly praised in Lionel Lindsay’s essay.\textsuperscript{87} Ure Smith wrote in his “Foreword,” that: “The object of the Exhibition was to gain some recognition in

\textsuperscript{85} See, “Australia Invades Academy,” \textit{Mail} (Adelaide), 14 July 1923.
\textsuperscript{86} Lionel Lindsay, “To the Editor – Art Exhibition in London,” \textit{Daily Telegraph} (Sydney), 23 December 1922. Lindsay responded defending both men.
\textsuperscript{87} Lionel Lindsay, “Australian Art,” in \textit{The Exhibition of Australian Art in London 1923: A Record of the Exhibition Held at the Royal Academy and Organised by the Society of Artists, Sydney} (Sydney: Art in Australia, 1923), unpaginated.
London for the work of Australian artists.” However, when *Art in Australia* published a specially commissioned article by the London critic Paul Konody, together with a series of extracts from British reviews, the response to the exhibition was tepid at best. These generally asserted that Australian art was competent in technique, but rather unadventurous and unambitious, with only Preston’s still lifes demonstrating any engagement with modernism. The landscapes of Heysen, Streeton and Gruner were widely praised, but Norman Lindsay’s nudes were criticised as aesthetically unrefined. Overall, the exhibition confirmed Heysen’s central position in the Australian art world of the 1920s, but did little to advance either his reputation, or that of Australian art, in London.

### 3.3. *The Art of Hans Heysen (1920)*

Although Heysen had been the subject of articles in 1917 and 1919, the most substantial presentation of his work occurred with the publication of the separate monograph *The Art of Hans Heysen* in 1920. This formed part of a larger burgeoning of publications on Australian art which commenced in 1916 and continued throughout the 1920s. The book serves as a marker of Heysen’s rapid return to prominence in the cultural field following the First World War. Like *Art in Australia*, its text and reproductions allowed knowledge of his work to be circulated beyond the main Australian art centres. As a Perth critic observed in

---

88 Sydney Ure Smith, "Foreword," ibid.
90 *The Art of Hans Heysen*, Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920).
an otherwise lukewarm review of the book: “Heysen is rated high by his admirers over East. We have heretofore had to take him on trust, but now ... we are able to form some idea of what his reputation has been built upon.”  

Although the 1899 memorial volume commemorating Ernest Moffitt is considered the first monograph on an Australian artist, the regular publication of Australian art books only began in 1916, stimulated by a combination of wartime patriotism and the recent fashion for collecting Australian art. That year the Melbourne publisher Thomas Lothian produced two sumptuous folio-sized books, illustrated with colour plates, dedicated to the art of Frederick McCubbin and Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. Both books were priced a two guineas to subscribers or three guineas if purchased after publication. They constituted a milestone in Australian publishing history as the first time a local publisher had endeavoured to produce such large and expensive works, a point many reviewers seized upon with patriotic pride. Concurrently in Sydney, the more modest publication J. J. Hilder: Water-Colourist was initiated by a group of the late artist’s friends including Ure Smith, Stevens and Lionel Lindsay to accompany a memorial exhibition and raise funds for Hilder’s widow. The success of this slender booklet illustrated with ten colour and three monochrome plates, which sold out

---

on the first day, convinced its instigators that a market existed for an Australian art magazine.96

_The Art of Hans Heysen_ was the fourth of five such books produced by _Art in Australia_’s editors in association with the Sydney publishers Angus and Robertson, for whom Stevens sometimes worked as a freelance editor.97 It accompanied lavishly illustrated quarto-sized volumes of a similar format dedicated to Jesse Jewhurst Hilder (1918), Norman Lindsay (1918), Arthur Streeton (1919) and William Blamire Young (1921).98 With the exception of the cheaper Lindsay book, which did not feature tipped-in colour plates, each of these books was priced at two guineas.99 As with the Lothian publications, this price limited their market to individuals who normally bought expensive British books.100 Between 1919 and 1923 the Melbourne publisher Alexander McCubbin, son of the late Heidelberg painter, also produced several books on Australian art.101 These included a less expensive series titled _Australian Art Books_, which appears to have been abandoned as unprofitable, and the first theoretical treatise in Australian art, Colin Colahan’s _Max Meldrum: His Art and Views_ in 1919.102 Heysen’s letters demonstrate that he took an active interest in

---

96 Underhill, _Making Australian Art_, 65.
98 _The Art of J. J. Hilder_, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918); _The Pen Drawings of Norman Lindsay_, Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918); _The Art of Arthur Streeton_, Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1919); _The Art of Blamire Young_, Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1921).
100 Richards, _People, Print & Paper_, 41-42.
101 Alexander McCubbin was a former employee of Lothian and had contributed the anonymous biographical essay to _The Art of Frederick McCubbin_. Gray, "Happy Beyond Measure," 35.
102 While 16 artists were named as the subject of books in preparation, ultimately only 6 were produced. James MacDonald, _The Art and Life of George W. Lambert_, Australian Art Books
these publications. After reading *The Art and Life of David Davies* (1920), he criticised its illustrations as “damnably rotten & that is putting it mildly. McCubbin will do himself much harm by passing out such rubbish.” Heysen also regarded inferior reproductions as detrimental to an artist’s reputation.

Ure Smith recognised the profile-raising value of the *Art in Australia* books. He advised Heysen that, “There is no doubt the book is a great help to an artist. It helps to keep his work in demand. It brings new buyers and it helps to keep his prices high.” As Daniel Thomas has observed, monographs “are bound to be promotional as well as critical if the artist is still alive,” and invariably serve to “reinforce a market for the works of art” as well as advancing understanding and appreciation of them. Heysen was also conscious of this and consequently wished both the text and reproductions to be of high standard. After having been impressed with the quality of the illustrations in the Hilder book, he was disappointed with those in the Streeton publication. Stevens assured Heysen that: “We know by experience that your watercolours will be a much safer proposition to block-maker and printer than Streeton’s work, just as Gruner’s oil paintings were much easier to reproduce than Streeton’s were.” However, when sending proofs for Heysen’s approval in September 1920, Stevens acknowledged, “that they are not near perfection, but if one is aware of the

---

106 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 30 December [annotated 1916, actually 1918], LF Papers.
107 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 15 January 1920, HH Papers.
difficulties in reproducing delicate work such as yours … one does not feel inclined to cavil too much at the prints we are getting.”

Regarding the production of the Hilder book, Ure Smith had observed to Heysen:

the business side of these books is a nuisance … Still … I feel that our use is that we stand between the artist and the publisher – we know enough of the publisher’s business to realise that he must make a payable project and our sympathy with the artist makes us keen to see he gets a fair deal in financial arrangements.

Ure Smith’s nonchalant attitude to business matters is further demonstrated when he anticipated that under the terms of their “half-profits” agreement, Heysen would “make £300 easily out of the book perhaps more, perhaps less. I’m unable until we know the results of the Streeton book to say more definitely.”

However, in December 1920 Heysen was sent a cheque for £100, the amount it was agreed he would receive upon publication of the book. It is unclear if he received any further royalties as the books sold. Ure Smith’s somewhat haphazard approach to management may have also contributed to the delays in producing the Heysen book.

Ure Smith first suggested the publication in October 1918, before making a more definite proposal in June 1919. Heysen agreed and arrangements were made for Hartland & Hyde to commence making reproductions of works owned

---

108 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 25 September 1920, HH Papers.
109 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 3 October 1918, HH Papers.
111 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 24 December 1920, HH Papers.
by Heysen or borrowed from private collectors. Ure Smith and Stevens wished to allow the engravers, “plenty of time over the work,” assuring Heysen that “no proofs will be passed until we are satisfied that the best work has been done.”

In June 1920 Stevens advised Heysen that they “aimed at getting the book out in September,” despite experiencing many delays, “chiefly on account of the difficulties in the printing trade – shortened hours, refusal to work over-time and higher wages.” However, it was mid-November before Heysen was sent the last of the proofs for his approval. Fortuitously these delays enabled the inclusion of colour plates of Heysen’s three watercolours in that year’s Society of Artists exhibition, which many in Sydney considered his finest works to date. These included *The Toilers*, discussed in the previous chapter, which received the Wynne Prize for 1920 and was reproduced as the book’s frontispiece (Fig. 49).

*The Art of Hans Heysen* finally appeared in Sydney and Adelaide bookshops in mid-December, but was not distributed to other states until later, depriving it of lucrative Christmas sales.

Ure Smith and Stevens asked Lionel Lindsay to contribute an article on Heysen’s art, “as we feel sure that there is no one better fitted for the task.” Lindsay’s essay, which was composed following a visit to The Cedars in March 1920, is considered below. Stevens invited Heysen to suggest an author for a second article, so Heysen approached his friend Charles Reade, a town planning

---

113 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 24 October 1919, HH Papers.
114 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 15 January 1920, HH Papers.
115 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 1 June 1920, HH Papers.
116 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 November 1920, HH Papers.
117 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 25 September 1920, HH Papers.
118 Based on a survey of newspaper advertisements (December 1920-January 1921), accessed through the NLA’s Trove database, trove.nla.gov.au
119 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 15 January 1920, HH Papers.
adviser and advocate of garden cities. However, upon receiving Reade’s manuscript Stevens regretted to advise Heysen that his, “highly ornate style and excess of eulogy … makes it, to my mind, absurd and to print it in a book such as yours … would be highly injurious to you and to us.” Heysen confessed to Lindsay that he was “extremely relieved” when the editors declined Reade’s article. Despite believing that it “contained much good writing in my humble opinion,” he described it as “an oration” that “quite missed the point that my aims are after all only very simple. Your article covers the whole ground & the two would not have agreed.” Although Reade’s essay remains untraced, a sense of his florid writing style may be gained from his letters, where he writes of Heysen’s “Meredithian exclusiveness in the hill tops” amidst the “pure pulse of simplicity.”

Heysen’s book featured 31 colour plates (23 of which dated from 1917 or later) and 32 monochrome reproductions of his work. It contained fewer colour images, but a higher total number of illustrations than the Hilder, Streeton and Blamire Young books. In contrast to Streeton’s book where European subjects predominated, all but one of Heysen’s images were Australian. Heysen was invited to supply a list of the works he wished included, but subsequent letters reveal Ure Smith and Stevens gently guiding this selection in the interests of greater variety and practical concerns. Although the primary market for

122 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 25 September 1920, HH Papers.
123 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 October 1920, LF Papers.
124 See, Charles Reade to Heysen: 5 August 1919; 1 October 1919; 4 October 1920, HH Papers.
125 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 24 October 1919, HH Papers.
Heysen’s work had been Melbourne, the majority of pictures reproduced belonged to Sydney collectors or to Heysen himself. Ure Smith had advised Heysen in mid-1919, “I would like, as far as possible to have the blocks etched in Sydney,” where he could monitor their quality. Ultimately only four paintings owned by Melbourne collectors were reproduced, with one intended reproduction rejected “as the blocks, made in Melbourne, were not quite satisfactory.” Wishing to be represented by the strongest examples of his recent work, Heysen delayed sending one watercolour to its London purchaser so that it could first be sent to Sydney and reproduced for the book.

The monochrome illustrations consisted of 28 mainly charcoal drawings, the majority of which were finished compositions rather than sketches. This strong representation reflects the primacy of drawing to Heysen’s technique and beliefs about art. Stevens also asked Heysen to include some of his etchings in the book. Although Heysen only produced twenty works in this medium, four were reproduced. Etching had recently undergone a revival in Australia and was extremely fashionable, which would explain the disproportionate representation of this facet of Heysen’s work. Three of Heysen’s floral still lifes were included after Stevens suggested that “as Lionel has written about your flower paintings … I think it is very desirable that at least one of them should be reproduced in colour” (Fig. 50). Stevens also wrote that they proposed reusing colour blocks

128 Heysen to Frank Rinder, draft, 22 December [1919], HH Papers. The work *Harrowing, Winter Morning* was purchased by Frank Rinder, the London adviser to the Felton Bequest.
129 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 17 March 1920, HH Papers.
131 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 25 September 1920, HH Papers.
which had previously appeared in *Art in Australia*, as they were “particularly anxious to include some prints which were not in the red and gold colour scheme of nearly all that you sent over.” Ure Smith assured Heysen that the book would “do a lot to remove the erroneous impression that you only paint gum trees.” However, this was partly achieved through the editors’ intervention, which like Lindsay’s essay sought to foreground Heysen’s breadth as an artist.

### 3.4. Lionel Lindsay’s Writing on Heysen

The critic who discussed Heysen’s work most extensively in *Art in Australia* publications was Lionel Lindsay. In addition to his 1920 essay, he contributed four articles on Heysen to the magazine between 1919 and 1928, and praised his work in more general considerations of Australian art. Following their introduction in 1905 the two men largely maintained their friendship via correspondence, with Lindsay frequently utilising the content of these letters in his writing. Thiele has described Lindsay as Heysen’s “champion and interpreter, consultant and critic,” who throughout his career “was always on hand to open Hans’s exhibitions, prepare forewords for his catalogues, write articles for his books.”

Heysen recognised the significance of Lindsay’s efforts, writing in 1926: “How can I thank you sufficiently for … all you have indirectly done, which I feel has decidedly helped to make my Exhibition a success. Your very sympathetic writings on my work from time to time have been a factor, as well as giving me much encouragement.”

---

132 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 20 October 1920, HH Papers.
133 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 November 1920, HH Papers.
135 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay June [1926], LF Papers.
critic serves as “the intermediary between the artist’s work and the public.”

Through his writing Lindsay became, in Thiele’s words, “Australia’s interpreter of Hans Heysen.” However, Lindsay’s appreciative commentary on Heysen served not only to bolster his friend’s reputation, but also foregrounded those characteristics that Lindsay valued in art.

Lindsay contributed numerous articles to *Art in Australia*, although his relationship with Ure Smith was somewhat strained during the early years of the magazine. Underhill has identified him as Ure Smith’s “most trusted art critic” and Joanna Mendelssohn has described Lindsay’s “standard eulogy of a living artist – praising his aims, looking only at the good qualities of his art and passing over the bad.” Despite regarding art as his vocation, until the mid-1920s he was obliged to rely on journalism and commercial illustrating to support his extended family. While generous in his appraisals of those he admired, Lindsay’s letters reveal his sometimes irascible temperament. This became apparent in his later published writings about modernism, as considered in the following chapter.

---


139 *Making Australian Art*, 92; Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 141-42, 69. In 1923 Lindsay asserted: “I believe with Eugene Fromentin, that artists should not criticise their contemporaries. It is an unwritten code of honour to ignore bad work, and praise what is good.” “Comradeship in Art – Lionel Lindsay Outspoken,” *Register* (Adelaide), 26 October 1923.

As his letters show, Lindsay envied Heysen’s ability to concentrate exclusively on his art and often resented the intrusion criticism made upon his own spare time. In a particularly despondent letter from 1932 he expressed his regret at “the waste of time I was foolish enough to use in writing about Australian Art, and to write clear English & not an art-jargon takes time. Only yourself and Syd have ever given me thanks.” Conscious of his friend’s sacrifices, Heysen wrote a letter to the editor in 1925, praising Lindsay’s “great service to his fellow-artists” with “much of his valuable time … spent for others in the cause of art.” Its publication strategically coincided with Lindsay’s Adelaide solo exhibition. Three years later Heysen thanked Lindsay for agreeing to compose an article on his work, “as I know how very pressed you are for time & I know of no one, but you who could do it, as you are more in touch & in sympathy with what I am striving for.”

Following a short article considering Heysen’s recent watercolours in 1919, Lindsay contributed the lengthy essay for the 1920 Heysen monograph. This was divided into two sections titled “Heysen – the Man,” and “Heysen’s Art,” but there are frequent slippages between the two where Lindsay implies that the character of the artist accounts for the quality of his art. He commences by discussing the importance of sincerity, describing Heysen’s mind as “simple yet

141 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: [6 June 1922]; 19 October 1922; 2 June 1924; 20 February 1938, HH Papers.
142 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 17 June 1932, HH Papers.
143 Hans Heysen, “Artist’s Tribute to Lionel Lindsay,” Register, 8 December 1925. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 8 March [1920], LF Papers; Heysen, “An Appreciation” 7.
144 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 24 March [1928], LF Papers.
145 Lionel Lindsay, “Hans Heysen’s Later Watercolours,” Art in Australia series 1, no. 6 (1919): unpaginated.
profound” and asserting that he loves both art and nature equally. After a detailed description of Heysen’s studies in Europe, which Lindsay presents as essential to the development of his technique, he positions Heysen’s move to Hahndorf as of equivalent significance, writing: “He was now free to develop his personality in landscape, having at his back accumulated knowledge, and about him a beautiful countryside which contained all the elements of the landscape painter’s art in a most typical Australian setting.” Thiele describes this essay as attempting to analyse “the threefold essence of the man, his environment, and his art.”

Throughout the essay, a recurring vacillation exists between foregrounding the Australian character of Heysen’s work and positioning him in relation to the grand tradition of European art. Lindsay resolves this contradiction by arguing for the necessity of an artist loving nature, giving the examples of Corot, Constable and Théodore Rousseau, asserting that to their company, “may also be added Hans Heysen.” As discussed in Chapter One, Lindsay’s comments reflect what Anne Gray terms “an aesthetic of the Continuing Tradition.” He compares Heysen’s Italian works with Turner, his farming subjects with Millet and Charles Jacque and his flower paintings to Henri Fantin-Latour. By suggesting that Heysen’s work demonstrated the same skill and sensitivity as these revered European artists, Lindsay sought to convince Australian art lovers that the best

---

147 Ibid., 7.
148 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 182.
149 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 20.
151 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 5, 12, 14-15, 18-19.
local artists were equally worthy of attention. As Moulin observes, this strategy “assumes that its audience is cultivated or at any rate passingly familiar with the names invoked,” thus appealing to their cultural capital.152

Lindsay’s essay also demonstrates a growing awareness of Australian art history. He proclaims, “Heysen’s mastery of the [gum] tree as the greatest contribution to Australian art,” praising his friend’s success in capturing the “character and colour” of the eucalypt, which had “eluded” earlier colonial artists.153 Additionally, Lindsay suggests that the work of Buvelot, Roberts, McCubbin and Streeton helped to hasten Heysen’s development, without him having been “directly influenced by any of these painters.”154 Lindsay had previously positioned Heysen’s achievements in relation to other Australian artists in his essays on Streeton and Conrad Martens, thus seeking to cement his friend’s reputation as a significant innovator in Australian art.155

In order to better convey Heysen’s personality, interests and objectives, Lindsay quoted passages from his correspondence. The 1920 essay includes six extracts from Heysen’s letters, which collectively account for two and half pages of the 16 page article. When compared to the surviving letters the quotations are largely accurate, but minor changes were made to Heysen’s somewhat eccentric punctuation and occasionally phrases were omitted without acknowledging the excision. Sometimes this has the effect of changing his emphasis. In a quote

152 Moulin, French Art Market, 73.
153 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 13-14.
154 Ibid., 13.
from 1918 that originally read, “I came upon them at ‘the moment’ when the animals were still sweating and steaming,” the underlining and inverted commas were omitted from the published text, diminishing the sense of temporality.  

The tone of other quotations is altered through their decontextualisation. A lengthy passage recounting his attempts to capture the effects of heat and sunlight in recent watercolours reads like a statement of his artistic aims. However, viewed in its original context of a 1909 letter lamenting the poor quality of works by other exhibitors in that year’s Federal Exhibition, it assumes a tone of superiority at odds with the humility that Lindsay ascribes to Heysen.

Lindsay’s use of direct quotes both conveys a greater sense of intimacy with Heysen, while confirming his authorial expertise. John House has observed that a critic “might publish, or quote from, an artist’s letter as a means of demonstrating his own insider status in the art world.” Throughout Lindsay’s essay, there are reminders of his privileged personal knowledge of his subject. He writes about conversations with Heysen and viewing drawings in his studio. House also considers instances of artists’ letters that were written in the knowledge that they might subsequently be published. Lindsay had previously quoted from Heysen’s letters in his 1911 Bulletin article. Consequently, from this date onwards, Heysen must have been aware that his statements to Lindsay

---

156 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 8 December [annotated “about 1910,” actually 1918], LF Papers. “Art of Hans Heysen,” 16. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 23 February [1918 or 1919], and the published quotation, ibid., 16-18.
157 Ibid., 8.
158 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [annotated: about 1910; actually 1909], LF Papers. For Heysen and Lindsay’s joint review of this exhibition, see Appendix Five.
160 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 6, 11, 18.
might appear in print. Thiele has characterised the two men’s correspondence as an “extensive and intimate interchange that probes the spirit and reveals the heart.” However, some of Heysen’s letters may have been written with a self-aware desire to record his aims and views for posterity. Indeed, on at least two occasions quotes used by Lindsay were taken from letters specifically written to supply information for forthcoming articles. Indeed, in his 1926 article on Heysen, Lindsay openly acknowledges: “I asked him for a note on his technique and he sent me the following.” He advised Heysen that such firsthand observations “would add that personal quality which is so valuable in an article of the sort I contemplate.”

As noted earlier, Lindsay drew attention to Heysen’s still lifes, first in 1920 and again in his 1925 article “Heysen’s Flower Pieces” (Fig. 51). On both occasions he relates Heysen’s flower paintings to those of Fantin-Latour. In the earlier essay Lindsay asserts that “I am sure that Fantin made him a master.” However, five years later he seeks to “stress the principal difference between them.” He contends that unlike Heysen, Fantin-Latour “was not a nature lover, a painter of landscape … but entirely an indoor artist,” and that there is a greater “vivacity” about Heysen’s flowers. Ann Elias argues that by invoking the work of a revered artist like Fantin-Latour, Lindsay helped legitimise Australian flower painting, which was accorded a low critical status during the Victorian and

---

164 Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen the Draughtsman,” *Art in Australia* series 3, no. 15 (1926): unpaginated. See, Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 January [1926], LF Papers. The lengthy quote in Lindsay’s 1919 essay also originated in this manner. “Heysen’s Later Watercolours,” unpaginated. See, Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 February 1919, LF Papers.
165 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, undated [c. December 1925], HH Papers.
166 They are also discussed in Lindsay, “Heysen the Draughtsman,” unpaginated.
167 “Art of Hans Heysen,” 18.
Edwardian periods. Mindful of lingering prejudices against the genre, Lindsay is careful to affirm the superiority of Heysen’s work, writing that “though still-life and flowers are painted by the acre … Heysen succeeds after so many have failed.” In his essay for the 1923 London exhibition, Lindsay goes so far as to assert that “no one since paint was first mixed – not even Apelles – has ever painted grapes so well.” Elias also observes that Lindsay emphasised “the interconnections between Heysen’s family, his garden, and his flower painting.” Following the suspicion attached to him during the First World War, she argues that Lindsay sought to show that a sensitive family man like Heysen “was incapable of treachery and evil.”

Lindsay also contributed essays to two of the three numbers of *Art in Australia* devoted to Heysen. His 1928 discussion of Heysen’s Flinders Ranges works is considered below, but it is his 1926 essay, “Heysen as Draughtsman,” that most clearly reveals his key beliefs about art (Figs. 38 & 41). Elias has observed that Ure Smith, Heysen and Lindsay all valued artworks that demonstrated diligent labour, craftsmanship and careful drawing. Following his return to Australia in 1921, Lambert was regularly praised as the country’s foremost draughtsman for the skill of his figure drawings. However, Lindsay reminds his readers that during Lambert’s absence, “we had in our midst a great draughtsman in another genre.” He declares Heysen Australia’s leading exponent of landscape

---

169 Elias, “Fantin-Latour in Australia”.
170 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 19. Henri van Raalte, curator of the NGSA, was less enthusiastic about Heysen’s still lifes, which he felt lacked the charm and poetry of his landscapes. See, Henri van Raalte, “Hans Heysen’s Exhibition,” *The Woman’s Record* 3, no. 4 (1922): 6.
171 Lindsay, “Australian Art,” unpaginated.
173 Lindsay, “Heysen the Draughtsman,” unpaginated.
drawing which involves not only “the absolute in form,” but “all that is intangible in light and atmosphere as well.” As evidence of Heysen’s ability he recounts the judgement of the London-based society painter John Singer Sargent, who reportedly stated “he had ‘never seen better drawings of landscape,’” after viewing works owned by the former Governor-General of Australia. Lindsay declares this an “outside unbiassed [sic] opinion of the expert,” demonstrating his reverence for the authority of the British cultural establishment.175

Lindsay praises both Heysen’s technical ability and intimate knowledge of his rural subject matter, asserting that he alone of Australian landscape artists, “has equipped himself with a knowledge of … all the life of farm and station … You feel that this landscape he paints so truly lies very near to his heart.” Once again Lindsay implies that the personality of the artist accounts for the quality of the art.176 However, he subsequently commends Heysen’s drawings for their “disinterestedness,” writing that “in the searching and exposition of forms the intellect rather than the sensibility of the artist must be exercised.” He concludes with the advice, “Let temperament alone; it can be safely trusted to conserve its interests, but discipline eye and hand.”177 Lindsay’s emphasis on technique has affinities with the British ‘New Criticism’ of D. S. MacColl and R. A. M. Stevenson, art writers whom he admired.178

175 Lindsay, "Heysen the Draughtsman," unpaginated.
177 Lindsay, "Heysen the Draughtsman," unpaginated.
Lindsay returned to the topic of drawing a decade later in a 1937 special issue of *Art in Australia* dedicated to the subject. This corresponded with a period of conflict between modernists and conservatives in the Australian art world, which is considered in the following chapter. Seeking to defend craftsmanship and naturalism, Lindsay again praises Lambert and Heysen as Australia's foremost draughtsmen.179 He concludes that modernism’s “greatest crime has been in the domain of drawing, to which it has contributed distortion as a fixed principle.”180 Heysen applauded Lindsay’s article and ordered additional copies of the issue to send to his daughter Nora and various friends in London.181

Hoorn has described Lindsay as “one of the most powerful art critics of the day, the conservative gatekeeper of Australian art.”182 In Heysen’s case, Lindsay’s predominantly positive comments served to reinforce the particular qualities that he admired in art. This reflects James Heffernan’s assertion that the language of art criticism “is always rhetorical, that its ostensibly descriptive moves are always interpretive, that it seeks to regulate what we see, and that its pictorial ‘facts’ … are designed by an interpreter who is cast as the verbal representative of visual art.”183 Hoorn suggests that for critics such as Lindsay the timeless continuity signified by Heysen’s traditional technique and subject matter served as a counterpoint to modernism, which was perceived as foreign.

---

180 Ibid., 44.
181 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 18 September [1937], SUS Papers.
urban, unhealthy, constantly changing and better suited to women. An overt hostility to modernism became more pronounced in Lindsay’s writing following his trip to Europe of 1926-27. However, by praising its antithesis in his earlier criticism, he contributed to a cultural climate that discouraged the development of modernism in Australia. Lindsay’s praise for Heysen’s work displays his central concerns of correct drawing and close observation of nature. Thus he reiterated the qualities he valued in art and helped advance his friend’s reputation by positioning Heysen as the exemplar of what Australian artists should aspire to achieve.

3.5. Heysen and Reproductions of his Work

In 1916 James MacDonald asserted that: “To the truly marvellous development of the art of printing is due the wide popularity that painting now achieves,” describing publishers as the artist’s “herald and co-partner in the wider field of renown … sending abroad the multiplied proofs of his genius to delight an infinitely widened circle of admirers.” Indeed, the frequent reproductions of Heysen’s work in Art in Australia and its affiliated publications were probably of greater importance than the magazine’s written discourse in sustaining his art world status. Heysen’s awareness of this is indicated by his careful monitoring of both the quality of reproductions of his art and the context in which they were deployed.

---

185 Lindsay, Comedy of Life, 259-60.
Of key importance were the skills, efforts and technological advances utilised by the process engravers and block makers Harland & Hyde and the printers Arthur McQuitty & Co., who had been Ure Smith’s preferred collaborators since 1916.\textsuperscript{187} Advertisements promoting both firms regularly appeared in Art in Australia Ltd. publications, emphasising their technical and artistic abilities.\textsuperscript{188} One from 1918 quotes Lionel Lindsay, who asserted that, “Hartland & Hyde are clearly … of that race of craftsmen beloved of William Morris. They seem to take a like pleasure in the reproduction of a work of art that the artist had in its invention.”\textsuperscript{189} A 1938 advertisement similarly quotes from a letter by Heysen praising a recent colour print, while one of his still lifes was reproduced in 1927 as a demonstration of the firm’s skill (Fig. 54).\textsuperscript{190}

Heysen’s correspondence documents both Ure Smith’s regular requests to publish examples of his art, along with the interest Heysen took in the visual accuracy of the resultant images. He felt that the quality of the reproductions had implications for the artist’s reputation, observing as early as 1909 that “a bad repro – dams the picture & the artist – as people do not allow for the inadequacy of process work & therefore its publication would do me only harm.”\textsuperscript{191} At the same time, Heysen felt that a reproduction could never adequately convey “that subtle something that lies in an original & which gives it its true reason to exist … and afterall [sic] it’s a damn good job it is so. I find this even with the best of

\textsuperscript{187} Underhill, \textit{Making Australian Art}, 138-41.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 148-50.
\textsuperscript{189} “Hartland & Hyde: To the Editors of ‘Art in Australia’,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 1, no. 5 (1918): unpaginated.
\textsuperscript{191} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 12 August 1909, WHG Papers.
colour reproduction – after all it’s only a masque of the original.”¹⁹² Heysen’s view is at odds with Walter Benjamin’s famous assertion that the intangible ‘aura’ of an art work was compromised, even in the original, by the development of copying technologies.¹⁹³

Concerns regarding the quality of the printed image affected which works were selected for reproduction. When Heysen submitted drawings for Art in Australia’s inaugural issue, Stevens regretted that they were unable to include a conté landscape, as “the tones are so delicate that … the block makers would not be able to do justice to them.”¹⁹⁴ With colour plates too, an awareness of the strengths and limitations of the three-colour printing process guided Heysen’s choice.¹⁹⁵ He was of the opinion that: “On a whole oils reproduced stronger & better than watercolours,” and felt most satisfied with the reproductions of his still lifes.¹⁹⁶ Heysen also sought to monitor the quality of published images by inspecting the proofs before they were printed and sometimes requested that changes be made to the relative colour values.¹⁹⁷

When preparing the 1928 Heysen issue, Ure Smith explained that colour illustrations were significantly more time-consuming and expensive to produce:

¹⁹² Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 11 December 1937, LF Papers.
¹⁹⁴ Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 23 October 1916, HH Papers.
¹⁹⁶ Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 24 January 1933, SUS Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 16 February 1928, LF Papers.
¹⁹⁷ Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 16 June 1924; 27 February 1928; 23 December 1928, HH Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 4 February [1926]; 4 July [1927]; 12 April [1928], 27 April [1928], SUS Papers.
“A colour block costs anything from £8-10-0 to £10-0-0 each set – whereas a black & white costs from £1-15-0 up to £2-5-0 each.” Consequently, Art in Australia Ltd. frequently sought to reuse its existing colour blocks in other publications, such as the magazine *Australia Beautiful* (1927-1931), and its successor *The Home Annual* (1932-1941). Underhill describes these as ‘“coffee table,’ Christmas present glossy production[s],” which were targeted at a larger, popular readership. They were heavily illustrated, predominantly with photographs or artworks depicting the Australian landscape, urban landmarks and wildlife (Fig. 45). Ure Smith reassured Heysen that, “the 12/6 *A in A* public are not the same people who buy ‘Aust. Beautiful’ – at 2/6. These people, cannot afford 12/6.” He had earlier suggested that *Australia Beautiful* would, “give the wider public a chance to get examples of the Australian artists work.” However, when reusing blocks from years earlier, as for the 1937 booklet *Heysen’s Gum Trees*, the printers were unable to achieve the same quality due to changes in the inks used or the loss of progress proofs. Sometimes *Art in Australia*’s blocks were loaned to other publishers, with three of Heysen’s charcoal drawings reproduced in a London publication, Jasper Salwey’s *The Art and Practice of Sketching* (1930).

---

198 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 14 January 1928, HH Papers.  
199 Underhill, *Making Australian Art*, 159. For Heysen’s representation in these publications, see Appendix Six.  
200 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 4 June 1927, HH Papers.  
201 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 2 December 1923; 15 November 1937, HH Papers; *Heysen’s Gum Trees*, (Sydney: Sydney Morning Herald, 1937).  
Heysen was also concerned about the manner in which images of his works were circulated. The printing technologies that facilitated high quality reproductions had primarily been developed to meet the needs of advertisers. Consequently, Heysen was happy for his art to be presented in a manner which facilitated aesthetic contemplation, but not if he felt it was being trivialised through overtly commercial usage. In 1932 Heysen complained to Ure Smith about the “flood of colour reproductions” of his works, including two paintings in the NGSA that were published “entirely without my knowledge or consent.”

Heysen explained that when “the Reproductions are intended for book form & educational purposes – like Art in Australia … no objection would ever be raised by an artist – but when it comes for purely commercial purposes as Almanacs &c the artist should have some say in it.” This shows that Heysen recognised the prestige and promotional value of having his work included in an elegantly produced art magazine. Heysen also allowed Art in Australia Ltd. to issue colour prints of Flowers and Fruit (1921, AGNSW) in December 1927 and White Gums (1926, Tamworth Regional Gallery) in early 1929 (Figs. 52 & 55). These were expensive, priced at one guinea, but Ure Smith felt that it would “have cheapened it to be anything less,” and that “people, who have taste, and who can never afford one of your originals,” would buy them.

Ure Smith usually asked Heysen’s permission before reproducing his pictures and although no royalty was paid for illustrations in Art in Australia, Heysen did receive payment for the two prints and large-scale reproductions of his works in

---

204 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 11 January 1932, SUS Papers. The NGSA had been assigned copyright of the works at the time of purchase.
205 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 11 January 1932, SUS Papers.
206 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 4 December 1927; undated [late 1927], HH Papers.
The Home. However, Ure Smith’s desire to reuse Heysen’s images on greeting cards placed a rare strain upon their friendship. In response to the economic stringencies of the Depression, in 1930 Art in Australia Ltd. issued cards featuring works of Australian art, with the artists receiving a royalty. Heysen subsequently regretted participating in this initiative, feeling that his work had been “cheapened,” and only reluctantly agreed to his pictures being used again in 1931 (Fig. 56). Despite repeated requests from Ure Smith and the willing participation of other prominent artists including Gruner, Blamire Young, Robert Johnson and Harold Herbert, he declined permission between 1932 and 1936. Ure Smith responded to one refusal: “Naturally I was disappointed at your letter – it made me feel like a second-rate tradesman, who didn’t know his job.” In 1937 a compromise was reached and Heysen agreed to have examples of his drawings reproduced on greeting cards. This corresponded with Art in Australia’s special number on drawing and the widespread conservative belief that sound draughtsmanship served as “a bulwark against Modernism.” Furthermore, being devoid of colour, drawings were believed to appeal more to connoisseurs, helping to mitigate the sense that Heysen’s work was being devalued.

207 Bertram Stevens to Heysen, 20 September 1921; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 28 October 1927 [misfiled with 1938 letters]; 10 February 1938, HH Papers.
209 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 30 January 1931; 7 February 1931, HH Papers.
210 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 12 January 1932; 24 October 1932, HH Papers.
211 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 14 January 1933, HH Papers. Heysen’s offending letter had not been located.
213 Underhill, Making Australian Art, 112.
Following Ure Smith’s forced retirement in November 1938, Heysen utilised his copyright as an expression of loyalty to his friend. At the suggestion of Norman Carter he wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the main Fairfax newspaper, expressing his displeasure and refusing them permission to reuse the blocks of his work in any future publications.\(^{214}\) However, under its new editorship *Art in Australia* predominantly featured modern artists and was thus unlikely to have included Heysen’s work.\(^{215}\) By contrast, Ure Smith continued to include Heysen in publications produced by his new company.\(^{216}\) During the following three decades, Heysen was increasingly willing for his pictures to be reproduced as prints, calendars and greeting cards. Following the establishment of the Legend Press in 1939, John Brackenreg regularly published colour reproductions of his work.\(^{217}\) This increased circulation of Heysen’s images beyond the consecrated spaces of specialist art publications and galleries made them accessible and affordable to a broader audience, but also contributed to the perception of him as popular rather than a serious artist.\(^{218}\)

### 3.6. The Introduction of Heysen’s Flinders Ranges Works in 1928

When Heysen commenced depicting the Flinders Ranges in inland South Australia in the late 1920s the resultant works were a significant departure from his earlier bucolic landscapes. He travelled to the Flinders nine times between November 1926 and May 1933. Thiele has described his experiences during

---

\(^{214}\) Heysen to Sydney Morning Herald, undated draft [December 1938]; Norman Carter to Heysen, 15 December 1938, HH Papers.

\(^{215}\) Furthermore, under the editorship of Peter Bellew *Art in Australia* showed scant regard for copyright restrictions, frequently reproducing pirated images of works by European artists. Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 113-14.

\(^{216}\) See Appendix Six.

\(^{217}\) John Brackenreg to Heysen: 7 July 1939; 24 August 1939, HH Papers.

\(^{218}\) Gloria Newton, "Pop Art Is One Thing... But What Is Popular Art?," *Australian Women's Weekly*, 24 August 1966, 6-11.
these visits and the practical support provided by members of his family and networks, particularly Frederick Joyner and Heysen’s eldest son David. The Flinders are actually semi-arid pastoral country, not desert. However, Heysen preferred to depict them under drought conditions, excluding most signs of agricultural land use, as considered in Rebecca Andrews’s detailed analysis of these works. Consequently, his pictures convey many of the features of the Central Australian ‘outback’ landscape and are the antithesis of the image of pastoral prosperity that dominated nationalistic painting during the interwar period. Along with the aesthetic elevation of the eucalypt, Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges are regarded as “his second outstanding contribution to Australian culture.” Art in Australia played a crucial role in facilitating the recognition and acceptance of this new facet of Heysen’s art when his images of this unusual and forbidding scenery were presented to Australian art lovers in June 1928.

Heysen is often credited with being the first artist to depict the outback landscape from an artistic point of view. However, as Alisa Bunbury has demonstrated, prior to Heysen the Flinders Ranges had already been represented by Aboriginal artists (the Adnyamathanha and Ndajuri people), topographical artists and photographers. John White, who served on the SASA’s council at the same time as Heysen, also produced a conventionally picturesque oil painting of the area, Land of the Salt Bush (1898, Fig. 57), and the Victorian artist Carl Hampel’s painting The Desert (whereabouts unknown), was included in the 1923

---

219 Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 195-212.
222 Bunbury, Arid Arcadia, 20-62.
London exhibition. Heysen may have had these pictures in mind when he wrote to Ure Smith, “I have seen the results of many amateur painters! – ghastly attempts which hold no temptation to ever wish to see the country.”

Although art history is now more inclusive of a wider range of cultures, media and types of visual imagery, this was not the case in the Australian art world of the 1920s. Consequently, Heysen was better placed to gain recognition for this unfamiliar subject matter as he worked within the favoured artistic paradigm and enjoyed a pre-existing national reputation and network of influential contacts. Becker has described the capacity for “established artists” to facilitate change by “exploit[ing] their attractiveness to the existing system,” thus encouraging it to handle works that do not conform to existing art world conventions. As Bunbury rightly observes, although not “the sole instigator of artistic interest in the outback there is no doubt that Heysen was the most visible proponent of the beauty of ‘Central Australia.’” His example served to broaden the type of imagery depicted by Australian landscape painters, with many other artists venturing inland during the decades that followed. Among these were Cazneaux, Horace Trenerry, Max Ragless and Jeffrey Smart who each gleaned advice from Heysen prior to visiting the Ranges.

Heysen’s visit followed enthusiastic descriptions of the Flinders scenery from others, with the account of his Melbourne dealer W. H. Gill a particular

---

223 White’s painting was purchased by the NGSA in 1898.
224 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 19 May [1928], SUS Papers.
225 Becker, Art Worlds, 130.
226 Bunbury, Arid Arcadia, 84.
Gill was also an amateur ethnographer and had recently travelled to inland South Australia to document the customs of the Wonkonguru people. He advised Heysen that the artist who “has the courage” to brave the discomfort of the Flinders, “will there find something that has not yet been done … & place a mark against his name that will endure. … To paint it as it should be done it is either you or Streeton – no others have the power and vision.” Gill also mentioned that both Blamire Young and Harold Herbert were considering painting the Ranges. The combined promise of dramatic and original subject matter, together with the threat of potential competition in this new field would have encouraged Heysen to visit without delay. The thought of outstripping his longstanding rival Streeton must have particularly appealed. Following Heysen’s first visit, but before he had developed many finished works, Gill observed:

Who has painted the greatest Australian Landscape yet. That gives expression to the light & heat of 9/10ths of Australia! Nobody it yet has to be done! Old Tom Roberts came near to it with his ‘Break Away’ but that is not pure Landscape, but it is a damned good Australian subject.

His words were designed to encourage Heysen, with the implication that his Flinders landscapes could attain a similar iconic status. Gill was also conscious of the strong demand from collectors for landscape subjects that were perceived to be distinctively Australian, as considered in Chapter One.

The publications of Art in Australia may have further spurred Heysen to examine this new area of subject matter. Six months after the 1926 Heysen issue, the magazine dedicated its September number to “A New Vision of Australian

---

228 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 7 October 1926, WHG Papers; Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 195.
230 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 11 November 1926, HH Papers.
231 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 18 January 1927, HH Papers.
Landscape,” in which Gruner, Lambert, Preston, John Moore, Roi de Maistre and Kenneth Macqueen featured prominently. The “Editorial” asserted that these works were not “of a particularly wild character,” but were distinguished by a “simplification and reduction to essentials,” believed appropriate to the Australian landscape. More provocatively, it suggested these artists had, “awoke with horror to the realisation that art had become an anaesthetic” and resolved “never to let any habit” dominate their art.232 Such comments would have alerted Heysen to subtle shifts in critical taste and encouraged him to re-evaluate his place in the cultural field. This occurred at a time when Heysen’s work was beginning to appear repetitive, with one 1924 review observing that he could “afford to go on repeating himself at this standard, whilst we hope that he will show us something still better – and different, in order to remove a vague feeling that he is painting to a formula.”233

During the 1920s Heysen was particularly interested in the works of Lambert, whose reputation was actively promoted by Art in Australia.234 In August 1923 a joint exhibition of works by Heysen and Lambert was held at Preece’s Gallery in Adelaide.235 Indeed, during the 1920s Lambert came to displace Streeton as the artist against whom Heysen measured himself. Like many of his correspondents, he credited the expatriate artist’s return to Australia in 1921 with having a stimulating effect on local art. Although Heysen sometimes found Lambert’s

---

portraits rather mannered, he admired his Middle Eastern landscapes, produced when an official war artist (Fig. 58).

He singled these out for praise in his contribution to the “Lambert Memorial Number,” in which he suggested that Lambert’s influence had “resulted in a severer study of form and character” and a general “hardening up.” William Moore noted that when in Sydney, probably for his May 1926 exhibition, “Heysen visited the war museum three times to see Lambert’s Palestine landscapes.”

Scholars have suggested that the association of desert imagery with the achievements of Australian troops during the First World War, “obliquely paved the way for representations of Australian aridity,” as national imagery. Lambert’s desert scenes feature colours and landforms similar to Heysen’s Flinders works and undoubtedly informed his aesthetic response to the Ranges. Indeed, Andrews observed that many critics initially described the scenery depicted by Heysen as evocative of the Middle East.

Two of Heysen’s Flinders paintings had entered the Australian cultural field prior to June 1928. In September 1927 he exhibited an oil titled *Mountains of Arkaba* at the Society of Artists annual exhibition. It was catalogued at 600 guineas, more than double the price he usually placed on his oil paintings. Ure Smith wrote enthusiastically about this work, pronouncing that, “It was a very good idea to get something different in subject matter. It certainly gives an entirely new view of Australian country.” He thought “people would be

---

236 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 24 September [1922]; 18 March [1923], LL Papers.
237 Heysen, “George Lambert Passes,” unpaginated.
240 *National Life and Landscape*, 189-91.
fascinated to get a true glimpse of what our interior country is really like.”

Ure Smith’s comments suggest he saw such scenery as capable of broadening both Australian landscape painting and his friend’s repertoire of subject matter. Later that year Ure Smith advised Heysen that the Society of Artists had been asked to select 16 works by Australian artists for exhibition at the Imperial Gallery of Art in London. He encouraged Heysen to submit, “one of your recent watercolours of Central Australia – As it is contemporary work” and he wished “to show what the artists are doing now.”

Heysen’s watercolour, also titled *Mountains of Arkaba* was duly selected (Fig. 59). It was reproduced alongside the other works bound for London in *The Home* of February 1928, squarely positioning this new departure in his work alongside those artists accorded prominence by the Australian art establishment (Fig. 60).

In October 1927 Gill wrote encouraging Heysen to hold a Melbourne exhibition of his latest sketches of the Flinders in early 1928. Heysen was reluctant to commit to an exhibition when he did not yet have sufficient “material in sight.” Furthermore, he wanted “time to digest what I have seen & done” and consequently wished to retain “all my notes to carry on with, for my ultimate intention – is if the work proves worthy – to show it in its entirety.” However, when approached by Ure Smith at around the same time, Heysen was more amendable to the suggestion of holding a Sydney exhibition in tandem with a

---

242 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 11 September 1927, HH Papers.
243 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 4 December 1927, HH Papers.
245 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 21 October 1927, HH Papers.
246 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 25 October [annotated 1928, actually 1927], WHG Papers.
special issue of *Art in Australia*. Significantly, neither Gill nor Ure Smith had yet seen Heysen’s most recent Flinders studies. Both were responding to positive reports from Lionel Lindsay who had visited Heysen on his return journey from Europe. Their willingness to propose exhibitions is a measure of the authority they attached to Lindsay’s judgements.

Ure Smith encouraged Heysen to stage a show at the Grosvenor Galleries, which were then under the management of Walter Taylor and Adrian Feint. He explained that Art in Australia Ltd. had been offered “an interest” in this business during 1928, receiving a third share of the Grosvenor’s profits in exchange for suggesting suitable exhibitions and helping with publicity through publications such as *The Home*. This agreement presumably grew out of Feint’s existing association with Ure Smith, through his work as a commercial illustrator for the advertising agency Smith & Julius and production of decorations and cover designs for *Art in Australia* and *The Home*. Underhill observes that “the profits were, so to speak, kept in the family,” but acknowledges that this arrangement created a conflict of interest with Ure Smith’s roles as President of the Society of Artists and a trustee of the NAGNSW.

In the same letter Ure Smith offered Heysen the opportunity to buy some of the shares in Art in Australia Ltd. being sold by Charles Lloyd Jones. Heysen willingly agreed to the publication and purchase of shares, and after some initial hesitation, to the Grosvenor exhibition. Ure Smith responded that it gave him “a
thrill of great pleasure” to have Heysen as one of their shareholders, as he liked to think the investors were “seriously interested in the welfare of our publications.” With its role in promoting the appreciation and collecting of Australian art in general, and his own work in particular, Heysen had a strong interest in *Art in Australia*’s success, even prior to investing in the company. He purchased further shares in June 1928.

The issue, titled “Recent Watercolours of Hans Heysen,” featured a cover designed by Feint, an Art Deco adaption of Heysen’s *Mountain Peaks, Flinders Range* (Figs. 61 & 62). Its “Editorial” asserted that: “It was time an unusual phase of Australian landscape was presented by a notable artist. … Heysen has blazed the trail … and ventured inland for his new artistic field.” The innovation of his subject matter was compared with Preston’s “new outlook on Australian flora,” which had been the focus of *Art in Australia*’s December 1927 issue.

Nearly half the images, and the majority of the colour plates, depicted Flinders subjects, although the original proposal to dedicate the issue exclusively to these works was abandoned after Ure Smith expressed reservations that there may be insufficient variety in the subject matter. To help locate the unfamiliar landscapes, a map showing the areas painted by Heysen was also included. Heysen felt this was a good idea, “as few people even know where are the Flinder’s Ranges in South Aus [sic].”

---

251 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 12 [or 18?] December 1927; 14 January 1928, HH Papers.
252 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 June 1928, HH Papers.
253 *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 24, (1928).
255 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 27 February 1928, HH Papers.
256 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 19 May [1928], SUS Papers.
In a demonstration of Ure Smith’s enthusiasm, the issue featured 14 colour and 24 half-tone illustrations. Ure Smith advised Heysen that they had incurred extra production costs due to including a greater number of colour plates, printing the half-tone images on one side of the paper only and reproducing seven of Heysen’s drawings in two colours, “Black & Buff or Black & Grey according to the paper you’ve used.” However, he was willing to do this for Heysen as: “I particularly like handling a book of your work. … I feel we are indeed doing a ‘service’ to Aust art by issuing such a book.” The Heysen number also contained an article by Lionel Lindsay. Ure Smith had originally felt that due to his previous writings on Heysen someone other than Lindsay should contribute the essay. However, a month later he wrote that, “Lionel wanted very much to write the article for the book – and as he has such a genuine enthusiasm for your work, I think you’d better agree to his doing so.”

Lindsay’s essay contained two lengthy extracts from letters by Heysen and the geographer Dr Charles Fenner, for whom Heysen’s Flinders landscapes appeared “as actual treatises on the underlying geological structures.” It is these quotations that most directly analyse the visual characteristics of Heysen’s works. Lindsay’s own commentary is chiefly concerned with considering the appropriate relationship between an artist and their subject matter. He praised Heysen for remaining, “impersonal, content to convey his impression, to embody the character and structure of forms revealed by the various modifications of light.

---

257 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 13 April 1928; 21 April 1928, HH Papers.
258 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 21 April 1928, HH Papers.
259 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 14 January 1928, HH Papers.
260 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 February 1928, HH Papers.
This, I believe, is the right approach to landscape.” By contrast, he condemns the “nonsense” of “grown men going back to their childish impressions” or looking “to the landscape of the primitive for guidance.”

Hoorn observes that: “Discussion of modernism often appeared when Heysen’s work was mentioned not because the critic was interested in modernism in its own right,” but because Heysen’s work epitomised “precisely what modernism was not.” Lindsay concluded by declaring “this wonderful series of mountain landscapes,” to be Heysen’s “discovery and, I believe, the most important contribution to Australian landscape made in this last decade.”

Heysen’s exhibition at the Grosvenor Galleries was opened on 14 June 1928 by William Herbert Ifould, the principal librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales and, like Ure Smith and Lindsay, a trustee of the NAGNSW. Its original opening date was postponed by three days to ensure that Art in Australia’s Heysen number was released in time. The exhibition featured 28 watercolours, of which only nine depicted Flinders subjects. This lower representation suggests Heysen’s uncertainty about how the art buying public would respond to this new facet of his work and his desire to retain some of them for future reference. The exhibition proved a critical and financial success, with total sales of £2000. All but one of the Flinders watercolours sold, with the

---

262 Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen’s Recent Watercolours,” Art in Australia series 3, no. 24 (1928): unpaginated.
264 Lindsay, “Heysen’s Recent Watercolours,” unpaginated.
265 Adrian Feint to Heysen, 6 June 1928, HH Papers.
266 Adrian Feint to Heysen, 2 May 1928, HH Papers.
268 Adrian Feint to Heysen, undated receipt [c. July 1928], HH Papers. Thiele erroneously claims that 36 pictures were sold, realising £3,750, mistakenly giving the results of Heysen’s 1926 Sydney exhibition. Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 204.
NAGNSW purchasing *The Guardian of Aroona Valley* (Fig. 64), thus conferring institutional consecration of this new development in Heysen’s art.\(^{269}\) As Andrews has considered, Heysen’s Flinders works received a predominantly positive critical response both in Sydney and during his 1929 Melbourne exhibitions.\(^{270}\)

Besides the correlation of dates, there were several points of intersection between Heysen’s exhibition and *Art in Australia*’s special issue. The exhibition’s catalogue included an extract from Lindsay’s recent article and *A Skyline of the Far North* (1927, Fig. 63) was reproduced on its cover, presumably using the *Art in Australia* printing block.\(^{271}\) Similarly, the map of the areas painted by Heysen was reprinted on the exhibition invitation card. Based upon their titles it appears that eight of the exhibits were among those reproduced in the magazine.\(^{272}\) Furthermore, advertisements promoting the Grosvenor Galleries’ forthcoming exhibitions appeared in both the March and June 1928 issues of *Art in Australia*.\(^{273}\) Heysen’s watercolour *A Sea of Hills, Arkaba*, was also reproduced in the May *Home*, with a caption publicising both the Heysen number and his Sydney show.\(^{274}\)

\(^{269}\) Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 June 1928, SUS Papers. In September 1929 the trustees returned this work in part payment for Heysen’s celebrated oil *The Hill of the Creeping Shadow* (1929, AGNSW), purchased from the Society of Artists’ annual exhibition.


\(^{271}\) This was also reproduced in *Australia Beautiful: The Home Pictorial Annual*, (October, 1928): 54.

\(^{272}\) As Heysen frequently reused the same titles and retitled existing works it is difficult to be certain.


The publications of Art in Australia Ltd. also helped less directly to legitimise Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges as a significant contribution to the Australian cultural field. In both January and July 1928, The Home published articles about the exploration of Central Australia, accompanied by photographs of the inland scenery and its indigenous residents. The stark images of Ayres Rock (Uluru), Mount Olga (Kata Tjuta) and the Petermann Ranges illustrating Donald MacKay’s account of his expedition in the Southwestern Northern Territory strongly resemble Heysen’s works (Fig. 67).275 In the second article, Randolph Bedford praised Heysen’s Flinder’s watercolours as, “sincere expressions of a fine mind” capturing “the real inland Australia – simply majestic and silent.”276 Preston’s painting Rifle Birds (1928, Fig. 66) was reproduced on the cover of this issue. This depicts a pair of native birds and Aboriginal tree carvings in front of a stylised desert landscape, which resembles Heysen’s Three Sisters of Aroona (1927, Fig. 65).277 In November the company republished Bedford’s text in the booklet Inland Australia. Feint’s cover design for the Heysen issue was reused as its frontispiece.278 The confluence of these descriptions and representations served to heighten public awareness of and interest in the sort of landscape imagery that Heysen had depicted.279

275 Donald Mackay, “Charting the Heart of Australia: Being an Account of the Recent Expedition to Central Australia,” ibid., no. 1 (January 1928): 14, 16, 24-25.
276 Randolph Bedford, “Inland Australia: A Pointillistic Impression of the Vast Unpopulated Territories of the Australian Continent,” ibid., no. 7 (July 1928): 91.
277 For a discussion of this work in relation to Preston’s thematic and aesthetic concerns, see, Edwards, Peel, and Mimmoctchi, Margaret Preston, 107.
278 Randolph Bedford, Inland Australia: A Series of Photographs (Sydney: Art in Australia, 1928).
279 From the mid-1930s Walkabout magazine, which was published by the Australian National Travel Association, further enhanced public consciousness of the central Australian landscape. See, Mitchell Rolls, “Reading Walkabout in the 1930s,” Australian Studies 2 (2010): 1-10.
Heysen’s Flinders works undoubtedly represent an innovative contribution to Australian art in terms of their subject matter. Some art historians, including Mary Eagle, Ian Burn and Andrews, have suggested that they also reflect modernist stylistic developments, with certain features recalling the paintings of the post-impressionists. Indeed, these works possess more decorative qualities, caused by Heysen’s layering of clearly delineated, geometric and intensely coloured landforms placed against the contrasting tones of the sky. A comparable shift away from the picturesque towards a more modern aesthetic is also evident in the photographs of Joyner, who accompanied Heysen on his 1927 trip to the Flinders, and in paintings by Gruner following his return from Europe in 1925 (Figs. 68-70).

In making this assertion about Heysen’s work, two quotations are frequently invoked. The first is Heysen’s observation to Ure Smith, that: “There are scenes ready made, which seem to say ‘here is the very thing you moderns are trying to paint.’ Fine big simple forms against clear transparent skies.” This oft quoted statement was taken from a private letter and did not appear in print until the publication of Thiele’s biography in 1968. The second description by contrast was written to Lindsay and quoted in his 1928 essay:

the light is flat and all objects sharply defined; distances very deceptive and no appreciable atmospheric difference between the foreground and middle distance; indeed hills, at least four miles away, appear to unite … I

---

282 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 21 November [1926], SUS Papers.
found the contours of the hills extremely interesting to draw – clear edges … always a beautiful balance between the pyramid and the circle.  

However, as Heysen’s writing indicates and the aforementioned writers have acknowledged, these post-impressionist qualities were grounded in empirical observation. As Ian North observed: “The Flinders gave Heysen objective reasons for suggestions of modernism to enter his work.”

Significantly, the manner in which the critical discourse published in *Art in Australia* situated these works within the cultural field shows that Heysen’s Flinders landscapes were held up as epitomising traditional qualities, rather than stylistic innovation. Lindsay had already praised them as demonstrating Heysen’s skill, experience and knowledge of “the science of composition.” Similarly, in the 1929 book *Australian Landscape Painters of To-day*, the modernist critic Basil Burdett describes Heysen as “the most traditional of our landscape painters,” whose work is based upon “general academic principles,” approached from the angle “of the draughtsman.” Burdett does not specifically refer to Heysen’s Flinders works, but one of these is reproduced in the publication.

The traditionalism of Heysen’s outlook is demonstrated by the text he contributed to *Art in Australia*’s 1932 issue on his work, structured as a series of

---

284 Lindsay, "Heysen's Recent Watercolours," unpaginated.
287 Lindsay, "Heysen's Recent Watercolours," unpaginated.
aphorisms expressing his views on art. Heysen advocates an approach concerned with craftsmanship, design (composition), the “representation of light” and the “imitation of natural forms.” He asserts that, “Simplicity is an essential quality … but it must be the outcome of long practice, observation and knowledge, and not a … short cut.” Cézanne is acknowledged as a “master,” despite what Heysen regards as his technical shortcomings, but he is not considered a suitable exemplar for younger artists. Heysen concludes by espousing the visual impact and artistic potential of the Central Australian landscape and more than half the issue’s illustrations depict the Flinders. Thus, although sharing certain characteristics with post-impressionist art, in this context these images would have been perceived as illustrating Heysen’s conservative views. Both Heysen and Lindsay’s statements, which foregrounded the craftsmanship and empirical basis of Heysen’s Flinders landscapes, are a reflection of their increasingly defensive mindset in response to the growing prominence of modernism. Their attitudes are examined further in the following chapter, where it is also argued that Heysen’s Flinders works fall within a broad spectrum of modernist practice.

Writing with patriotic bombast, Thiele has credited Heysen’s Flinders scenes with the “awakening of the national consciousness to the bare bones of that arid landscape.” Notwithstanding the visual impact of these pictures, such an assertion fails to acknowledge the significant collaborative roles played by both Heysen’s networks and illustrated publications in introducing this imagery to the

290 Ibid., 7-8, 10, 15-18.
291 Ibid., 18-20.
Australian art world. Ure Smith’s affiliations with key Sydney cultural institutions expedited the success and acceptance of Heysen’s works. Of foremost importance was the 1928 Heysen number of *Art in Australia*, for which additional trouble and expense was incurred in order to present his pictures to best effect. Lionel Lindsay would later claim that modern art in Europe “was written into existence by hireling critics, corrupted in most instances by interested dealers.” However, as this 1928 episode demonstrates, his own traditionalist criticism was likewise utilised to advance the commercial interests of his friend and there were strong ties, and indeed conflicts of interest, between Art in Australia Ltd., the NAGNSW and some sections of the Sydney art market.

During the interwar period *Art in Australia* magazine and its associated publications functioned as influential institutions in the cultural field of the Australian art world. The important role these played as distribution systems in promoting and sustaining Heysen’s reputation, both through text and image, is demonstrated by the published products. However, Heysen’s unpublished correspondence also provides important insights into his close ties to the network that lay behind the magazine, particularly Ure Smith and Lionel Lindsay, with their various preferences and prejudices, professional concerns and personal loyalties. In addition to *Art in Australia*, this network exerted considerable influence within key institution of the Sydney art world, including the NAGNSW and the Society of Artists. However, as the period progressed *Art in Australia’s*

293 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, ix.
own position within the cultural field shifted. By the mid-1930s its failure to adequately engage with local and international modernism made it appear increasingly insular and conservative. The place of Heysen and his networks in the Australian conflicts between modern artists and traditionalists is considered in the following chapter.
Chapter Four: Where to Draw the Line? Heysen and Modern Art

While a handful of Australian artists had engaged with modernism in the 1910s and 1920s, both their numbers and prominence grew significantly during the 1930s and 1940s. As Humphrey McQueen observed, modern art “moved from being an outside challenge in the early 1930s to centre stage by the end of the decade.”¹ This chapter considers the response of Heysen and his networks to the ascendency of modernism from the early 1930s until the Jubilee celebrations of 1951. During these tempestuous years, the influence exerted by Heysen’s networks diminished substantially as many of his associates died, retired or were sidelined by a new generation who were more sympathetic to modernism. A detailed examination is made of Heysen’s frequently ambivalent attitudes towards both European and Australian modern art. Particular attention is also given to his close links to two key art world controversies, the short-lived Australian Academy of Art and the publication of Lionel Lindsay’s anti-modernist polemic Addled Art (1942). The chapter concludes by analysing Heysen’s repositioning within the cultural field, considering the changing manner in which his work was situated in art historical studies and retrospective exhibitions during this period.

4.1. Defining Modern Art in the Australian Context

Modern art, as the concept is understood in the present chapter, describes the emergence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of significant new approaches within the arts as alternatives to received traditions, particularly the pervasive idioms of naturalism and classicism which had dominated Western

¹ McQueen, Black Swan of Trespass, 129.
art since the Renaissance. Charles Harrison has described the frustration of modern artists “at the rigidity and impersonality of the ruling grammar and vocabulary of art,” which proved “unsuitable for any spontaneous or individual form of expression.”

Modern art encompasses a broad range of practices that are nonetheless connected through their exploration of two distinct but frequently overlapping concerns. Firstly, modern art may engage with the social, political or psychological conditions of modernity – the transformation of human experience through recent processes of modernisation, such as industrialisation and urbanisation.

Secondly, modernism frequently involves a self-reflexive enquiry into the nature of the art work itself, leading to an engagement with and foregrounding of the formal properties of the medium. Such approaches are primarily concerned with questions of style and aesthetics, although this self-reflexivity may alternately lead to the questioning and subversion of established definitions of what constitutes art.

In some manifestations the stylistic developments of the latter mode are used to better express the psychological or socio-political concerns of the former.

Writing to Sydney Ure Smith in 1934, Heysen stated: “When I speak of the ‘modern school’ I mean the great bulk of work that is being carried on in the manner of Cézanne – Van Gogh – & many others of that period – whom we now speak of as the pioneers of what we are apt to call modern art.”

Earlier

3 Harrison argues that: “Modernism was not to be the mere passive expression of the experience of modernity. Rather it was to stand for the attempt to secure some independence of thought and value – some autonomy – in the face of that experience.” Ibid., 27.
5 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
movements such as Realism and Impressionism had also represented substantial breaks with artistic conventions, but by the 1930s both had been readily absorbed into mainstream practice, whereas Post-Impressionism was still perceived as modern. Consequently, in this chapter Post-Impressionism – here understood as a broad, international tendency – marks the threshold between modern art and traditionalism.6

Modern art is frequently characterised by a preoccupation with ideas of modernity, innovation and originality. Thus, it represents a fundamentally different paradigm from the “aesthetic of the Continuing Tradition” as represented by Heysen and described in Chapters One and Three.7 Indeed, the catalogue of the Contemporary Art Society’s Sydney-based Annual Exhibition 1940 asserted that “Art does not stand still. Its movement is always forward, so each year sees some new step taken.”8 This emphasis upon newness, particularly when combined with formalist conceptions of modernism as style, has often resulted in histories of modern art that are structured as a series of successive movements, with each progressive development superseding the last. Alfred Barr and Clement Greenberg have constructed such teleological accounts outlining a quest towards pure abstraction.9 However, such conceptualisations do not adequately

---

6 For a comparable understanding of Post-Impressionism, see Belinda Thomson, Post-Impressionism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6-10, 60-76.
7 Gray, "Australian Artists within a Wider World," 86-87.
acknowledge the temporal overlaps or the coexistence of diverse manifestations of modern art within particular art worlds. For instance, Emma Barker, Christopher Green and David Batchelor have considered the diversity of art practised in France during the interwar period, with a broad range of art movements occurring concurrently. These variously reflected “tradition and progress; nationalism and internationalism; [aesthetic] autonomy and [political] commitment.” Between 1932 and 1951, the period considered in this chapter, the Australian art world was similarly characterised by a plurality of aims and approaches.

David Peters Corbett provides a useful framework in his study of early twentieth-century English art, when he conceives of a “continuum of ‘modernist’ and other art,” where it is possible to identify different levels of engagement with modernism “within a complex spectrum of practice.” This continuum is subdivided into categories, ranging from the avant-garde to traditionalism. These are not intended as inflexible divisions, but instead “provide a language in which discriminations can be articulated.” Corbett’s conceptualisation aligns nicely with Bourdieu’s notion of the “Field of Cultural Production,” in which each cultural position “is subjectively defined by the system of distinctive properties by which it can be situated relative to other positions.” Indeed, Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy have adapted Bourdieu’s ideas to conceive a cultural field which consists of several successive yet coexisting “generations” of artists,

including the “rear-guard,” “consecrated avant-garde” and “new avant-garde.”\(^\text{13}\)

Such approaches reflect Harrison’s assertion that “the value of modernism is established in practice as a kind of intentional difference with respect to other current forms and styles of practices.”\(^\text{14}\)

By the same token, Heysen and his conservative friends frequently differentiated between “modern” art and “ultra-modernism.”\(^\text{15}\) Prima facie, Heysen’s own art would appear to belong to the traditionalist or rear-guard end of the continuum. However, as considered in the previous chapter, in several of Heysen’s Flinders Ranges works his inherent realism appears “modified by principles derived from modernist experiments.” Indeed, Ian Burn has argued that the simplification, underlying geometry and rhythmic linearity apparent in the landscapes of artists such as Heysen, Lambert and Gruner represents “a rapprochement between modernist style and the idea of the landscape, further discrediting a categorical separation between the traditional and the modern.”\(^\text{16}\) Corbett has proposed the notion of “adapted modernism,” whereby certain modernist characteristics are used to invigorate more traditionalist approaches, imbuing them with a greater interest in design, dynamism or emotional temperateness. Thus, such art works represents “compromise formulations and positions.”\(^\text{17}\) Many of the paintings produced by Nora Heysen following her studies in London belong to this category. This is also true of the bolder


\(^{16}\) Burn, *National Life and Landscape*, 109-12, 89-91.

examples of Hans Heysen’s Flinders images, such as *The Land of the Oratunga* (1932, Fig. 71).

Another important factor in the Australian context was the broader enthusiasm for modernisation and modernist aesthetics in many areas of daily life. Consequently, scholars have proposed the need for an interdisciplinary approach, as distinct from the insular and medium-specific focus of formalism, to better understand the emergence and reception of modernism in Australia. From the 1920s onwards there was a widespread adoption of modernist approaches in architecture, design and the applied and commercial arts, with movie theatres, hotels and department stores embracing visual innovations. Mary Eagle and Anne-Marie Willis have observed that many European art movements first entered the Australian public consciousness “mainly through their secondary manifestation in fashion goods for a growing consumer market.” In 1929 Sydney Ure Smith commented in *Art in Australia* that:

> This prejudice against the more modern art in Australia is difficult to understand. Modern designs in fabrics … curtains, furniture, rugs, glass, china and lighting fixtures are imported every month … yet we are confronted with the inconsistency of a woman in a gown designed by a modern French artist and completely surrounded by the products of a modern decorative artist’s brain, condemning ‘modern’ work, by an Australian artist, which would fit in so well with her modern home.

---


A similar observation was made in 1933 by Leslie Wilkie, the director of the NGSA, who concluded that “modernity is probably entering our make-up, but it is tenderly and charily viewed at first.” Indeed, the association of modern styles with popular culture, fashion and advertising, areas particularly identified with female consumers, frequently saw modern art dismissed as shallow and ephemeral.

Many Australian artists, both modern and traditional, supported themselves by working as commercial artists and designers. In Sydney a significant number found employment with the Smith & Julius advertising agency, which was co-founded by Ure Smith and closely affiliated with Art in Australia Ltd. Heysen had worked as a freelance illustrator for the Lone Hand between 1907 and 1911, but now enjoyed a steady market for his work so was not obliged to produce commercial art. Nonetheless, the increasing ties between art, commerce and modernity sometimes influenced the manner in which his art was presented. Heysen sold works and staged solo exhibitions with the art galleries of Sydney department stores, as considered in Chapter Five. Such galleries were a prominent part of the Sydney art world, locating art collecting within the broader nexus of consumer culture. In a further link to the commercial sphere, from the 1930s onwards the South Australian Tourist Commission and others frequently invoked Heysen’s name in articles and advertisements promoting the Flinders

---

23 Eagle, Australian Modern Painting, 116.
24 Heysen held solo exhibitions with Farmer & Co. (May 1926) and David Jones’ Galleries (October 1938 and March 1952).
25 Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System, 86-87, 101-03.
Ranges as a destination. Similarly, in 1936 the Adelaide Steamship Company commissioned Heysen to paint a large oil, *White Gums*, (1936, private collection), for the passenger liner TSMV Manunda. During the interwar period ocean liners were icons of modernity, with their majestic streamlined forms epitomising the machine aesthetic. Will Ashton and Margaret Preston also had paintings commissioned for Australian ships, while Douglas Annand produced graphic art, interior design and murals for the Orient Line.

A third consideration with regard to Australian modern art is the relationship between national and international developments and the role of both nationalist and internationalist outlooks. Accounts of the appearance of modern art in Australia variously describe it as: being belatedly introduced from abroad (Bernard Smith; Hughes; Williams); reflecting a provincial cultural dependence, resulting in derivative echoes of overseas movements (Terry Smith, 1974); emerging locally as a response to contemporary social and political conditions (McQueen; Haese; Eagle); following a hybrid process of “Adopt, Adapt, Transform” (Terry Smith, 2002); or the product of a dialogue between local and

---


international concerns, facilitated by overseas travel and study and the influence of immigrant and expatriate artists (Butler and Donaldson; Speck).³⁰

As there was a strong element of cultural nationalism amongst the art establishment during the interwar period, it is often implied that the cultural conservatives were committed nationalists, while Australian modernists and their supporters possessed a more cosmopolitan mindset. Although there was frequently a correlation between these preferences, there are also notable exceptions.³¹ Margaret Preston was both a nationalist and a modern artist, while the traditionalists Will Ashton and Harold Septimus Power were just as celebrated for their depictions of European as Australian subject matter. Thus, the changing shape of the cultural field in Australia was influenced by three overlapping concerns: modern art as a spectrum of diverse, coexisting approaches; the intersection between the fine arts and broader cultural manifestations of modernity; and differing levels of engagement with and emphasis upon the local and international.


³¹Richard Haese observes that the distinction frequently made between ‘Australianists’ and ‘Internationalists’ is “not nearly as clear-cut as many would have it, and ignores ideological differences.” He argues that for several more progressive cultural figures of this era, “the nationalist versus internationalist debate was culturally bankrupt. For these men both positions had been reduced by their respective proponents to a level which promoted art that was academic, escapist, even *kitsch.”* Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 99-100.
4.2. Hans Heysen’s Networks, c.1932-1951

During the 1930s Heysen benefitted from an advantageous art world network, which included several influential figures (Figs. 74 & 96). However, by the early 1950s many of his key contacts had either died, retired or been supplanted by a new generation of tastemakers eager to advance the cause of modern art. Heysen enjoyed a particularly strong network in Sydney with significant ties to the Society of Artists and Art in Australia, as considered in the previous chapter. Four of his associates were also trustees of the NAGNSW: Lionel Lindsay (trustee, 1918-1929 and 1934-1949); Howard Hinton (1919-1948); Sydney Ure Smith (1927-1947); and James McGregor (1929-1958). Hinton and McGregor were also important art collectors and cultural philanthropists. Furthermore, Heysen’s friend Will Ashton was the director of the NAGNSW from 1937 to 1944 and later the director of David Jones’ Art Gallery from 1944 to 1947. Heysen also maintained an amiable professional association with James MacDonald (director of the NAGNSW, 1928-1936 and NGV, 1936-1941; art critic for the Age, 1943-1947) and Daryl Lindsay (director NGV, 1942-1955), but was not a close friend of either man.

The artist, teacher and stained-glass designer Norman Carter was another friend and regular correspondent closely aligned with Heysen’s Sydney network. From 1926 Carter was the long-serving vice-president of the Society of Artists and in 1938 painted the rather dour portrait Hans Heysen, Esq. (1938, Fig. 72). A further important contact was the artist, publisher and exhibition manager John Brackenreg, who relocated from Perth to Sydney in 1938 and established the Legend Press in 1939. Brackenreg managed shows for Heysen in 1933 and 1938,
printed colour reproductions of his work and published the sumptuous volume *Hans Heysen: Watercolours and Drawings* (1952). Heysen was also friends with Harold Herbert, the Melbourne watercolourist and art critic for the *Argus* (1934-1944). Most of these men held reactionary views on art, although Ure Smith, McGregor and Daryl Lindsay had broader and more progressive tastes.

When considering the obstacles encountered by Australian modernists, later art historians have frequently described the conservative cultural gatekeepers as if they were a unitary faction. However, as evidenced in the letters received by Heysen, regular differences of opinion occurred amongst the members of his networks. Despite their friendship with Will Ashton, neither Ure Smith nor Lindsay voted for his appointment as director of the NAGNSW as they had already nominated Basil Burdett, an art critic and gallerist sympathetic to modernism. McGregor, however, advocated for Ashton. Similarly, there were significant divisions between those trustees, such as Heysen’s friends, who were involved with the Society of Artists, and those affiliated with its rival, the RASNSW. During this period differences in outlook also existed amongst the members of the Society of Artists. In 1927 Ure Smith observed to Heysen, “in our Society we have the modern school also the normal school – and they don’t like each other much.” He later defended this diversity as a virtue, asserting in 1946: “we have kept a balance between the ultra moderns and the good

---

32 Butler and Donaldson, "Stay, Go, or Come," 123; James, "'No Thank You'," 63-67.
33 James McGregor to Heysen, 11 November 1936; Will Ashton to Heysen, 28 November 1936; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 5 December 1936, HH Papers.
35 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 2 September 1927, HH Papers.
conservatives … We are neither as advanced as the experimental contemp[orary] art society or (thank goodness) as outmoded as the Royal Art Society.”

Nancy Underhill has observed that following Ure Smith’s forced retirement from Art in Australia Ltd., he concentrated upon promoting the Society of Artists and its members through his new publishing company Ure Smith Pty Ltd. (est. February 1939). During the 1940s Ure Smith actively endorsed the works of a younger generation of Sydney-based artists including William Dobell, Russell Drysdale, Donald Friend, Elaine Haxton and Douglas Annand, many of whom were associated with the Merioola Group. Their works typically displayed a moderate engagement with modernism, but remained figurative and were frequently melancholic, poetic or whimsical in tone. Richard Haese has argued that by 1946 a “recognised Ure Smith ‘stable’ of painters” had come to represent the tastes of “the new establishment.”

Lionel Lindsay objected to Ure Smith’s support of modern art in his three capacities as a publisher, trustee and President of the Society of Artists. In 1940 Lindsay resigned from the Society because he felt his work had been marginalised in favour of modernist practitioners. He later complained to Heysen that Ure Smith was, “really no friend of ours. His entire lack of principle, in ‘going over

---

38 Ibid., 50-52, 171.
41 Mendelsohn, Lionel Lindsay, 198; Underhill, Making Australian Art, 50.
to the enemy,’ he pretends to defend on the ground of representing all interests! but actually he likes anything modernist.” Conversely, Ure Smith wished that Lindsay would recognised that,

the newer men such as Dobell, Drysdale and Friend would like him so much and … that they were interesting as personalities and not the ultra-moderns he thinks they are … I feel the influence of the Society on these younger people will be sound and we’ll see them dropping their tricks and getting down to something more profound.\textsuperscript{43}

This mix of tolerance and conservatism supports Underhill’s observation that with regard to safeguarding “Australian art from the stylistic excesses” of the avant-garde, “Ure Smith and Lionel Lindsay shared a common protectionist aim but had quite different cut-off points.”\textsuperscript{44}

Heysen also maintained influential contacts in the Adelaide art world. Following the establishment of a separate Board of Governors for the NGSA in 1940, he was appointed to that committee.\textsuperscript{45} Other foundation board members included the lawyer Ronald Finlayson (board, 1940-1945), whose friendship with Heysen was considered in Chapter Two and John Goodchild (1940-1953 and 1960-1969), an artist, teacher, President of the RSASA (1937-1940) and Principal of the School of Arts and Crafts (1941-1945).\textsuperscript{46} Like Heysen, Goodchild was a

\textsuperscript{42} Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 29 August 1943, HH Papers. Cf. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 25 October 1945, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{43} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 May 1943, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{44} Underhill, \textit{Making Australian Art}, 182.
\textsuperscript{45} Charles Fenner to Heysen, 13 January 1940, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{46} Both men had already been appointed to the preceding Board of Governors for the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, Finlayson in 1929 and Goodchild in 1938. For a discussion of these and other early members of the board, see Margot Osborne, “Post-Imperial Perspectives: British Art since 1940 at the Art Gallery of South Australia” (PhD thesis, University of Adelaide, 2015), 76-80.
traditionalist in both his work and tastes, firmly believing in the importance of correct drawing.  

Heysen held a particularly high opinion of Louis McCubbin, the director of the NGSA from 1936 until 1950.  

In tandem with a major extension to the gallery building which opened in 1937, McCubbin helped revitalise the institution by renovating the displays, introducing educational programmes and publishing the country’s first gallery magazine.  

It is a testament to McCubbin’s broadmindedness that in addition to winning the praise of cultural conservatives, he also earned the admiration of the modernist artist and critic Ivor Francis. 

Despite the conservatism of Heysen and the other trustees, the NGSA was the first state gallery to purchase works from the Contemporary Art Society (CAS), acquiring three paintings from the Anti-Fascist Exhibition of 1943. McCubbin shrewdly promoted the acquisition of works like Francis’s surrealist composition *Schizophrenia* (1943) by emphasising characteristics like its “good craftsmanship” that were valued by his trustees.

---


48 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 April [1937], SUS Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 12 April 1938, WA Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 23 May [1944], LF Papers.


50 Alexander Melrose, a solicitor and philanthropist, donated £10,000 for an extension to the NGSA in 1934, prior to McCubbin commencing as director. However, McCubbin was responsible for the curation of the displays when the ten galleries of the Melrose Wing opened in August 1937. See, “£10,000 Gift to Art Gallery – Mr. Alex Melrose is Donor – for Centenary,” *News* (Adelaide), 23 November 1934; Ernestine Hill, “Beauty of New Art Gallery,” *Advertiser*, 6 August 1937; “New Wing of National Gallery Opened,” *Advertiser*, 17 August 1937.


52 The three works purchased were: John Bainbridge, *Cette Liberté* (1942); Jacqueline Hick, *Landscape* (1943); and Marjorie Gwynne, *Farm by the Sea* (c.1939). All purchased with the Elder Bequest Fund.

53 Louis McCubbin to the Art Gallery Board, Report on the Exhibition of Paintings by Ivor Francis and Douglas Roberts, 8 August 1945, AGSA Board Papers, AGSA Research Library.
Heysen was also friends with the important local art patrons Edward (Bill) and Ursula Hayward (née Barr Smith). Following their marriage in 1935 the couple began assembling an extensive collection of Australian, British and French art, which included works which were modern, but not avant-garde. Ursula was the daughter of Heysen’s friends and patrons Tom and Mary Barr Smith. She became the first woman appointed to the board of the NGSA, serving from 1953-1970 (Fig. 75). Bill was a joint managing director of the John Martin’s department store, which in 1946 established an art gallery. Stefan Heysen, Hans’s youngest son, was appointed the inaugural manager of the John Martin’s Art Gallery from 1946 to 1949 and subsequently established the Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf (1949-1953).

The prominence and influence of Hans Heysen’s networks also had significant implications for his daughter Nora, particularly following her relocation to Sydney in 1938 (Fig. 73). This corresponded with a decisive period in her career, as she sought to re-establish her position in the Australian art world and consolidate her experience following her time abroad. Hans’s friends were well placed to help advance Nora’s reputation and promote her work through exhibitions, publications and gallery purchases. As a member of the arts committee of the Australian War Memorial, McCubbin recommended Nora for appointment as an official war artist in January 1943. Nora had proactively

54 Stefan’s involvement with the art market is considered in Chapter Five.
55 Ure Smith reproduced Nora’s paintings in his publications from 1933 onwards. Both McGregor and Hinton presented paintings by her to the NAGNSW; Hinton also donated four of her works to the Teachers’ College, Armidale.
sought this position by approaching her father’s friends McGregor, McCubbin and Ure Smith. However, as Catherine Speck has observed, one consequence of being so closely tied to Hans’s networks and serving as a conduit for messages to him was the “feeling of lack of separation from her father,” detrimental to Nora’s establishing an independent identity. This was apparent in 1939, after Nora was awarded the 1938 Archibald Prize for her portrait *Madame Elink Schuurman* (1938, private collection), becoming the first woman to receive this accolade. Some disgruntled artists unfairly inferred that rather than receiving the prize based upon merit, Nora had triumphed because a number of the trustees who judged the award were friends of her father. While Hans’s networks were undeniably valuable contacts for an emerging artist, Nora’s links with this increasingly reactionary circle proved a mixed blessing.

4.3. **Heysen’s Views on Modern Art**

During a 1934 interview, Heysen asserted that “modern art was so complicated that he [had] arrived at no definite conclusion. There were too many diverse aims, some entirely conflicting, with the result that the term modern art covered a very wide field.” This shows that Heysen conceived of modern art as encompassing a broad spectrum of creative practice. Consequently, his own feelings on recent art ranged from admiration and begrudging tolerance to outright abhorrence. Although Heysen never offered any comprehensive statement of his views on modern art, it is possible to gain a sense of which characteristics he

---

57 "Nora Heysen,” 64; *Heysen to Heysen*, 17-18.
58 “Nora Heysen,” 62-64.
found commendable, permissible or objectionable from various statements he made in newspaper articles and letters to his associates. This chapter examines instances of Heysen’s engagement with Australian and European modern art in order to better elucidate his taste and opinions. These views were shaped in dialogue with other members of his networks, whose attitudes often reinforced, but sometimes challenged, Heysen’s outlook.

Several of Heysen’s statements regarding modern art date from 1934, when he, Sallie and their four daughters travelled to Europe. One reason for this trip was to see Nora established in London so that she could commence further art studies, just as her father had done in Paris in 1899. She would remain in London until August 1937, during which period she developed and modernised her painting style. Although the majority of his time was spent in Great Britain, Hans also made shorter trips to Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. The trip allowed him to revisit works by the historic artists whom he greatly admired. His letters and statements to newspaper reporters convey his enthusiasm for Rembrandt, Constable, Fantin-Latour and the artists of the Barbizon and Hague schools. The visit also provided the first opportunity for Heysen to view a substantial range of modern European works at firsthand. He visited a large number of art museums, exhibitions and sales, in part because he had been authorised by the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery to act as a buyer for the NGSA. The 21 works which Heysen selected are considered in Appendix Seven.

Heysen’s comments on international loan exhibitions also provide insights into his opinions of modern European art. The most significant of these was the *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*, which toured Australia in 1939. This collection of 217 exhibits was assembled by the art critic Basil Burdett and included significant works by Post-Impressionist, Fauvist, Cubist and School of Paris artists. Adelaide was the first city to host the exhibition and as a promotional exercise Heysen was permitted to view the collection three days before its official opening. He advised *The Advertiser* that the city was fortunate in having the opportunity to see an exhibition “so thoroughly representative of the period, and … so remarkably diversified.” Heysen praised the works of Van Gogh, Pierre Bonnard and Paul Signac, but also acknowledged: “There are some works which I cannot get in touch with.” Heysen also saw several other exhibitions of modern and contemporary art which visited Australia during this period, with he and his friends comparing their impressions of the works via correspondence.

As in previous decades, Heysen took an active interest in the works of other Australian artists. During the 1920s and 1930s he regularly visited Melbourne and Sydney, allowing him to view the works of his contemporaries at firsthand. However, from 1939 increased domestic responsibilities, petrol rationing and old

---

63 Other visiting exhibitions which Heysen attended included: *The Loan Collection of Contemporary British Art* (1935); *Exhibition of Twentieth Century British Art* (1939), both organised by the Empire Art Loan Collections Society; *Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings by Henry Moore* (1947-48), organised by the British Council; *The Massey Collection of English Painting* (1950), toured by the National Gallery of Canada; and *French Painting Today: a Loan Exhibition arranged between the French and Australian Governments* (1953).
Consequently, Heysen’s awareness of recent developments in Australian art was largely limited to works exhibited in Adelaide or encountered as reproductions. His networks also provided him with significant, yet often biased, observations on recent Australian art. Heysen made a small number of public statements regarding modernism, but like his friends expressed his views more freely and frequently in his private correspondence. His intermittent references to modern Australian art provide a sense of which qualities he considered praiseworthy or objectionable. However, there are some surprising omissions. Unfortunately nothing is known regarding Heysen’s opinions of Dorrit Black, who returned to Adelaide in 1935 after having engaged with modernism in Sydney, London and Paris. However, given Black’s dedication as an artist, teacher and advocate for modern art in Adelaide, Heysen must have been aware of her activities.

Modern art was amongst the topics Heysen considered in two articles written in 1932. As described in the previous chapter, “Some Notes on Art: With Special Reference to Landscape Painting in Australia,” consisted of a series of aphorisms expressing his views on art. In these he asserts the primacy of careful craftsmanship and the observation of natural forms and cautions artists against the imitation of “the ruling fashions of the day” or adoption of a fixed manner. In

---

64 Petrol rationing was implemented in Australia from 1 October 1940 until 8 February 1950. Lorna Froude, "Petrol Rationing in Australia During the Second World War," *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, no. 36 (2002): unpaginated.

65 Tracey Lock-Weir, *Dorrit Black: Unseen Forces* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2014), 98-100, 08-09; Ian North, *The Art of Dorrit Black* (South Melbourne and Adelaide: Macmillan and Art Gallery of South Australia, 1979), 85-91, 99-100. Furthermore, both Heysen and Black showed works in the 1937 Group Exhibition and Heysen readily agreed to sign a petition by Black calling for Adelaide publications to accord greater prominence to art criticism. Dorrit Black to Heysen, 14 July 1944; Heysen to Dorrit Black, [draft], 17 July [1944], HH Papers; *Group Exhibition by South Australian Artists*, RSASA Gallery, 8-23 July 1937.

his second article, “Our Art is Bright and so is its Future,” written for the Adelaide News, Heysen praises “a new Australian school” of painting emerging in Sydney and Adelaide. He describes the work of these artists as “based on normal vision, with an insistence on form and design,” while also possessing “the necessary freshness of originality and expression.”

He suggests that this generation had developed under the influence of George Lambert “who taught that an artist must make himself efficient in the technique of his art as a tradesman would in his trade.” Speaking six years later, Heysen again advised young artists to master technique in preparation for “the day when your art may develop a personal expression,” so that the hand may thus serve as “an unconscious tool of the mind.”

Conversely, Heysen was uncomplimentary about the “leading school in Melbourne,” which had developed during the late 1910s from the teachings of Max Meldrum. Tonalism was based upon Meldrum’s quasi-scientific theory of perception, which proposed a systematic method through which artists could capture their optical impressions by giving greatest emphasis to the relative tonal values. Heysen described this style as “clinging to the theories and methods of the so-called modern impressionistic school, which have really long been out-of-date … characterised by neglect of design and form, and the attempt to convey

---


68 Heysen, “Our Art is Bright.”

69 “No Short Cuts in Art – Hans Heysen’s Advice to Young Painters – Lindsay Exhibition Opened,” Advertiser, 9 November 1938.

70 Heysen, “Our Art is Bright.”

meaning merely by vague colouring.”72 He regarded Meldrum’s sombre palette as “shutting out any ‘warmth’ that might penetrate the heart – colour, light and sunshine” and dismissed his creed “that there is no line in nature” as “totally oblivious to reason.”73

Heysen congratulated Lionel Lindsay for publicly critiquing these “narrow minded & stupid doctrines on art.”74

Besides disliking the solemnity and imprecision of tonalism, Heysen also objected to the prescriptive character, asserting: “Its members are bound to a manner – and that means the stoppage of progress in art.”75 Heysen disagreed with artists adopting a standardised approach, lamenting in 1938:

> Unfortunately, art today is riddled with theories and formulas … These factors only help to choke creative achievement. I feel convinced that an artist must receive his so-called inspiration from direct emotional reaction to something seen in nature. It must first come through the eye to the mind, and there be transformed into a personal creation.76

Significantly, in Heysen’s mindset an artist’s subjective response was contingent upon their engagement with “the imitation of natural forms.”77

Despite Heysen’s dislike of their style, he nonetheless provided hospitality to the tonalists Colin Colahan and Percy Leason when they visited South Australia in 1938.

---

72 Heysen, “Our Art is Bright.”
73 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 1 May [1935], LF Papers. For Heysen’s criticism of Meldrum’s Self Portrait (1938, AGSA), see Heysen to Norman Carter, 8 April 1941, NC Papers.
75 Heysen, “Our Art is Bright.”
76 “No Short Cuts in Art.” Richard Haese has reflected upon the prescriptive methods taught by Max Meldrum; George Bell and Arnold Shore; and Grace Crowley and Rah Fizelle in their private art schools. Haese, Rebels and Precursors, 9-10, 12-15, 58.
October 1930 and helped promote Colahan’s Adelaide exhibition. This is consistent with accounts of Heysen’s open-mindedness towards art which differed from his own. Robert Campbell, the director of the NGSA from 1951, recalled that often during Heysen’s time on the gallery board:

he would say of a contemporary artist, whose work was under consideration; ‘Although it’s not my way of looking at things, he has something worthwhile to say; the painting gets my vote.’ But he always insisted on painterly qualities of craftsmanship, those qualities which we can rely upon finding in his own work. Poor workmanship never got past him.”

This was apparent in Heysen’s response to a visiting exhibition of Henry Moore’s art in 1948. Although he personally disliked the work, Heysen believed that Moore “seems utterly sincere and honest with his art and definitely has ‘something to say.’” Reporting upon a visit to The Cedars in 1937, Basil Burdett similarly observed that both Heysen’s conversation and private collection indicated “a wider taste than most of his fellow-Australian painters,” together with an ability to “look dispassionately on work which differs from his own.” When Burdett asked Heysen, “How do you square a liking for van Gogh with your own work?” Heysen offered the sage response: “I don’t … I am not van Gogh. Because I admire his work, it does not mean that I want to paint like him.”

During his travels of 1934, Heysen was particularly keen to examine the works of Cézanne and Van Gogh, who he regarded as the “great originators of modern

---

80 Heysen to Nora Heysen, 1 June 1948, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 181. This was the Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings by Henry Moore, organised by the British Council, which toured Australia in 1947 and 1948.
art.”82 He praised Van Gogh, finding “his extraordinary intensity – pattern and very original colour schemes … always impressive.”83 During the 1939 *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art*, Heysen described Van Gogh’s *Portrait of Alexander Reid* (1887, Fig. 76) as “the most vivid portrait, as expressed by the Impressionist method he had ever seen. In many modern works the portrait was sacrificed to the method, but in this instance that was not the case.”84 Here Heysen’s admiration for Van Gogh’s brilliant colour and rhythmic brushwork is conditional on style remaining subservient to the subject matter. This is at odds with Burdett’s assertion regarding Van Gogh, “that the beauty of a picture resides in the beauty of its treatment and handling, of its actual painting, and that intrinsic beauty in the subject is irrelevant.”85

Heysen’s was more ambivalent in his feelings about Cézanne, who he considered uneven in quality. He advised Ure Smith that:

Generally speaking I found his work too static & with an absence of that recession of form which I had expected to find – but I found recompense in his colour which is often very fine, especially when dealing with greens. On the whole I thought him a clumsy technician, one who was groping for something & which he never was able to express.86

Heysen admired some of Cézanne’s landscapes and figure works, such as *The Card Players* (1892-96, Fig. 77), which he considered “monumental in design and convincing in the simplification of its form.” However, he disliked Cézanne’s later scenes of bathers, with their “elongation and distortion of the human

---

83 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
84 “S.A. Artist Sees Modern Exhibition.”
86 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
forms.”

Burdett found it significant that Heysen recognised “what so few Australian painters have been able or are willing to see – that the reaction against impressionism represented by Cezanne’s ideas was essential. Being a painter in the classical tradition, to whom form has always remained important, this recognition was naturally easier for him.”

Although Heysen praised Cézanne and Van Gogh as “intense & great individualists,” he felt that “to set them on a high pedestal for students to follow is certainly dangerous & most unfortunate.” In 1932 he expressed concerns that the extolling of Cézanne to young artists was producing “a mass of little crippled Cézannes,” and advised that: “You cannot adopt the individuality of another … It is far better to say humbly that which we have within us.” Upon his return from Europe he recommended art students look at “the men of the 15th and 16th centuries,” who had “relied on hard and severe study to gain the technical knowledge for the building up of pictures, and supplemented this with solid study from nature direct.” Far from being simply recherché, Heysen’s advice reflects his admiration for a strand of recent British figurative art. Sacha Llewellyn and Patrick Elliott have examined the practice of a significant number of British artists who sought inspiration from historic sources, especially Italian Quattrocento, early Netherlandish and seventeenth-century Dutch painting, “as a way of reinvigorating their art through references to the past.”

---

87 “Modern Art Criticised.”
88 Burdett, “Hans Heysen at Home.”
89 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
91 “Modern Art Criticised.”
in most later art historical accounts, during the interwar period such artists enjoyed art world prominence and the cultural capital of recognition by traditionalist institutions. Consequently, it was not unreasonable for Heysen to assume that they represented the mainstay and future direction of contemporary art.

These considerations informed Heysen’s admiration of the allegorical figure paintings of Stanley Spencer. He advised Ure Smith that Spencer was “a man who interested me immensely,” praising *The Resurrection, Cookham* (1924-27, London: Tate) and *Travoys Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-station, Macedonia, September 1916* (1919, London: Imperial War Museum). After some hesitation Heysen decided to purchase Spencer’s *The Meeting* (1933, Fig. 78) from the Royal Academy for the NGSA, only to discover it had already been sold. However, he believed “the picture would not have been understood in Adelaide – in fact it would have been roundly abased … still it had a peculiar attraction – in design & colour – despite the distortions in the drawing.”

Heysen found himself able to tolerate (if not admire) these characteristics of Spencer art, because they showed the influence of Pieter Bruegel and fifteenth-century Flemish painting. By acknowledging Spencer’s debt to European art history, his distortions could be read as displaying reverence, rather than iconoclastic disregard for cultural tradition. However, Heysen did not reflect upon the conceptual concerns informing Spencer’s style, such as his desire to unify the sacred and profane by imbuing his quotidian subject matter with a

---

93 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.

Heysen’s admiration for retardataire modern figuration is also evident in the works he purchased for the NGSA, which are detailed in Appendix Seven. What David Peters Corbett has described as “compromise formulations” of modernism are apparent James Bateman’s \textit{The Harvest} (1934, Fig. 79), where a modern sense of rhythm is combined with nostalgic subject matter.\footnote{Corbett, \textit{Modernity of English Art}, 71. Heysen met and befriended Bateman and the two maintained a correspondence from 1934 until 1939.} Indeed, only two of the works Heysen selected display overtly modern characteristics. Léon Bakst’s \textit{Indo-Persian Dance} (1912) and Harry Allen’s \textit{A Derbyshire Well Blessing} (1934, Fig. 81) both feature non-naturalistic, heightened colours and an interest in decorative surface pattern. Significantly, the more progressive style of Allen’s painting is offset by its old-fashioned subject, which depicts a rural English folk tradition. By contrast, the only work to depict urban modernity, Stanley Anderson’s ironically titled \textit{Gleaners} (c.1932, Fig. 80), is an example of academic
naturalism. Several works are in styles that represented important innovations during the nineteenth century, but which had since been absorbed into the academic establishment. These include works by Robert Anning Bell, who was prominent in the Arts and Crafts movement, and the muted Impressionism of Lucien Simon and George Clausen. With their emphasis upon the monumental solidity of landforms, David Young Cameron’s *Goatfell, Autumn* and Ernest Procter’s *Eggardun, Dorset* (1929) recall some of Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges. These similar pictorial concerns undoubtedly increased their appeal to him.

The Australian modern artists who Heysen most greatly admired were Thea Proctor, Adrian Feint and Arthur Murch.\(^98\) Although distinctive and original artists, the works of all three were characterised by precise drawing, careful observation and an interest in the works of earlier artists. These priorities are reflected in Heysen’s observation to Lionel Lindsay: “Murch is a very searching student of Nature – and with his ‘stored up’ knowledge of the old Masters he should develop fast.”\(^99\) Murch’s work was characterised by a muted yet luminous palette, simplification of form and a deliberate sense of artifice, which recalled both Art Deco classicism and Quattrocento paintings (Fig. 82).\(^100\) While

---

\(^98\) Proctor and Feint were both close associates of Ure Smith and frequently produced illustrations for his publications. Proctor stayed with the Heysen’s in 1929, while staging an Adelaide exhibition of her work. Murch twice visited Heysen in Hahndorf and was later an acquaintance of Nora. Feint also befriended Nora following her move to Sydney. Thea Proctor to Sallie Heysen, 25 August 1929; Thea Proctor to Hans Heysen, 19 September [1929, misfiled as 1923], HH Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 24 April [1927]; October [1940], SUS Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 22 June [1933], WA Papers; Speck, *Heysen to Heysen*, 70, 93, 111, 14, 16-19, 21-22, 75-76, 89.

\(^99\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 26 June 1933, LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Will Ashton, 22 June [1933], WA Papers.

conveying a veneer of modernism, his style was fundamentally grounded in tradition and Heysen hoped that Murch would serve “as an influence to counteract the growing circle of ‘experimentalists.’” Proctor similarly developed a personal aesthetic which frequently combined jazz age modernity with a nostalgia for the elegance and languor of an idealised past. Likewise, in the 1940s, Feint became renowned for his luxuriant still lifes, which evoked a sense of the uncanny suggestive of Surrealism. His works thus possessed a frisson of the modern, while remaining accessible to conservative viewers. As with his response to European art, Heysen was most inclined to accept modern characteristics in the works of Australian artists when he felt they were building upon an existing tradition. Terry Smith has observed that such attitudes conceived of modernism as “a manner, to be adopted by degrees” rather than “a fundamentally different mode of picture making.”

In 1928 Heysen praised the drawings of the Russian artist Alexandre Iacovleff for showing “that a just balance of realism & decoration (Pattern) can be achieved – & that it is quite unnecessary to resort to distortion to attain a sense of originality & to heighten a sense of reality.” An exhibition of Iacovleff’s work had recently opened in Sydney from which Heysen and several of his friends

104 Smith, Transformations in Australian Art, 2: The Twentieth Century - Modernism and Aboriginality, 28.
105 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 16 October [1928], SUS Papers.
acquired works (Fig. 83).\textsuperscript{106} Heysen’s statement reflects his reservation about the manner in which some modern artists elected to emphasise formal properties and decorative effects at the expense of the elusive qualities that he admired in nature. In 1932 he lamented:

\begin{quote}
Many Moderns, judging by their work, would have us believe that in Nature all is static and made of cast iron, but the clouds still scud across the skies, and give their radiant light, and the trees remain sensitive to every breeze … Let those who see trees as blocks of wood, and flowers as coloured cloths, give them their right place in art. Do not name them as trees and flowers, but as decorative patterns only.\textsuperscript{107}
\end{quote}

Heysen was not unequivocally opposed to pattern. He asserted to Ure Smith that the “legitimate use of pattern & decorative designs helps to give a permanent strength to all work.”\textsuperscript{108} Similarly, he congratulated Lionel Lindsay for the sense of “design and patterns” evident in his wood engravings and praised Thea Proctor’s fan designs as “exquisite in their rhythm and colour pattern.”\textsuperscript{109} However, he believed that pattern should serve to reinforce, rather than overwhelm, the underlying pictorial structure and character of the subject. Thus he reflected that Gruner’s \textit{On the Murrumbidgee} (1929, Fig. 68) made “a most interesting and fine pattern – but it struck me more as a beautiful pattern than as a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[106] The \textit{Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Alexandre Iacovleff} was held at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney, in October 1928, organised by Basil Burdett. James McGregor purchased Iacovleff’s pastel drawing \textit{Fara Ali Afden, an Abyssinian} (1928) on Heysen’s behalf, prior to the show opening. Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 26 August 1928; 4 November 1928, HH Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 21 August [1928]; 16 October [1928], SUS Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 9 December 1928, JM Papers.
\item[107] Heysen, “Some Notes on Art,” 16.
\item[108] Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, Sunday [18 March 1928], SUS Papers.
\item[109] Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, June [1926], LF Papers; Hans Heysen, “Foreword,” in \textit{Thea Proctor’s Exhibition of Fan Designs, Paintings on Silk, Watercolours, Drawings and Woodcuts} (Adelaide: Argonaut Galleries, 1929), unpaginated.
\end{footnotes}
real piece of Nature.” Heysen later expressed similar criticisms of the rural landscapes of the Queensland-based watercolourist, Kenneth Macqueen. These concerns are evident in Heysen’s comments on the art of Margaret Preston, who became renowned for her bold and innovative still lifes and hand-coloured woodcuts. When writing to Ure Smith in 1928 Heysen observed:

I often envy Margaret Preston’s unerring eye for pattern – yet I cannot reconcile myself to her point of view – as a flat decorative pattern it is splendid but … it fails to realise natural objects, everything is made of the same material & there are no variations of textures. It always remains a pattern of shapes & colours. Unfortunately this school is blinded … to the real beauties of nature.

Heysen similarly advised Lionel Lindsay that he preferred her works where “the use of decoration is not confounded by any suggestion of realism. I don’t want to think of her flowers as flowers, when I do – all sense of subtlety is lacking – all that something which makes Nature’s objects so fascinating & mysterious.”

Ann Elias has considered the different connotations inherent in Heysen and Preston’s floral still lifes. She argues that Heysen’s elegant and restrained depictions of European blooms suggest old-fashioned values, domesticity and the coexistence of sensory pleasure with an awareness of transience and mortality. By contrast, Preston’s vivid formal arrangements of line and colour, which frequently depicted hardy, unkempt Australian wildflowers, evoked “the decorative commercial world and a modern machine aesthetic.” Thus her flowers

---

110 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [c. April 1930], SUS Papers.
112 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 16 October [1928], SUS Papers.
113 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 16 February 1928, LF Papers.
take “the mind away from nature and towards technology, urban life and modern social contexts.”\footnote{114}

Heysen’s comments were made after considering Art in Australia’s December 1927 issue dedicated to Preston (Figs. 84 & 85). He reflected that Preston’s “work lends itself to reproduction & is often improved by reduction.”\footnote{115} In view of Heysen’s concern that the subtlety of his own pictures was often lost in photomechanical reproductions, this was a rather backhanded compliment implying that the visual appeal of Preston’s work was merely superficial. Significantly, several of the paintings illustrated in the magazine were owned by Heysen’s friends, including Ure Smith, Gruner, Lindsay and Will Ashton, demonstrating their greater acceptance of her modern approach.\footnote{116} This endorsement by his peers would account for Heysen subsequently acquiring one of Preston’s Banksia still lifes (date and whereabouts unknown), which he loaned to the NGSA in 1942.\footnote{117}

Heysen was less conciliatory toward the British expressionist Matthew Smith, despite his work earning admiration from both Heysen’s networks and the wider

\footnotesize

\begin{itemize}
\item 114 Elias, Useless Beauty, 13-17, 23-24.
\item 115 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 16 February 1928, LF Papers; Cf. Heysen to Will Ashton, [May 1928], WA Papers.
\item 116 See, "Margaret Preston Number," Art in Australia series 3, no. 22 (1927). Preston arranged to have additional colour plates included in the issue at her own expense. Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, undated [late 1927], HH Papers.
\item 117 The work is listed as: ‘Banksia’ (oil) 21” x 18 ½”, Amended List of Pictures Lent by Mr. Hans Heysen, June 1942, AGSA Correspondence 1942, AGSA Research Library.
\item Heysen probably purchased this work in 1929, after Sydney Ure Smith wrote praising the works in Margaret Preston’s forthcoming exhibition and offered to select a painting for Heysen’s collection. Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 31 July 1929, HH Papers. The exhibition Margaret Preston at the Grosvenor Galleries, 7-31 August 1929, included four paintings of Banksias, see Denise Mimmocchi, ed. Margaret Preston: Catalogue Raisonné of Paintings, Monotypes & Ceramics [Cd-Rom] (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2005). The painting was not included in the 1970 auction of works from Heysen’s collection.
\end{itemize}
art establishment. After viewing an exhibition of Smith’s paintings in London, Heysen declared that his “violent colour combinations were nauseating – & I was glad to breathe fresh & healthy air when I got out again.”\footnote{Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers. The exhibition was \textit{Recent Paintings by Matthew Smith}, Arthur Tooth & Sons Ltd, 10 May to 2 June 1934.} The Manchester Art Gallery purchased Smith’s \textit{Model Reclining} (1933, Fig. 86) from the same exhibition, thus conferring cultural consecration.\footnote{John Gledhill, \textit{Catalogue Raisonné of the Oil Paintings of Matthew Smith with a Critical Introduction to His Work} (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Lund Humphries, 2009), 158.} Similarly, both McGregor and the Haywards acquired works by Smith for their private collections.\footnote{James McGregor purchased Smith’s \textit{Tulips and White Hyacinths} (c.1932, private collection) and Bill and Ursula Hayward bought \textit{Landscape Near Cagnes} (c.1935, Carrick Hill) during their 1935 visit to London. The Haywards later purchased Smith’s \textit{Nude with Pearl Necklace} (c.1931, Carrick Hill) in the 1950s. J. S. MacDonald, “Mr J. R. McGregor’s Collection,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 3, no. 57 (1934): 21; Gledhill, \textit{Catalogue Raisonné of Matthew Smith}, 154, 61, 75.} Lionel Lindsay also regarded Smith favourably, writing in 1937 that he had “won to personal expression in honest paint.”\footnote{Lionel Lindsay, “Modernism: With a Note on the Work of Arnold Shore,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 3, no. 67 (1937): 25.} However, their endorsements did not cause Heysen to revise his opinion. In 1950 he told Will Ashton that Smith’s paintings “filled me with disgust … they are crude & filthy & made me physically sick.”\footnote{Heysen to Will Ashton, 4 June 1950, WA Papers. Five paintings by Smith were included in \textit{The Massey Collection of English Painting: Circulated in Australia and New Zealand with the Assistance of the Carnegie Corporation}, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1949).} Smith’s work derives its impact from his gestural brushwork and frequently discordant palette, qualities that are the antithesis of Heysen’s naturalism, with its precisely delineated forms, subtle colour harmonies and unobtrusive technique. Heysen also believed that much modern British art displayed “little original painting, but much effete imitation” of French examples.\footnote{“Mr. Hans Heysen – Melbourne Rembrandt Criticised.”} It is likely that Heysen had Smith in mind when he asserted that: “Modern Art is best when left in the hands of the Frenchmen …”
invariably have ‘taste’ … whereas in the hands of other nations it becomes crude & vulgar.”

However, the most confronting exhibition Heysen experienced in Britain was *Unit One* at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, in June 1934. This significant exhibition is credited with introducing key European avant-garde practices into British art, including examples of abstraction, constructivism and surrealism. It featured important works by Barbara Hepworth, Henry Moore, Ben Nicholson and Paul Nash (Fig. 87). Heysen disparaged their work as “an outcome of Braque & Co’s influence. A collection of flat patterns – in black, grey & white with no hint of representational form, no plastic form & no recession, it was all a conundrum to me.” When writing to W. H. Gill he condemned “so called Abstract Art” declaring “it is illogical and stupid, and will die a natural death.” Heysen elaborated on his objections in a 1935 article, asserting that because viewers’ judgements were “based on emotional experiences and from contact with life and nature” all good art “must be based or built up on representational forms … Anything disconnected from life can remain but a collection of dead forms … quite unable to awaken any emotional reaction.” Ure Smith similarly scorned Moore and Nicholson’s work, dismissing the latter’s abstract paintings as “interesting as designs – and some of them would have made diverting cocktail

---

124 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
127 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 13 January 1935, WHG Papers.
128 Heysen, "Recent Pictures Purchased,” 28.
trays.” Both he and Heysen failed to recognise the significance of Nicholson’s incised abstracts, in which the painting is regarded “not so much as a depiction as an object in itself.”

Heysen was similarly perplexed by the avant-garde art he encountered during his travels in Germany in July 1934. Following a visit to the Hamburg Kunsthalle, he wrote to Ure Smith disparaging the “atrocious” modernist art. In a statement that is both unfortunate and chillingly prophetic, he wrote: “There were 3 rooms full of the most indigestible stuff I have yet seen and if this art was a reflex of the public spirit & morals then it was high time ‘Adolf Hitler’ came on the scene to clean up matters.” He described these as leaving “an ‘indelible stain’ like a ‘dirty story.’” Amongst the German Expressionist and Neue Sachlichkeit paintings then in Hamburg which may have suggested social or sexual deviancy to Heysen were works by Oskar Kokoschka, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Hofer, George Grosz, Emil Nolde and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (Figs. 88 & 89). Heysen would have been shocked by their expressive distortions of the human figure, overt sexuality and criticism of bourgeois society. Upon his return he criticised those “extreme experimenting artists,” who perpetuated “the abnormal, and the distortions of natural forms.”

---

131 Hitler was appointed Chancellor on 30 January 1933. However, it was not until 19 August 1934, the month after the Heysens’ visit, that he abolished the office of President and declared himself Führer, achieving the status of absolute dictator.
132 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
At the time he made these denunciations Heysen would not have known that the National Socialists were in fact taking an active interest in the visual arts. The notion that modernism reflected cultural degeneracy had first been asserted in late nineteenth-century conservative cultural discourse and would later inform Lionel Lindsay’s *Addled Art* (1942). However, this assertion was most notoriously utilised by the Third Reich who declared avant-garde art “degenerate” and associated it with mental illness, physical disabilities, the “racially inferior,” immorality and nefarious Communist and Jewish influences. By appealing to pre-existing prejudices that such art was incomprehensible and elitist, the regime was able to further its political objectives against those minorities it despised.135 As early as 1933 several modern artists lost their teaching positions and progressive museum directors were dismissed. Amongst them was Gustav Pauli, the director of the Hamburg Kunsthalle responsible for acquiring the modernist works that Heysen had found objectionable.136 In 1937, three years after Heysen’s visit, the National Socialists purged German art museums of works deemed to be “degenerate” due to their style or subject matter. In a propaganda exercise designed to further the regime’s political, racial and aesthetic ideologies, a selection of the confiscated work was displayed and deliberately ridiculed in the infamous *Degenerate Art* exhibition (1937).137

---


137 von Lüttichau, “‘Crazy at Any Price’,” 36-37, 47-48.
By the late 1930s and early 1940s new manifestations of modernism were also appearing in Australia, including local variations of expressionism, surrealism, abstraction and social realism. Heysen first encountered such works in July 1942 when he attended the *First Exposition: Royal S.A. Society of Arts Associate Contemporary Group*. This was instigated by a group of younger, more progressive members of the RSASA, who were frustrated that their works were regularly rejected by the Society’s conservative and self-perpetuating selection committee. It also featured art loaned by the Melbourne and Sydney branches of the CAS. Jane Hylton has described this exhibition as “Adelaide’s first substantial public experience of either interstate or local modern Australian art.” Many viewers were shocked by the exhibition with its merits debated extensively in letters to the editor.

Heysen was appalled by the works and expressed his “revulsion of feelings” in letters to Lionel Lindsay, Ure Smith and Norman Carter. He objected to what he perceived as poor craftsmanship, grim subject matter and the derivative aping of European art movements, denouncing the exhibition as:

> a very depressing collection … with little or no originality, no happiness nor expression of the life that surrounds us – a soulless lot of stuff … I seemed to have seen it all before in books and failed to find an original note nor what might suggest an Aus note – a mere backwash and imitation of what has happened in France years ago … It is bad art – devoid of any reaction to real life – and it is unhealthy art, treading on dangerous ground … if we are surrounded by this bad stuff long enough – we lose our sense of standards and real values – and tolerate it.

---

139 Hylton, *Adelaide Angries*, 16.
141 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 19 August [1942], LF Papers.
142 Heysen to Norman Carter, 8 August 1942, NC Papers. Cf. Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated fragment [1942], SUS Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 19 August [1942], LF Papers.
Many of the exhibits responded to the rise of Fascism and the Second World War. In both their anguished subject matter and expressionist style the paintings by Albert Tucker, Victor O’Connor, Yosl Bergner and Arthur Boyd recalled the avant-garde art that had repulsed Heysen in Germany (Fig. 90). Charles Merewether has observed that earlier, few Australian artists had interested themselves in Expressionism, but once perceived as “an art destroyed by Nazism it gained a new urgency and significance.”\(^\text{143}\) Furthermore, as Richard Haese has considered, it offered a conception “of art as a vehicle for social criticism and an agent for social change,” while nonetheless allowing artists to maintain their commitment to self-expression, aesthetic autonomy and experiment.\(^\text{144}\)

With their commitment to empirical observation, Heysen and his associates also struggled to comprehend Surrealism. Heysen condemned such works as, “A ghastly array or sordid and unhealthy dreams or will I say ravings.”\(^\text{145}\) Ure Smith advised Heysen that the members of the CAS “are not our kind. All the imitation Dali’s, the psycho-analysts and the semi-medical artists do not attract me at all.”\(^\text{146}\) Interestingly, however, Ure Smith readily embraced Surrealism in photography and commercial art, regularly reproducing surrealist images by Max Dupain and Douglas Annand in *The Home.* Bourdieu asserted that a “work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural


\(^{144}\) Haese has considered the manner in which expressionist and surrealist approaches provided a subjective yet socially-engaged alternative to the narrow dogmatism of some communist-affiliated artists and critics. See, Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 127.

\(^{145}\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 14 June [c.1945], LF Papers. For Lindsay’s opposition to Surrealism, see Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 199-200.

\(^{146}\) Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 May 1943, HH Papers.
competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded.” As both Heysen and Ure Smith were uninterested in art theory, neither possessed the cultural capital necessary to understand Surrealism, thus Ure Smith could only appreciate it as a quirky signifier of contemporaneity.

As apparent in Heysen’s designation “unhealthy art,” when describing avant-garde art or their response to it, he and his circle frequently employed language evoking physical and mental illness. Writing to Heysen about Dobell’s *The Red Lady* (1938, Fig. 91), Lindsay condemned the work as, “a flame of erysipelas – a St Anthony’s fire … This bloated India rubber lady was not painted with any satirical intent, and the withered hand and arm affected me with disgust. No artist should vaunt the notion of disease nor abnormality in paint.” He later asserted, “Think of what deformations mean in life – the clubbed foot, the withered hand, the horror of elephantiasis – and you will not be long in seizing the decadent and nihilistic value of this phase of modernism.” Such statements were typical of the conservative critical rhetoric which emerged during the late nineteenth century in which vanguard art was conflated with perceived deteriorations in health and morality.

Heysen’s art, by contrast, was upheld by traditionalists as epitomising wholesomeness and reason. MacDonald asserted that, “Heysen’s drawings are

---

147 Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 2.
149 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 24 July 1940, HH Papers.
150 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, 37.
derived from and stand for health and sanity … No recondite code is needed for the understanding of any of his work. It is for healthy unsophisticated people who are thrilled by the … marvel of natural phenomena.”[^152] Jeanette Hoorn has observed that in cultural discourse of the interwar period the pastoral landscape was associated with wellness and the revitalisation of the body[^153]. Thus, for conservatives, Heysen’s principal subject matter as well as his style represented relief from the perceived decadence of modern art.

However, despite Heysen’s predominant conservatism, there were a handful of surprising episodes in which he supported the works of modernist artists. Despite certain reservations he conceded the merits of Dobell’s *Portrait of an Artist* (*Joshua Smith*) (1943, private collection), after it was controversially awarded the 1943 Archibald Prize. The story of the unsuccessful court challenge mounted by a pair of disgruntled artists on the grounds that the work was a caricature rather than a portrait has already been recounted in detail[^154]. Of greater pertinence to this dissertation is the manner in which some traditionalists were nonetheless able to recognise admirable qualities in what was widely regarded as a shockingly modern work. Heysen was initially perplexed both by Dobell’s success and that his friends Lindsay, McGregor and Ure Smith had voted in favour of the work[^155]. However, as he was only able appraise the portrait from a newspaper image, he

[^155]: Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 14 February [1944], LF Papers; Heysen to W. R. Sedon, 15 February 1944, Sedon Galleries. Lindsay’s art historical and art world knowledge was later discretely utilised to assist in the legal defence of the Archibald decision. See, Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 212-13.
decided to reserve his final judgement. Heysen’s friends were able to reassure him of the portrait’s visual appeal, stylistic debt to European precursors and resemblance to its sitter, together with Dobell’s ability as a draughtsperson.\textsuperscript{156} Significantly, their arguments regarding reverence for tradition, drawing and similitude to nature were all fundamentally conservative. Their opinions convinced Heysen to accept the portrait, even if he could not bring himself to like or admire it. His position on the board of the NGSA also meant he sympathised with the trustees of the NAGNSW and objected to the court action designed to undermine their decision.\textsuperscript{157}

In 1949 Adelaide experienced a local equivalent of the Archibald controversy, following the awarding of the Melrose Prize for portraiture or figure work to Russell Drysdale’s \textit{Woman in a Landscape} (1949, Fig. 92).\textsuperscript{158} Hans had judged the inaugural prize in 1921 and Nora Heysen was twice awarded the Melrose Prize in 1933 and 1941.\textsuperscript{159} Hans again served as a judge in 1949, together with McCubbin and Joseph Burke, the recently appointed Herald Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Melbourne. Their decision provoked an outcry, with numerous letters to the editor debating the work’s merits and over 40,000 people visiting the exhibition to view the controversial painting. Heysen advised Will Ashton:

\begin{flushright}
Heysen to Will Ashton, 6 March 1944, WA Papers; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: 18 March 1944; 7 November 1944, HH Papers; Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, Sunday 1944, Speck, \textit{Heysen to Heysen}, 141.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 1 November 1944, LF Papers; “‘Distortion Carried Too Far’ in Dobell Portrait,” \textit{Advertiser}, 10 November 1944. Contrary to the implications of the headline, Heysen, Goodchild and Louis McCubbin all defended the Dobell as a portrait.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
This prize had been endowed by the solicitor, writer and cultural philanthropist Alexander Melrose.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
Personally I thought the painting an excellent interpretation of a type – we have them in our own village – but not typical of the outback. The painting held together well – it was one piece. The woman had volume and she was standing on her feet. I thought it a development in his art and strongly voted in its favour for the prize – & also for its purchase for the Gallery. Drysdale has many fine qualities – but very ‘one eyed,’ he will develop a ‘manner’ unless he treads carefully, and goes more directly to nature.\(^{160}\)

While acknowledging the formal accomplishment of the work, Heysen’s appreciation is premised upon his recognition of its subject matter from first-hand experience.\(^ {161}\) Heysen provided similar support for progressive art in 1951, when he helped select works by Jacqueline Hick and Jeffrey Smart as South Australia’s entries for the Jubilee Open Art Competition.\(^ {162}\) Smart’s \textit{Wallaroo} (1951, NGA) was subsequently awarded this national prize.\(^ {163}\)

However, Heysen did not unequivocally accept all the works of Dobell and Drysdale. Upon learning that Ure Smith was producing a book on Dobell, Heysen reflected,

he is an extraordinary clever painter – inclined too much towards the abnormal … sordid and ugly for my personal liking, and not healthy as an influence on our younger painters. Still he has something to say & says it in his own way and we have to admire him for it.\(^ {164}\)

Heysen’s ambivalence is further evident in his comments regarding an exhibition which contained, “3 beauties of Dobell … all well considered paintings, with none of his ‘sloppy’ technique – I thought his Archibald exhibit [of 1953] an abortion –


\(^{162}\) The other South Australian selectors were Ivor Francis and Robert Campbell, the director of the NGSA. A painting by the more traditional artist Max Ragless was also selected. “S.A. Entries for Jubilee Art Contest,” \textit{Advertiser}, 12 July 1951.


\(^{164}\) Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 26 February 1945, SUS Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 10 February 1945, LF Papers.
and extremely nasty with nothing whatsoever to recommend it.” Heysen had similarly mixed feelings about the work of Drysdale. In 1953 the NGSA purchased Drysdale’s *Mullaloonah Tank* (1953) and Sidney Nolan’s scene of drought *Near Birdsville* (1953). Heysen acknowledged that both works possessed admirable qualities, but lamented to Nora that such a sombre and unhappy view of the landscape should be “acclaimed as the forerunner of an Australian school!”

Given his engagement with the Flinders Ranges, Heysen was interested in the attention and acclaim achieved by Nolan’s series of outback landscapes. Although Nolan had exhibited with the CAS since 1939, his art world profile increased considerably as a consequence of several solo exhibitions staged between 1948 and 1953. During this period Nolan’s iconography was self-consciously Australian in character, concentrating upon regional landscapes and historical narratives. His *Exhibition of Central Australian Landscapes* opened in Sydney in March 1950, featuring large-scale, aerial views of Australia’s red centre, which emphasised the vastness and geological structure of the landscape. In June 1950 Nolan’s painting *Inland Australia* (1950, Fig. 93) was awarded the Dunlop Art Prize and was purchased by the Tate Gallery, London, in 1951.

---

Hans was interested in John Brackenreg and Nora’s opinions of Nolan’s exhibition. In contrast to the adulation of the modernist critics Paul Haefliger and James Gleeson, they objected to Nolan’s obvious reliance upon aerial photographs and felt that his use of automotive enamel paint gave a “thin and cheap quality” to his skies. Later that year Heysen was able to view two of these works in Adelaide. He described them to Will Ashton as “of rather an unpleasant red & convolutions like the (insides) of a dead animal,” and felt that “the high praise bestowed” on Nolan was “quite unjustified.” Ironically, Heysen’s disparaging comments presage Nolan’s 1953 series of drought paintings, which depict the carcasses of horses and cattle. The NGSA acquired its first Nolan in May 1952, purchasing MacDonnell Ranges (1949) from his first Adelaide solo exhibition.

It has been suggested that by engaging with national imagery Nolan and Drysdale were revising and subverting the tradition established by the Heidelberg School. However, Heysen felt that such works represented a departure from the “spirit of Roberts & Streeton,” who he believed “had the love of this country –

---


with all its beauties at heart.”

From the late 1930s onwards he repeatedly complained that Australian artists seemed “to close their eyes to the characteristics of their own country & live in a world created by Art Magazines from overseas.”

His letters increasingly emphasised his belief that Australian art should possess a national character and aspire to convey the *genius loci* of the local landscape. Along with his admiration of the Heidelberg School, during this period he regularly expressed his enthusiasm for John Constable whom he praised for consistently demonstrating “his love for his surroundings in his work.”

Although these artists were widely regarded as outmoded, Heysen believed that their style and rural subject matter possessed an eternal, timeless character. By contrast he reproached local modern artists for seeming “more concerned with the worn out movements from Europe than the ‘atmosphere’ of their own country.”

Significantly, Heysen was also critical of the facile, nationalistic landscapes produced by many traditionalists, dismissing the paintings of Robert Johnson,

---

174 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 27 January [1948], LF Papers. Heysen made these comments after Drysdale was awarded the 1947 Wynne Prize for *Sofala* (1947, AGNSW). Cf. “Hans Heysen: Famous Australian Painter Lives and Works Among the Gumtrees which have made him World Famous,” *Pix*, 18 March 1950.
175 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 December [1939], LF Papers.

Nora Heysen expressed similar concerns. See, Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen: 21 September 1940; 5 October 1940; Tuesday 1940, Speck, *Heysen to Heysen*, 123-25.
Ernest Buckmaster and John and William Rowell as possessing “no real searching … they have really nothing vital to say.”

These concerns are evident in the growing interest that Heysen took in the landscape paintings of Lloyd Rees during the early 1950s. Writing to Will Ashton in mid-1951, he observed that Rees:

> usually works in a low tone and rarely suggesting the Australian clarity of colour & tone – But he is I think a fine artist, with a fine appreciation of chiaroscuro a la the old English school of landscape painters a quality which we so badly lack in the Aus painters but I do miss that breath of freshness & sunshine so essential to our landscape in his work – also he is inclined to scratch & scrape, instead of using a more direct brush stroke.

Just as Heysen’s earlier letters had implied a sense of rivalry with Streeton and Lambert, during this period he seems to instinctively compare his own art world status with that of Rees, whose works were achieving growing recognition.

Indeed, the two artists were placed in direct contest when participating in the 1951 Commonwealth Jubilee Art Competition, as considered below. Furthermore, in 1952 the *Bulletin’s* review of the recently published *Hans Heysen* suggested that Heysen’s *Study for Bald Hills of Rapid Bay* (1938, Fig. 94) resembled a painting by Rees, “for here … are the sprawling and rhythmical hills, the massive and rather desolate power, the impression of the earth as some prehistoric monster frozen to stone by the gorgon-stare of time.”

While the reviewer felt the romantic undertones of Rees’s style imbued his works with a visionary quality,

---

178 Heysen to James McGregor, January [1937], JM Papers. Lionel Lindsay shared Heysen’s hostility to such popular yet vulgar artists “who reduced art to sitting room decoration.” See, Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 7, 9, 30.


Heysen regarded them as melancholic, speculating that “sadness … must lie in Lloyd Rees’ make-up and [is] a reflection of his nature.”

If reluctant to accept many new developments in Australian painting, Heysen was quick to recognise the artistic merits of Albert Namatjira. He first encountered the Western Arrente artist’s work in 1937 when three of Namatjira’s watercolours were included in an exhibition of Rex Battarbee’s art held at the RSASA Gallery. Heysen praised these as “virile and unsophisticated & they held something far better & truer of the country than Batterbee’s work.” Heysen purchased two of Namatjira’s watercolours in late 1937 and acquired another from Namatjira’s first Adelaide solo exhibition in 1939 (Fig. 95). He also began corresponding with Pastor Friedrich Wilhelm Albrecht, the superintendent of the Finke River Mission, Hermannsburg, regarding Namatjira’s work.

As Heysen later recalled, he strongly advised against Namatjira travelling to Adelaide to further his art education:

as I felt that if his work was to hold and retain a truly original outlook – he should work in the surroundings where he was bred and … I was

---

183 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 22 June [1945], LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Robert Croll, 23 August [1937], Croll Papers; Basil Burdett, “Our First Native Artist,” *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 25 September 1937.
184 Pastor Albrecht posted Heysen two of Namatjira’s watercolours in 1937, writing “As a price for these two paintings I thought that £2-0-0 for the two together would be fair.” However, Heysen appears to have instead sent a cheque for three guineas. F. W. Albrecht to Heysen: 13 December 1937; 7 January 1938, HH Papers.
185 Heysen purchased *Mount Giles* (c.1938-1939, NGA), from Natmatjira’s 1939 Adelaide solo exhibition, Alison French, *Seeing the Centre: The Art of Albert Namatjira 1902-1959* (Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2002), 133. However, only two works by Namatjira were included in the sale of Heysen’s collection. Lots 146 and 182 in *The Hans Heysen Collection: Including Works by Eminent Australian and Overseas Artists*, (Melbourne: Leonard Joel 1970).
185 F. W. Albrecht to Heysen: 13 December 1937; 7 January 1938, HH Papers.
convinced that to bring him south was to destroy that something—primitive—and this is exactly what has now happened—He certainly has become quite a facile Watercolourist & is well in the limelight, but with it we have lost any further development in his outlook—or contribution to Aus Art—it’s a great pity.186

Heysen’s belief that the inherent quality of Namatjira’s works had been compromised by his success and exposure to Western art reflected the widely-held prejudice that Namatjira’s works were culturally inauthentic.187 However, such views failed to recognise that Namatjira’s paintings depicted “a terrain where every aspect had social and ritual or ancestral meaning,” reflecting “a vast and varied network of ecological and spiritual territories.”188 Nonetheless, it is significant that Heysen should prefer Namatjira’s earlier works, which in their greater simplicity and stylisation correspond more closely to a modernist aesthetic than his more naturalistic later watercolours. Heysen subsequently expressed admiration for the Western Arrente artist Edwin Pareroultja and acquired two of his works.189

---

186 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 22 June [1945], LF Papers. Cf. F. W. Albrecht to Heysen, 29 November 1939, HH Papers.
Reflecting upon European modernism, Heysen advised Ure Smith: “At first I hated the modern stuff – then I became more tolerant – but after that I must confess my natural sympathy was lacking & it became very tiresome.” Like other members of his network, Heysen could recognise the merits of certain manifestations of modern art, but opposed what he considered “ultra-modernism.” He most readily accepted modern characteristics when these served to enliven or enhance works which demonstrated craftsmanship, the study of nature and continuity with the art of the past. By contrast he dismissed much avant-garde art as formulaic, irrational and unhealthy. He was particularly concerned that the example of European modernism was preventing local artists from conveying distinctively Australian qualities in their works. While Heysen was predominantly traditionalist in his sympathies, a close examination of his views demonstrates that he was less conservative that his own art might suggest. However, the perception of Heysen as a recalcitrant reactionary was further reinforced through his association with the Australian Academy of Art and Lionel Lindsay’s *Addled Art*.

### 4.4. Involvement with the Australian Academy of Art, 1937-1949

The proposal in the mid-1930s to establish an Australian Academy of Art shows that the rear-guard mentality of the governing art world oligarchy was not limited to their aesthetic preferences, but was also reflected in the credence they placed in outmoded institutional structures. Although its instigators’ aspiration of achieving a greater unity amongst the various regional art societies was laudable,

---

190 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
by the time of its proposal national academies had long since ceased to be vehicles of progress in the arts. Richard Haese and Christine Dixon have provided detailed accounts of the Academy’s history and the backlash against it.

Following its founding in 1937 the Academy staged four exhibitions that were national in scope between 1938 and 1941; it then continued as a Melbourne-based entity, holding more modest exhibitions until 1946, before being disestablished in 1949. This chapter will concentrate upon the close association and sometimes reluctant involvement of Heysen and his networks with the endeavour.

The idea for an Australian Academy, modelled upon the Royal Academy of Arts in London, was the initiative of Robert Gordon Menzies, who was then the Attorney General of the United Australia Party government and subsequently Prime Minister from 1939 to 1941 (and again from 1949 to 1966). Menzies, who held conservative views on art, believed that the Academy should prescriptively “set standards” for art and “raise the standards of public taste by directing attention to good work.” As an ardent imperialist he also hoped to secure a Royal Charter for the institution and envisaged it awarding the titles of academicians and associates to prominent artists. Ure Smith lamented to Heysen:

Menzies can only visualise the Academy in all its splendour with names … brass trumpets, high fees, R.A.’s, Royal charters, openings of Exhibitions – but someone has got to ‘produce’ a successful Academy exhibition … We’ve got to … start from the bottom – not from the top.

By contrast Ure Smith hoped the Academy would in essence fulfil the national aspirations he had earlier held for the Society of Artists, encompassing a diversity

193 "Australian Academy – Mr. Menzies’ Advocacy,” Age (Melbourne), 28 April 1937.
194 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 5 February 1938, HH Papers.
of approaches, including modern art.\textsuperscript{195} As considered below, the Academy did exhibit the works of several modern artists. Ure Smith advised Heysen that he regarded the first priorities to be the “standard of work, and maintaining a high quality of exhibitions,” and felt that the Academy should also concern itself with public art education and art in schools.\textsuperscript{196} Heysen’s aspirations for the Academy were closest to those of Ure Smith. He supported the idea of “having some central authority as an Academy would give,” and hoped it would facilitate “contact with other art worlds” by “holding well selected Exhibitions in the various [State] capitals.”\textsuperscript{197} However, he also believed that “no Academy has ever made artists.”\textsuperscript{198}

Many in the Australian art world objected to the Australian Academy, irrespective of whether it was conservative or more inclusive. Its opponents included traditionalist and moderates, motivated by a range of different concerns.\textsuperscript{199} However, it was Menzies’s openly voiced hostility towards modern art that served to unite a diverse array of modernists and their supporters against the proposal. The most significant outcome of this opposition was the foundation of the Contemporary Art Society in 1938. This was instigated by the Melbourne artist and teacher George Bell, who was a similar age to Heysen and whose own work was only moderately modern. He had declined an invitation to be a foundation member of the Academy, believing that academies were “reactionary

\textsuperscript{195} Haese, \textit{Rebels and Precursors}, 40-41.
\textsuperscript{196} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 12 June 1937, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{197} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 3 June 1937, LF Papers; Heysen to Nora Heysen, 3 November 1936, Speck, \textit{Heysen to Heysen}, 66-67. Cf. Heysen to William McInnes, [undated draft, October 1935], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{198} Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 12 March [1937], SUS Papers.
\textsuperscript{199} Haese, \textit{Rebels and Precursors}, 42; Dixon, “Counterclaims,” 12, 15-16.
influences” that “set out to standardise art.” Bell believed that an Academy would inevitably mean “the sanctification of banality and the strict preservation of mediocrity,” and that the influence it sought was comparable to a “dictatorship.”

Similarly, at the opening of the first exhibition of the CAS in 1939, Herbert Vere Evatt, a High Court justice, Labor party stalwart and advocate of modern art, stated that the Society opposed the Academy, which:

- fosters a spirit of exclusiveness and of commercial monopoly … calculated to obstruct the spread of modern culture in Australia. … History teaches us that, when applied to the art or literature of any day or age, the principle of authority prevents progress, encourages ossification, and discourages genius.

Although the CAS was racked by infighting amongst its various factions, these cultural debates proved a productive force for advancing modernism in Australia. A Sydney branch of the CAS was established in August 1940 and an Adelaide division in June 1942.

Heysen was involved with the Academy in several capacities and served as the institution’s primary link to South Australia. In June 1937 he represented the State at the conference held in Canberra responsible for officially founding the Academy (Fig. 96). Although he was physically isolated from the Adelaide art

---

200 George Bell, “Painters’ Tart Reply to Mr Menzies’ Art Criticism,” Herald (Melbourne), 3 May 1937.
203 Haese, Rebels and Precursors, 47-48, 97, 129-53; Grishin, Australian Art, 252-53.
204 Dixon, "Counterclaims," 26; Haese, Rebels and Precursors, 69-71, 74-75.
205 Minutes of the Meeting of a Conference of Delegates held in the Hotel Canberra for the purpose of forming an Australian Academy of Art, 19 June 1937, HH Papers.
world and no longer a member of its principal art society, the RSASA, his standing as an artist of nationwide repute meant he did not encounter local opposition to his role as the State’s representative. Heysen was the only South Australian-based artist among the 50 foundation members of the Academy. Louis McCubbin had declined this honour, feeling that as the director of the NGSA he needed to remain independent. The South Australian artists John Goodchild and Ivor Hele were subsequently elected members in 1939 and Max Ragless in 1941. Several other artists from the State also exhibited with the Academy. In both 1939 and 1940 Heysen and McCubbin were asked to make a pre-selection of works by local artists before these were forwarded to the Academy’s official selection committee.

In the hope of defusing the rivalry that existed between Sydney and Melbourne, the Academy’s council was divided into a Northern Division, representing NSW, ACT and Queensland and a Southern Division encompassing the remaining States. Similarly, the honour of president was conferred upon the veteran Melbourne artist Sir John Longstaff, while Ure Smith, as the polydynamic lynchpin of the Sydney art world, was reluctantly appointed vice-president. Heysen was elected to the Southern council, although he had closer ties to the Sydney-based artists on its Northern counterpart.

---

206 “Australian Academy of Art – Gallery Director Declines Invitation,” *Advertiser*, 23 March 1937. Will Ashton, the director of the NAGNSW, declined membership on the same grounds.

207 Minutes of the Second Annual Assembly of the Australian Academy of Art, 16 December 1939; Minutes of Extraordinary Meeting of Members of the Southern Division of Academy, 22 November 1941, HH Papers.

208 These included George Whinnen, T. H. Bone, Marjorie Gwynne and Gwen Barringer.

209 Charles Hill, General Secretary, Australian Academy of Art, to Heysen: 16 December 1939; 18 January 1940, HH Papers.

210 In 1938 the council for the Northern Division comprised: Norman Carter, Lionel Lindsay, Elioth Gruner, Thea Proctor and Sydney Ure Smith, all friends or acquaintances of Heysen.
benefactors were named Patrons of the Academy. Three were members of Heysen’s network, his friends and prominent art collectors McGregor and Hinton, together with the Adelaide cultural philanthropist Alexander Melrose.\textsuperscript{211} Largely through his involvement with the Academy, several members of Heysen’s circle, including McGregor and Lionel Lindsay, befriended Menzies.\textsuperscript{212} Although generally uninterested in politics, like the majority of his friends Heysen became a supporter and admirer of the politician.\textsuperscript{213}

Most accounts of Australian art history have emphasised the opposition to the Academy from politically engaged and avant-garde artists. However, the correspondence exchanged by Heysen and his associates reveals they were foremost preoccupied with the ill-feelings that it provoked amongst more traditional artists of established reputations. As Joanna Mendelssohn has observed, far from representing a simple opposition between modernists and conservatives, the failure of the Academy stemmed from “the complex network of loyalties, rivalries and enmities that made up the politics of Australian art.”\textsuperscript{214} Foremost amongst the concerns discussed in their letters were the rivalry and mistrust that existed between Victorian and New South Wales artists and the close, but potentially detrimental relationship of the Academy to the Society of Artists. As most of his correspondents were based in Sydney, Heysen received a rather biased account of these disagreements.

\textsuperscript{211} Australian Academy of Art, \textit{First Exhibition: Catalogue} (Sydney: Australian Academy of Art, 1938).
\textsuperscript{213} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 31 December 1949, LF Papers.
\textsuperscript{214} Mendelssohn, \textit{Lionel Lindsay}, 195.
When lunching with the Melbourne artist William McInnes in 1936, Heysen was “astonished at his very positive ‘Victorian’ point of view – and his denial of anything good coming from Sydney painters & I soon felt that their viewpoint on Art was irreconcilable.”\(^{215}\) The previous year Lionel Lindsay had encountered hostility and mistrust when employed as the Melbourne Herald’s art critic, due to his close ties to the Sydney art establishment.\(^ {216}\) However, equivalent prejudices also existed in Sydney, with the members of Heysen’s network dismissive of both the sombre academicism taught by the National Gallery Art School and the tonalism of Meldrum and his followers. Lindsay, McGregor and Ure Smith all felt that the Academy’s inaugural exhibition had been significantly weakened by “the poor quality of work” submitted by Victorian artists.\(^ {217}\) Ure Smith observed: “When I look at the Sydney painting – at least our men are searching and they have a colours sense – and their work is not common and is individual – All the Melb work … is the same in technique. They don’t draw.” He felt that both Hans and Nora Heysen’s work, with its careful draughtsmanship and emphasis on light rather than shadows, was closer to the Sydney artists.\(^ {218}\) Following the failure of the 1941 Academy exhibition, which Ure Smith attributed to poor management by the Melbourne artists, the Northern Division used the pretext of wartime transport difficulties to go into abeyance.\(^ {219}\) However, with the Academy’s membership, quality of exhibits, sales and critical reception all

---

\(^{215}\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 20 September [annotated 1935, actually 1936], LF Papers.

\(^{216}\) Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, 183-87.

\(^{217}\) Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 6 April 1938; James McGregor to Heysen, 24th [probably April or May 1938], HH Papers.

\(^{218}\) Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 April 1938, HH Papers.

\(^{219}\) Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 31 May 1941, HH Papers.
continuing to decline, the war merely provided the excuse many in Sydney had been seeking to dissociate themselves from the waning institution.220

The Academy also provoked hostility due to the predominance of members of the Society of Artists amongst its ranks.221 After comparing the 1939 membership lists of both societies, Henry Fuller, the secretary of the RSASA, claimed that “the ‘academy’ is practically the ‘Society of Artists’ under a different name.”222 During the rather fraught period of the Academy’s foundation, members of the Society had wholeheartedly supported the endeavour, which in turn contributed to their prominent representation. By contrast, Sydney Long and William Lister Listler, senior artists affiliated with the RASNSW, both resigned from the working party for the proposed Academy objecting that they had not been nominated as academicians. However, as Ure Smith advised Heysen, “before doing so, whilst acting on the committee they were secretly organising its downfall with other Societies.”223 As both Long and Lister were also trustees of the NAGNSW, they used their influence to try and prevent the Gallery purchasing works from the Academy’s exhibitions.224 Despite their initial support, both Ure Smith and Lindsay felt that the quality of work exhibited at the inaugural Academy was inferior to that shown in the Society of Artists’ annual exhibitions.

220 Haese, Rebels and Precursors, 50.
221 Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System, 58-60.
224 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 10 April 1938; 18 April 1940, HH Papers.
They were also concerned that if members started to neglect these shows in favour of the Academy, it would be to the detriment of the Society. McGregor convinced them to maintain their support when they considered abandoning the undertaking in 1938.\textsuperscript{225} However, after widespread disappointment with the 1941 exhibition, Ure Smith decided it was better to concentrate his energies on the Society of Artists.\textsuperscript{226}

Heysen exhibited at each of the first four Academy exhibitions (1938-1941), which were national in scope. However, despite remaining on the Academy’s council, he did not show in the remaining four exhibitions (1943-1946), which only featured works by Southern Division artists. Nora Heysen was also a regular exhibitor with the Academy, showing nine works between 1938 and 1945. Given the divided feelings about the Academy in the Australian art world, reviews of its exhibitions were frequently partisan. When Art in Australia, then in its final year of Ure Smith’s editorship, devoted a special issue to the Academy’s inaugural exhibition, the anonymous reviewer praised two of Hans Heysen’s watercolours as amongst “the best he has produced.” The Farmyard Gum (1936, Fig. 97), is described as “full of the character of its subject … handled with vigour and rare knowledge of the medium.”\textsuperscript{227} This was the only work which the NAGNSW purchased from the exhibition. Conversely, in their reviews of the Academy’s 1940 exhibition both Howard Ashton and John Young dismissed Heysen’s work as predictable, the former writing “we have seen the same Hans

\textsuperscript{225} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 15 March 1937; 5 February 1938; 10 April 1938; 25 April 1938; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 6 April 1938; [undated, c.1940], HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{226} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 31 May 1941; 21 December 1941; 8 August 1942; 15 May 1943, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{227} “The First Exhibition of the Australian Academy of Art,” Art in Australia series 3, no. 71 (1938): 23.
Heysens now for 20 years, and his repetition ceases to hold our interest, accompanied as it is with no alteration in technique or the outlook.” Their similar observations about other exhibitors reinforced the perception that the Academy exerted a stultifying effect that was detrimental to Australian art.

Despite accusations of its conservatism, there were several artists working in a modern idiom who exhibited with the Academy. Amongst its foundation members were Feint, Macqueen, Preston, Proctor, Roland Wakelin, William Frater, Arnold Shore and Grace Cossington Smith. Furthermore, although the Academy and CAS are frequently presented as mutually antagonistic, a number of artists, including the South Australians Marjorie Gwynne and Ruby Henty, willingly exhibited with both associations. However, the types of modern works exhibited at the Academy tended to reflect earlier, already familiar manifestations of modernism in the post-impressionist or ‘School of Paris’ mode. These were primarily contributed by Sydney artists, as the more progressive artists of that city had largely supported the Academy. By contrast, examples of surrealism, abstraction and overtly political social realism were excluded from its shows, but featured prominently in CAS exhibitions. In providing an alternative venue for more challenging art, the CAS reflects Becker’s observation that art worlds often have more than one distribution system.

---

228 Howard Ashton, “Academy Show Mediocre,” Sun (Sydney), 29 March 1940; Young, “The Academy Show,” 42.
231 Becker, Art Worlds, 95-97.
Heysen had initially supported the inclusion of moderate modernists, telling Robert Croll, the Academy’s secretary, “I am glad Frater has joined up as it’s essential to have every phase of ‘Art thought’ included as long as it is expressed in all earnestness & some originality.” However, Heysen was less tolerant of the modern works on the one occasion he attended the Academy, when its 1939 exhibition travelled to Adelaide. He complained to Norman Carter about three “very restless paintings by Arnold Shore … each trying to outdo the other by an explosion of colour & violent technique. Frater also had 2 paintings far more modern in outlook than Shore … neither carried conviction or substance.” By contrast, Lionel Lindsay acclaimed Shore as a rare example of an artist whose paintings demonstrated an original and successful utilisation of modernist characteristics.

The 1939 exhibition also enabled Hans to see Nora’s Archibald Prize winning portrait *Madame Elink Schuurman* (1938). He confided his disappointment with the work to Carter, feeling that “in parts it was jolly good – but as a whole it failed.” Heysen believed Nora had fallen “between two stools … for it is neither a successful portrait nor successful colour scheme.”

---

233 Heysen to Norman Carter, 1 June [annotated 1938, actually 1939], NC Papers.
234 Lindsay, “Modernism,” 25; *Addled Art*, 51. Lindsay later wrote to Joseph Burke: “When I was on the Trust … I always tried to get the best of such modern painters, first of Margaret Preston, and later Drysdale, Dobell and Arnold Shore bought. It was invariably defeated until they started to buy worse examples.” Lionel Lindsay to Joseph Burke, 29 October 1954, Joseph Terence Burke, Personal Papers, 1978.0039, Series 1/49 – Daryl Lindsay, Joan Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay, 1949-1974, University of Melbourne Archives.
235 This exhibition allowed visitors to compare Nora’s painting with several of it Archibald competitors. Artists whose entries for the 1938 Archibald Prize were included in the 1939 Academy were: Edward Heffernan, John Rowell, Dora Wilson, A. E. Newbury, Archibald Colquhoun, James Quinn, Max Meldrum and Norman Carter.
he had spoken to Nora about “the danger of letting colour play the master role,” in her portraits. Both men shared the view that colour served a primarily decorative role in painting and was less important than form, tone or draughtsmanship.

The failure of the Australian Academy of Art is tinged with irony. An organisation that aspired to achieve a greater unity amongst the country’s artists’ societies only served to exacerbate pre-existing divisions and contrary to the wishes of its traditionalist progenitor, ultimately strengthened the position of modern art. Bourdieu has observed that an “Academy’s monopoly rests on a whole network of mutually reinforcing beliefs” and that as “these interlocking beliefs gradually collapse, they drag down … the symbolic capital that they underpin.” Heysen’s geographical isolation meant that he largely learned about the destructive factionalism surrounding the Academy at second-hand. He reflected in 1937, “It seems strange enough – but a great deal of jealousy does exist in the artistic fraternity.” His inability to recognise the fundamentally anachronistic nature of the institution is revealed by his subsequent membership of the Fellowship of Australian Artists, a conservative Melbourne-based society established in 1950 in response to the Academy’s demise. While claiming to embrace “a wide diversity of styles,” the Fellowship nonetheless required the

---

237 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: 11 February 1939; 16 May 1939 [both misfiled as 1938], HH Papers.
238 Heysen to Nora Heysen, 21 June 1936, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 61; Lindsay, Addled Art, 49-50.
240 Heysen to R. H. Croll, 19 February 1937, Croll Papers.
works exhibited to display “a basic minimum of craftsmanship.” Heysen regularly contributed works to its exhibitions until the early 1960s, despite many critics panning both its exhibitions and outmoded objectives.

4.5. Heysen, Lionel Lindsay and Addled Art, 1940-43

While many members of Heysen’s networks felt upset and indignant about the growing prominence, popularity and acceptance of avant-garde art, the friend who was most vocal in the campaign against it was Lionel Lindsay. When Lindsay mentioned modernism in his published criticism of the 1920s and 1930s it was mostly presented in what Jeanette Hoorn has termed the “abstract negative,” invoked as the antithesis of the traditional approaches he considered praiseworthy. Writing in 1923, Lindsay claimed that Australian art was fortunate in remaining old fashioned and provincial, “unaffected by the ‘stunt’ art that has ravaged the older civilizations, following the way of three parts tradition, which is the safest and sanest.” Such comparisons reflect Bourdieu’s assertion that even the dominant position depends upon and is defined in relation to “the other positions constituting the field.” A more overt enmity entered Lindsay’s writing following his 1926-27 trip to Europe and from the mid-1930s the condemnation of modernist aesthetics increasingly became a central

---

242 Fellowship of Australian Artists, Royal Tour Exhibition (Melbourne: Fellowship of Australian Artists, 1954).
This culminated in his anti-modernist polemic *Addled Art*, in which his already hostile tone is made further objectionable by his anti-Semitic and sexist assertions. Not only did these outbursts serve to tarnish Lindsay’s reputation, but Heysen’s work was also tainted by association.

In October 1940 Lionel Lindsay wrote a letter to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* condemning the Contemporary Art Society’s exhibition. In addition to claiming that “modernism was organised in Paris by the Jew dealers,” he criticised the works on display as derivative of European examples, asking “what relationship exists between the ‘Ecole de Paris’ … and Australian character, conditions, and viewpoint?” He was also preoccupied with the number of Sydney exhibitors bearing “foreign names” and suggested that many of their works reflected a “mainly Germanic intrusion into Australian aesthetics, for true art grows like a tree from its native soil, and not from the sludge of decadent civilisations.”

It is ironic that while condemning the influence of recent European émigré artists, Lindsay’s arboreal metaphor for “true” Australian art should evoke the signature subject matter of his German-born friend. His letter provoked several responses, many criticising his anti-Semitism and defending the originality of the exhibits. Significantly, two pointed out that Heysen and Gruner were also prominent Australian artists with “decidedly un-English” names, while the artist Colin Wyatt dismissed Heysen’s work as “unoriginal,” compared to that of the CAS.

These rejoinders suggest how closely many in the Australian art

---

248 Lionel Lindsay, “Contemporary Art,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 October 1940.
249 Letters to the Editors, *Sydney Morning Herald*: Jean Bellette, 18 October 1940; Colin Wyatt, 18 October 1940; R. Haughton James, 19 October 1940. For further discussion of the reactions to this exhibition, see, Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 69-71.
world had come to associate Heysen’s art with Lindsay’s biased aesthetic preferences.

By the 1940s Heysen’s work epitomised the conservatism that committed modernists stood against. The catalogue of the First Exposition of the RSASA Contemporary Group asserted that, “Australian culture has been imitative. It must now become creative.” It went on to describe South Australian art as:

a dummy art founded on imitation of the past … of the closest-to-nature-trick-techniques of Royal Academicians, or, a bit closer home, to the few romantic discoverers of the Australian palette: Heysen-and-gum-trees, Streeton-and-panorama; resulting in popular-imitative-romantic watercolour after popular-imitative-romantic watercolour right round the slumbering walls of exhibitions.250

Although criticising Heysen’s many imitators, this statement nonetheless suggests a denunciation of his works. During the 1940s the phrase “gum tree school” emerged as a pejorative expressions amongst advocates of modern art.251 Indeed, the Adelaide modernist and jazz musician David Dallwitz composed a satirical song titled If You Want to Paint a Gumtree which was regularly sung at gathering of the CAS.252 Similarly, Clive Turnbull devoted a paragraph of his study Art Here to lamenting “the endless representation of gumtrees … All are alike in intellectual content or lack of it,” and Herbert Badham described how a “well-known fashionable painter announced recently that his trip to the country was intended to destroy the ‘myth’ of the gum-tree and Heysen.”253

250 Royal S.A. Society of Arts. Associate Contemporary Group, First Exposition (Adelaide: s.n., 1942), unpaginated.
252 Francis, Goodbye, 228.
Shortly after the controversy provoked by Lindsay’s letter, its author received a knighthood in the 1941 New Year’s honours list. Sir Lionel advised Heysen that this new status would enable him “to hit harder in the defence of art,” which he believed was being undermined by the news media.\(^{254}\) The outcome was *Addled Art*, which was completed in mid-1942 and bears that date, although publication delays meant it was not released until June 1943 (Fig. 98). Lindsay’s book was not only an attack on modernist aesthetics, but also reflected his belief that such art was the outcome of an age of social, spiritual and mental decline.

He wrote to Heysen soon after completing the text:

> The world & civilisation are paying today for Hollywood, Radio and Modern Art – The latter symptomatic of decadence – all low brow and degrading influences. No wonder Hitler swept France like a flame when all had been corrupted in the spirit of the nation that once was the highest in Europe.\(^{255}\)

Mendelssohn has observed that from the late 1930s, Lindsay increasingly turned to writing letters to friends “as a way of coping with events that disturbed him.”\(^{256}\) His letters to Heysen were frequently preoccupied with his concerns regarding politics, modern society and international events, which he often related back to his views on art.\(^{257}\)

Becker asserts that writers on aesthetics frequently “strike a moralistic tone” as they conceive their purpose as finding “a foolproof formula which will distinguish things which do not *deserve* to be called art from works which have *earned* that

\(^{254}\) Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 6 January 1941, HH Papers. Robert Menzies was Prime Minister at the time of Lindsay’s knighthood. Leon Gellert reported that James McGregor acted as Menzies’s advisor on arts honours, suggesting appropriate candidates for knighthoods. Leon Gellert, interview by Katherine Campbell Harper, 22-26 August 1975, ORAL TRC 2111, NLA.

\(^{255}\) Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 9 July 1942, HH Papers. Cf. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 24 July 1940, HH Papers.

\(^{256}\) Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 190.

\(^{257}\) For the prevalence of such claims amongst Australian conservatives, see, Haese, *Rebels and Precursors*, 4-6.
Some of Lindsay’s central arguments in *Addled Art* include that far from being original, avant-garde art is frequently formulaic; its success is the product of “art propaganda,” written into existence by charlatans and corrupt critics; it is unduly preoccupied with ugliness and deformation; and its supporters are obsessed with novelty and the latest fashion. Two potentially libellous chapters discussing modernism in Australia and the role of the press in its promotion were omitted following legal advice. However, Lindsay’s most controversial published assertions were that modernism’s ascendency was due to a conspiracy of Jewish art dealers who utilised trickery to maximise their profits and that such art was most readily embraced by women due to their “superficial nature.”

Lindsay was not alone in holding these prejudiced views, with equally anti-Semitic and misogynistic claims appearing in James MacDonald’s art writing of the period. Following the publication of *Addled Art* Lindsay’s anti-Semitism was widely condemned, even in reviews that were otherwise supportive of the book. However, no reviewers at the time criticised him for his attitudes towards women. Astonishingly, when a British edition of the book was released in 1946 none of its anti-Semitic content was removed, despite news reports having revealed the horrific extent of Nazi persecutions.

---


259 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, ix, 1, 3, 6, 17-18, 25, 32, 36-37, 41-47, 50, 52-57.

260 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: 9 July 1942; 22 July 1943, HH Papers; Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 204.

261 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, 7-14, 17-18, 52.


263 Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 203-05.

Although Lindsay’s book polarised reviewers it was a popular success with the first edition selling out within a week.\footnote{Mendelsohn, Lionel Lindsay, 205.} Heysen was largely enthusiastic about it, writing:

I am always confident that our thoughts & ideas on Art run along similar lines, and your book on ‘Addled Art’ more than ever confirms it … Australians cannot thank you sufficiently, but let us most sincerely hope they listen to your warning. You have not minced matters and your pen is penetrating and biting, it leaves no doubt of your sincerity and your purpose.

He also praised Lindsay’s “knowledge and exceptional experience in gaining the ‘inner workings’ of the Jew Art dealers’ duplicity.”\footnote{Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 9 July [annotated 1942, actually 1943], LF Papers.} Following his 1934 visit to Europe, Heysen had expressed the view that dealers were manipulating the market value of modern art.\footnote{Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 15 July 1934; undated [November 1934], SUS Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 13 January 1935, WHG Papers.} He was similarly disapproving of Australian art dealers if he felt that they treated art like any other tradable commodity, as considered in the following chapter. Although Heysen’s statement primarily reflects his general distrust of art market commercialism, his ready acceptance of Lindsay’s anti-Semitism indicates that he was not immune to this insidious prejudice which more progressive Australians had only recently begun to challenge.\footnote{See, David Nichols and Emily Turner-Graham, "Bluey and Sol: Antisemitic Humour in a German-Australian Outpost, 1937-1939," Immigrants & Minorities 33, no. 3 (2015): 240-41.}

Ure Smith by contrast felt that although “Lionel’s book has some good material in it, I feel he is prejudiced and I think it was a mistake to tackle the Jews so viciously.”\footnote{Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 July 1943, HH Papers. Cf. Ure Smith to Heysen, 27 July 1943, HH Papers.} Interestingly, in the same letter Ure Smith also criticised the
CAS’s recently opened Sydney exhibition, demonstrating that he was not an unconditional supporter of avant-garde art. Other members of Heysen’s network were more enthusiastic about *Addled Art*. James McGregor brought Heysen a copy of Lindsay’s book “with great glee – he seems to have enjoyed it as much as I have.” McGregor’s delight is attributable to his close friendship with Lindsay, as like Ure Smith he was moderately supportive of modernism. Indeed, in 1939 he was instrumental in the NAGNSW’s purchase of Maurice de Vlaminck’s *The Red Roofs* (1912). Lindsay had criticised Vlaminck as painting “a savage sort of landscape slashed in … the colour forced. He paints as he drives a sports car … and confuses speed of execution with emotional force.” Will Ashton also praised Lindsay’s book, writing: “It is about time somebody with authority enlightened the public as to what has been going on during these last few years in the name of Art.”

Although primarily concerned with European modern art, several of Lindsay’s statements in *Addled Art* may have reminded readers of Heysen’s work. In his introduction he declared:

> Australia already possesses a tradition in art and is proud of it. The expression of her life and landscape by Streeton, Roberts, Lambert and Heysen, though it closes an era, is as vitally alive as the art of Constable and Corot. It rests with the Australian artist … to continue in that tradition, and add to it his personal vision and skill.

Lindsay described modern art as “sick, like a man deprived of decent food,” and suggested it was “time that the old fields were ploughed and manured and

---

270 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 9 July [annotated 1942, actually 1943], LF Papers.
271 Chanin and Miller, *Degenerates and Perverts*, 232.
272 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, 23.
273 Will Ashton to Heysen, 19 July 1943, HH Papers.
274 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, x.
cultivated, to produce the nourishing staples and harvests which are the reward of hard work.”

This metaphor links back to the pastoral landscape subjects he favoured in his writings on Australian art and Heysen’s work in particular. He devotes an extensive passage to commending the works of Tom Roberts for depicting the “characteristic life” of Australia, suggesting that “it is to Roberts that our young artists must turn” for inspiration. However, in extolling an art “centred in the pastoral industry,” grounded in careful observation and concerned with capturing the effects of “Australian light,” Lindsay again evokes features he had frequently praised in Heysen’s work.

Indeed, the modernist artist and critic Adrian Lawlor predicted that *Addled Art* would find particular favour amongst “the great sub-mental Australian ‘art-loving’ public … with their expensive Heysens and Powers, their priceless Streetons and their honest-to-goodness Max Meldrums.”

In August 1943, two months after the release of *Addled Art*, an exhibition of 57 drawings by Heysen opened at the NAGNSW (Figs. 100 & 101). This had previously been shown at the NGSA and subsequently toured to the NGV. During the Second World War many state galleries hosted temporary loan exhibitions as their permanent collections had been placed into storage as a wartime precaution. Lionel Lindsay had suggested at a trustees’ meeting that the NAGNSW host the exhibition of Heysen’s drawings and was supported by McGregor, who had viewed the collection in Adelaide. The trustees voted in

---

275 Ibid., 60.
276 Ibid., 62-63.
277 Adrian Lawlor, ”Angry Gentleman,” *Angry Penguins*, no. 5 (1943): unpaginated.
278 At the NAGNSW these had included memorial exhibitions for Elioth Gruner and William McInnes (1940) and shows devoted to Sydney Long (1941), Lloyd Rees, Roland Wakelin, William Dobell and Margaret Preston (1942).
their favour, but at the same meeting rejected a proposal from the CAS to stage an exhibition of the Swiss-born Sydney modernist Sali Herman.\textsuperscript{279}

The Heysen exhibition was reportedly popular with visitors in all three cities, a point that his supporters seized upon as evidence that the public were still interested in traditional art based upon craftsmanship and observation.\textsuperscript{280} Indeed, after Keith Murdoch expressed admiration, Lindsay wrote “it gave me a chance I was waiting for and I proposed, that seeing we had given the modernists a far too generous showing, that this would correct the public’s impression that only bad drawing was available. Jim [McGregor] backed me with his usual heartiness.”\textsuperscript{281} Although it was not conceived as a commercial exhibition, nearly half the works were purchased for public collections and other drawings were sold by private negotiation.\textsuperscript{282}

Lindsay contributed a short catalogue essay for the Sydney show in which he declared Heysen “our greatest draughtsman of landscape.” Heysen’s “sound, honest, thorough” drawings are contrasted with the perceived neglect of careful draughtsmanship by modernists.\textsuperscript{283} His assertions clearly recall \textit{Addled Art}, particularly the chapter titled “Drawing – Bad and Good.” Here Lindsay claimed that while drawing “demands discipline, patience, finesse of hand and eye,” the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{279}] Monthly Meeting of Trustees, 27 November [1942], Minutes of the Board of the NAGNSW, 11/3166 – 21/1/1941-23/2/1945, Capon Library.
\item[\textsuperscript{280}] M. J. MacNally to Heysen, 3 July 1942; Will Ashton to Heysen, 29 September 1943; Daryl Lindsay to Heysen, 29 March 1944, HH Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 22 September [1943], WA Papers.
\item[\textsuperscript{281}] Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 24 October 1943, HH Papers.
\item[\textsuperscript{282}] The NAGNSW purchased 14 drawings; the NGV seven; the Queensland Art Gallery four; the Geelong Art Gallery one; and Howard Hinton purchased two for presentation to the Armidale Teachers’ College.
\item[\textsuperscript{283}] Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen's Drawings,” in \textit{Exhibition of Drawings by Hans Heysen} (Sydney: National Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1943), 5-6.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
advocates of modernism asserted “that expressive drawing need not be correct, nay, was even more emotional in its incorrectness … that bad drawing possessed a mystic and mysterious force denied to the correct expression of form.”

Lindsay concluded with the nationalistic assertion that Heysen’s work reveals “to his countrymen the character and beauty of the land they dwell in” and is “an implicit, though unconscious, refutation of Modernism … in his faith and vision lie the security of Australian Art.”

James MacDonald and Harold Herbert wrote enthusiastic reviews when Heysen’s drawings were shown in Melbourne. However, Paul Haefliger, the Sydney Morning Herald’s pro-modernist art critic, remained unimpressed, describing Heysen’s work as technically competent, but lacking that “indefinable spirit, which is felt rather than seen.” He had recently criticised Lindsay’s book in a review titled “Addled Analysis.”

In a 1944 essay the Melbourne artist Vic O’Connor emphasised the similarities between Lionel Lindsay’s views on modern art and those of the National Socialists. O’Connor had earlier participated in the Anti-Fascist Exhibition staged in Melbourne and Adelaide in 1942-43. Two years later the art historian Bernard Smith discussed aspects of Addled Art in his essay “The Fascist Mentality in Australian Art and Criticism,” which was published under a pseudonym in the

---

284 Addled Art, 34.
286 Harold Herbert, “National Gallery Show,” Argus, 15 February 1944; “Art Matters,” Age, 15 February 1944.
287 “Heysen Drawings,” Sydney Morning Herald, 12 August 1943.
He identified “attributes of pre-fascist mentality” present in Australian art criticism, including: “the doctrine of racial supremacy, the belief in society as an organism, a hatred of democracy, the fascist praise of rural life, the identification of modern art with Bolshevism and Jewish exploitation.”

The last three characteristics were all evident in *Addled Art*. In relation to the celebration of rural life, Smith quoted MacDonald’s praise of Arthur Streeton. However, this could equally have been illustrated by Lindsay’s writings on Heysen, even though neither man’s enthusiasm for country life had its basis in fascist sympathies. Peter Beilharz has argued that Smith was more broadly concerned about the manner in which much art criticism, modernist as well and traditionalist, subscribed to the romantic notion that the artist-hero’s creative vision existed independently of their socio-political conditions, at a time when contemporary fascist regimes were similarly utilising romanticism to undermine progressive political ideals.

As Smith exclusively examined statements made in published criticism, his views regarding “the relationship between the rhetoric of the period and the imagery produced,” is not made clear.

---


292 Ibid., 50-51.


294 For Lindsay’s opposition to Spanish fascism see, Mendelsohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 187-88.


works of both Streeton and Heysen it seems unlikely that he regarded their paintings as embodying the same proto-fascist beliefs he identified in Lindsay’s text. Jeanette Hoorn has endeavoured to complete Smith’s analysis by suggesting that Australian pastoral landscape paintings of the interwar period demonstrate affinities with the ideologies and aesthetic preferences of European fascists. Her introductory argument concerns a cult of “pastoraphilia,” whereby a culturally and politically dominant oligarchy promoted Australian agriculture and its representation in art as a “healthy” alternative to the urban, industrial and modern. This elucidation has considerable merit and provides a useful framework for considering the tensions between nationalist conservatives and more cosmopolitan modernists. However, Hoorn’s attempts to demonstrate parallels with the ideology of National Socialism in the works of Australian artists is frequently flawed and heavy handed. She particularly focuses upon Heysen’s images of agricultural labourers, which she appears to have selected because of the artist’s German heritage and friendship with Lindsay. She argues that Heysen’s *The Toilers* (1920, Fig. 31), can be compared to officially sanctioned paintings of the Nazi regime in terms of its palette, brush strokes and subject matter, asserting that “Heysen’s agricultural pictures echoed the ideologues of the Third Reich: ‘Art has to grow from the blood and the soil if it wants to live.’”

Hoorn suggests that Lindsay may “have introduced Heysen to the artists of

---

However, the European artists whom Heysen admired were largely French, British and Dutch rather than German. As Hoorn acknowledges, Heysen was “the nearest Australian equivalent to the Barbizon School painters,” whose paintings established the artistic tradition referenced in works like *The Toilers*. Furthermore, despite his frequently offensive and reactionary political views, Lindsay maintained that totalitarianism was detrimental to art. He wrote to Heysen in 1939:

> Germany and Russia … are paying today by the loss of their mental freedom which is the death of the spirit. All this mystical talk of race spirit … man is only a cypher where he submits his unique character to the Political Potter. Life and art obey their own logic … The insolence of forcing on the German people an ideology that is of the past & has been superseded, is to throw it back in time!

It is undeniable that many of the arguments in *Addled Art* find parallels in National Socialist writing condemning modern art. However, Lindsay acknowledges that several of his opinions are based upon British, French and American writers, including Fritz René Vanderpyl, René Guillouin and Thomas Craven. Indeed, just like Heysen’s regional realism, such reactionary and offensive attitudes were circulating in many countries and not restricted to Australia and Germany.

Lou Klepac suggests that Heysen’s reputation may have suffered from his having been championed by Lionel Lindsay, particularly in the wake of *Addled Art*. For many in the Australian art world, Heysen’s art had become

---

300 Ibid., 213.
302 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 31 July 1939 [misfiled with 1938], HH Papers.
304 Lindsay, *Addled Art*, 1, 9-10, 12-13, 18, 53-54.
inextricably linked with Lindsay’s writing, as considered above and in the previous chapter. However, Klepac fails to acknowledge Heysen’s active involvement in the formation and circulation of such conservative attitudes about art. Mendelssohn has observed that Lindsay’s “correspondents were also participants in the same debate” regarding modernism, and that the “way he shaped his opinions in his letters to them was a partial recognition of their participatory status.”

Indeed, Heysen’s letters to Lindsay regularly express his disillusionment with modernism, although due to their difference in temperament he is considerably less vitriolic in tone. Similarly, because Heysen was largely apolitical, he rarely reflected upon the social and historical changes which may have produced and encouraged modernism. It was these concerns which accounted for some of the most odious and bizarre passages of *Addled Art*. Nevertheless, if one compares the views of Heysen and Lindsay specifically on matters of aesthetics there are considerable similarities in their attitudes towards avant-garde art.

### 4.6. Heysen and the Cultural Field, 1934-1951

The period of this chapter corresponds with the publication of the first substantial accounts of Australian art history and the staging of important retrospective exhibitions of Australian art. Members of Heysen’s networks were involved with a number of these ventures, although their influence upon art world affairs diminished during these years. Bourdieu has argued that the meaning of an art work “changes automatically with each change in the field within which it

---

306 Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 190.
307 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 7 December [1939]; 19 August [1942], LF Papers.
is situated for the spectator or reader.”  

The differing manner in which Heysen’s artistic achievements are located within these publications and exhibitions indicate both changes to his reputation and place within the cultural field during these decades. This demonstrates a shift from viewing his works as examples of current artistic practice, to regarding them as epitomising the achievements of an earlier era. This perception was further reinforced by the deaths of several artists who similarly depicted the regional landscape or employed an Edwardian aesthetic, including: William Blamire Young (died 1935); Gruner (1939); Streeton (1943); Harold Herbert (1945); Ure Smith (1949) and Harold Septimus Power (1951).

Near the beginning of this era Heysen’s prominence in the cultural field was confirmed when the NAGNSW staged a retrospective of his work in 1935. The collection of 98 works in a variety of media was hurriedly assembled after the gallery trustees endorsed Ure Smith’s suggestion they hold such a show. This was the third “Loan Exhibition” devoted to a living Australian artist organised by MacDonald, following similar displays of Streeton and Gruner. The reviewer for the Sydney Morning Herald observed: “It is fitting that Mr. Heysen should come next, for these three have been enthroned by a majority among collectors as the presiding trinity of landscape painters in Australia in their generation.”

Although these exhibitions were designed to “traverse the whole of a painter’s

---

history instead of concentrating upon recent work,” Heysen’s exhibition did not include any of his European subjects, thus omitting a crucial formative stage of his artistic development. The reviews of the show commended Heysen for the variations he had achieved within his limited range of subject matter, through his attention to the nuances of light, tone and colour. As discussed above, an exhibition of Heysen’s drawings was shown at the NGSA, NAGNSW and NGV between 1942 and 1944. However, the Heysen retrospectives staged in 1952, 1960 and 1966 were held in commercial or community galleries, as Heysen’s work increasingly fell out of favour with the directors and trustees of state galleries.

William Moore’s exhaustive two volume study *The Story of Australian Art* (1934) provided the first substantial history of Australian art. A journalist, critic and playwright, Moore had been a participant in the Australian art world since the early years of the century. He had previously written art criticism for the Melbourne *Herald*, Brisbane *Courier*, Sydney’s *Daily Telegraph* and *Art in Australia*. Moore first contacted Heysen in 1913 to enquire about the details of his career and praised his work in a 1914 article for the British magazine *The Studio*. The two men maintained intermittent contact during the following two decades. In August 1933 Moore wrote requesting to borrow photographs of Heysen’s works for reproduction in his forthcoming magnum opus. After learning that Moore needed to provide the publishers Angus and Robertson with a

---

313 William Moore to Heysen, 5 April 1913, HH Papers; Moore, ”Notes on Some Younger Australian Artists,” 207.
guarantee of £500 to cover the cost of printing blocks, Heysen pledged £25 toward the endeavour. It was perhaps in recognition of this support that Moore selected Heysen’s watercolour *In Brachina Gorge* (1927, Fig. 99) as the colour frontispiece for volume two.

As Robert Holden has observed, Moore “enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with artists and art matters at first hand. To him, therefore, it was something that lived, something still on-going, and not merely history reviewed through second-hand sources.” However, due to these close ties and Moore’s background in journalism, his book suffers from a lack of clear arguments and critical judgements. It has been criticised as an “encyclopaedic stream of facts,” but also praised for its generous inclusiveness of artists subsequently omitted from the canon of Australian art history. Moore’s account was nonetheless influenced by the nationalism of the interwar period. He considered the institutional structures of the Australian art world, with chapters devoted to artists’ societies, art schools, galleries and the art market. Consequently, his study served to reinforce “the range of values of those institutions,” privileging art which “conveyed a sense of tradition and continuity” and furthered a “regional consciousness.” As with his prominent representation in *Art in Australia*, Heysen’s work epitomised these favoured qualities.

---

314 William Moore to Heysen: 11 August [1933]; 22 September [1933]; Heysen to William Moore, undated draft [1933], HH Papers.
317 Burn et al., *Necessity of Australian Art*, 32, 36-37.
Moore primarily considered Heysen in his chapter “The Australian School of Landscape Painters.” Despite the absence of a central argument, Moore’s observations implicitly supported prevalent beliefs about the development of Australian painting. In contradistinction to earlier colonial artists, whom Moore believes viewed the Australian landscape with a European mindset, Louis Buvelot is credited as “the ‘father’ of landscape painting in Australia,” able to convey the distinctive qualities of the local environment. Tom Roberts is acclaimed as “the founder of impressionism in Australia,” while the influence of Streeton “led to the creation of an Australian school of landscape painting.” As in Lionel Lindsay’s essay of 1920, Moore identifies Heysen’s assiduous depiction of eucalypts as his principal contribution to this tradition. Like Lindsay, he also includes lengthy quotations from Heysen which demonstrate his careful observation of his subject matter. In the same chapter Moore briefly discusses “the modern movement in Australia,” which he describes as “but moderately modern” and chiefly characterised by “a freer treatment of the subject, more solidity in design, and greater emphasis in colour.” However, Moore presents such artists as merely pursuing a different aesthetic from their traditionalist counterparts, rather than representing a significant advance in their approach to art. Consequently, his account presents Heysen as an important innovator whose work is in keeping with other contemporary practitioners.

---

318 Moore also provides an overview of Heysen’s career and commercial fortunes in his chapter on the art market. Moore, Story of Australian Art, 2, 29-30.
319 Ibid., 1: 87, 94.
320 Lindsay, “Art of Hans Heysen,” 13-14.
321 Moore, Story of Australian Art, 1, 86-87, 99-100.
322 Ibid., 107-09.
By contrast Bernard Smith’s *Place, Taste and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art since 1788* (1945) demonstrated a clearer spirit of intellectual enquiry and sought to examine the relationship of Australian art to both the structure of society and developments in European art. Consequently, his book was “largely concerned with the mutations which have occurred in styles and fashions originating overseas as they have been assimilated into conditions, social, political, moral and aesthetic, existing in Australia.” However, Smith was also critical of aspects of both nationalism and modernism in Australian art. He described “a Heysenesque landscape or a cubist pattern after the manner of Braque” as both examples of art which neglected to address “the social and political upheavals of their own time.” Instead, he believed that social realism was the most appropriate mode for contemporary artists as it enabled them to respond to social inequality, the rise of fascism and the Second World War. Significantly, Smith’s book was published by Ure Smith, who proactively supported the promising young scholar. Lionel Lindsay objected to both Smith’s political beliefs and vison for Australian art, writing to Heysen that Ure Smith was “culpable in publishing this pimply faced (member of the Communist party I’m told) Bernard Smith’s thesis.” However, unbeknown to him, Ure Smith had refused to print *Place, Taste and Tradition* until a section that was disparaging of the Lindsays was omitted.

---

324 Ibid., 245.
327 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 25 October 1945, HH Papers.
Smith considers Heysen’s work in the chapter titled “The Aftermath of Impressionism,” positioning it alongside that of Lambert, Meldrum, Hugh Ramsay and Rupert Bunny. These artists are categorised as epitomising “Academic” Impressionism, which Smith describes as “a compromise between the revolutionary technique of the plein-air painters and the studious methods of the academicians.”  

Smith credits them with building upon the legacy of the Heidelberg School, although their developments were grounded in traditional concerns with observation and craftsmanship. They are thus classified as innovators, but not necessarily modernisers. Smith asserts that Heysen “emphasised the need for definition and contour without departing from the governing tenets of Impressionism. For, although he was an excellent draughtsman … the rendering of atmosphere and tonal values are still paramount considerations.”

While Heysen’s own achievements are praised, Smith nonetheless implies that his work provided a “recipe” for less original artists, writing: “The dominant tendency in Australian landscape runs from Streeton to Heysen and from Heysen to Elioth Gruner … This vision has become the traditional Australian landscape approach for a great number of other painters.” Smith was also critical of the chauvinistic tone of nationalist art criticism, whereby landscape painting was regarded “as the only possible point of departure for arriving at a national art.”

His book concludes with four chapters devoted to the development of modern art.

329 Smith, Place, Taste and Tradition, 137.
330 Ibid., 145-46.
331 Ibid., 136, 46.
332 Ibid., 163-70.
in Australia. Consequently, Heysen’s achievements are sequestered to the first third of the twentieth century, having been surpassed by two generations of modern artists.

Unlike Smith’s cogently argued and politically engaged account, Herbert Badham’s *A Study of Australian Art* (1949) privileged the evaluation of individual artists over assertions about broader artistic developments. John Warnock has observed that Badham’s two criteria for appraising an artist were craftsmanship and individual formal or emotional qualities. These priorities reflected his work as an art teacher at the East Sydney Technical College and his own paintings, hard-edged realist depictions of modern, urban life. Heysen’s art is favourably considered in the fourth chapter, which is predominantly concerned with landscape and portrait painting between 1901 and 1930. In contrast to Smith, who describes Heysen’s achievements in the past tense, Badham acknowledges “Heysen is still with us and his strength is undiminished.” However, he proposes: “It would be interesting to see another type of subject from his brush,” offering a veiled caution that Heysen’s work now appears repetitive. A fifth chapter considering modern art reinforces the perception that Heysen’s position in Australian art history chiefly belongs to an earlier period. However, Badham’s ambivalent attitude towards modern art mitigates the sense that such developments represent progress in Australian art.

---

A similar trend is apparent in the manner in which Heysen was represented in retrospective exhibitions of Australian art. His work featured prominently in both *The Centenary Art Exhibition* (Melbourne, 1934) and *150 Years of Australian Art*, a substantial survey exhibition staged by the NAGNSW in association with the 1938 Sesquicentennial celebrations. Contrary to the comprehensive titles of these exhibitions, they primarily focused upon art from the last fifty years. At the same time modern art was sparsely represented, with the majority of works reflecting late Victorian and Edwardian aesthetic developments. The Sydney exhibition was the larger endeavour, boasting 826 artworks and was organised by Will Ashton under the direction of the NAGNSW’s trustees. Heysen was represented by 16 pictures, with the selection foregrounding the breadth of his work in terms of subject matter and medium. With the exception of Lambert, all the other artists represented by ten or more works were still alive, contributing to the false impression that the exhibition’s predominantly traditionalist content represented the mainstream of current Australian art. This was also true of the smaller Melbourne exhibition, which included nine works by Heysen.

---


338 George Lambert was represented by 24 works; Lionel Lindsay, 23; Norman Lindsay, 18; Sidney Long, 14; Elioth Gruner, 13; Thea Proctor, 13; and Arthur Streeton, 10.

339 *The Centenary Art Exhibition* was held in the Commonwealth Bank Chambers, Melbourne, from 8 October to 15 December 1934 in association with the centenary of Victoria. It was managed by Robert Croll and organised by a committee which included Heysen’s dealer W. H. Gill and acquaintances Louis McCubbin, William McInnes and Harold Herbert. The exhibition featured 287 works by 118 artists. Besides Heysen, artists who featured prominently were: Arthur Streeton, 11 works; George Lambert, 10; Norman Lindsay, 10; Elioth Gruner, 9; J. J. Hilder, 7; Sir John Longstaff, 6; and William Blamire Young, 6.
Lionel Lindsay wrote the 1938 catalogue essay, together with a longer article for a special issue of *Art in Australia* devoted to the exhibition and a promotional piece for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. These give some insights into the view of Australian art history which informed the curatorial selection. Like Moore, Lindsay constructs a narrative in which Louis Buvelot is praised as “the father of Australian Landscape,” the artists of the Heidelberg School then built upon this foundation, with Heysen, Gruner, Lambert and Will Ashton positioned as their successors. Lindsay argues that in the fields of portraiture and sculpture Australian artists had not yet achieved anything “distinctly national in outlook.” However, Australia had “been fortunate in our Landscape artists, who, by the truth of their vision, have revealed to us our country, and shared with us their discovery.” In all three texts Heysen is praised for the skill of his draughtsmanship and watercolour technique. While happy to extol those artists he admired, Lindsay confided to Heysen that “the Sesquicentenary Exhibition will be a democratically dull affair,” as several artists he considered mediocre were overrepresented.

By contrast, although considerably smaller in scale, the two touring exhibitions *Art of Australia, 1788-1941* and *Jubilee Exhibition of Australian Art* (1951) were broader in their historical and aesthetic focus. Both exhibitions are significant for devoting sections to Aboriginal art, situating it as meriting serious aesthetic, rather


341 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 1 December 1937, HH Papers.
than anthropological attention, even if their presentation of it as a superseded
stage of development reflected social Darwinist notions. These shows also
 accorded greater attention to both Australian colonial and contemporary art,
although few avant-garde works were included in either display. By emphasising
the generations of artists who both preceded and overtook Heysen, these
exhibitions securely established his contribution as part of the narrative of
Australian art history. However, as with the writing of Smith, it was implied that
his achievements belonged to a previous era rather than the mid-twentieth century.

The *Art of Australia* was curated by Professor Theodore Sizer, the director of
the Yale University Art Gallery and commenced its tour of art galleries in the
United States and Canada in October 1941. Several members of Heysen’s
network sat on the exhibition’s advisory committee. These included Will Ashton,
James MacDonald and Louis McCubbin, in their capacities as directors of the
three main state galleries, G. V. F. Mann, the chairman of the Commonwealth Art
Advisory Board and Ure Smith as President of the Society of Artists and vice-
 president of the Academy. Caroline Jordan has noted that Sizer needed to
negotiate pressure from both pro-modern and anti-modern factions with regard to
the works selected. Sizer endeavoured to limit the examples of “carefully
finished factual painting, largely landscape, of the Paris and London trained men,”
as he believed they would be less interesting to a foreign audience, despite the
“enormous prestige” such work enjoyed in Australia.

---

342 Caroline Jordan, “Cultural Exchange in the Midst of Chaos: Theodore Sizer's Exhibition 'Art of
343 When Sizer and the selection committee travelled to Adelaide to consider works, they also
visited The Cedars for afternoon tea with the Heysens. “Art Chiefs in Adelaide,” *Advertiser*, 14
February 1941.
Although Heysen fell into this category, four of his works were amongst the 134 exhibits selected. However, space restrictions meant that the collection was divided in two for separate tours of galleries in the United States and Canada, although the complete exhibition was shown at the National Gallery of Canada.\textsuperscript{345} As part of this distribution only Heysen’s watercolour \textit{Land of the Oratunga} (1932, Fig. 71) toured the United States, while his remaining three works were allocated to the Canadian group.\textsuperscript{346} Jordan has observed that the majority of works produced by academically trained artists or depicting less nationally distinctive subject matter were sent to Canada.\textsuperscript{347} As the other two celebrated landscape painters of the interwar period, Streeton and Gruner were similarly represented by four works each. Like Heysen, three of Streeton’s and two of Gruner’s paintings were allocated to Canada. By contrast, due to their avant-garde and nationally specific qualities all three of Margaret Preston’s recent paintings were selected for the US.\textsuperscript{348}

The \textit{Jubilee Exhibition} was organised to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Federation and toured to galleries throughout Australia between March and December 1951. It was organised by Laurence Thomas, the assistant-director of the NGV. This exhibition consisted of 156 works, divided into four sections: Aboriginal Art; Early Colonial Art; Art of the Middle Period; and Contemporary

\textsuperscript{345} Ibid., 42-44.
\textsuperscript{346} However, Heysen’s work was sufficiently admired to be reproduced in two US art magazines: Theodore Sizer, “The Art of Australia,” \textit{The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin} 36, no. 12 (1941): 249; “Art from Australia,” \textit{Magazine of Art} 34 (1941): 417.
\textsuperscript{347} Jordan, “Cultural Exchange,” 43.
\textsuperscript{348} Professor Sizer acquired Preston’s \textit{Aboriginal Landscape} (1941) for the Yale University Art Gallery. This iconic work was subsequently purchased by the AGSA.
Art. Although a living and practising artist, Heysen was included in the rather awkwardly titled “Middle Period.” This encompassed works ranging in date from 1866 to 1938, with the majority produced between 1888 and 1914. Lionel Lindsay, who by 1951 had largely retired from art writing, contributed the catalogue essay for this section. He reinforced the identification of Heysen with a passing generation, asserting that: “With Heysen the Streeton-Roberts era closes.”

Whereas in the previous exhibitions Heysen was represented by an equal or greater number of works to his peers, here the curatorial selection placed greater emphasis on the early paintings of the Heidelberg School and the achievements of Paris-based expatriates. Two of Heysen’s watercolours were included. *Summer* (1909, Fig. 9), with its golden sunlight, positioned Heysen as a successor to the Heidelberg artists, while his *Land of the Oratunga* (1932, Fig. 71), prefigured the Central Australian landscapes by Drysdale and Nolan in the Contemporary section.

However, a different component of the Jubilee celebrations acknowledged Heysen as a living practitioner. He was one of seven artists, working across different media and subject matter, commissioned to produce an entry for the Commonwealth Jubilee Art Competition. Each artist received a fee of £150, with the best work awarded an additional £850 and acquired by the government.

---

349 Sir Lionel Lindsay, “The Art of the Middle Period,” in *Jubilee Exhibition of Australian Art* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1951), 14.

350 Streeton, Roberts and Charles Condor were represented by four works each and Frederick McCubbin, Hugh Ramsay, Emanuel Phillips Fox and Rupert Bunny by three. For the role of McCubbin’s family in proactively promoting his reputation, see, Peter McNeil, “Family Ties: The Creation of Frederick McCubbin’s Reputation 1920-60,” *The La Trobe Journal*, no. 50 (1992): 32-36.

351 The seven artists were: Ivor Hele and William Dobell (painting of a figure subject); Heysen and Lloyd Rees (landscape painting); David Taylor Kellock (stained glass); Lyndon Dadswell (sculpture); and Charles Meere (mural design).
Heysen painted the 40 x 55½ inch canvas *In the Flinders – Far North* (1951, Fig. 102), the first largescale oil painting he had produced for several years. His composition sets a cluster of knotted gum trees in front of a view across the barren Aroona Valley to the jagged peaks behind. During the Federation era vast, unpeopled landscapes had been regarded as a fitting metaphor for the young nation as it looked towards the future. However, by 1951 Heysen’s depiction of an unchanging, remote environment seemed less appropriate as a symbol for Australia, following the country’s rapid modernisation and participation in two world wars. It is possible that the gnarled, weathered trunks and exposed roots of the eucalypts were intended to represent tenacity in the face of hardship, as in Harold Cazneaux’s iconic photograph *The Spirit of Endurance* (1937, AGSA). Ultimately the prize was awarded to Lloyd Rees’s harbour view *Sydney 1951* (1951, Fig. 103), where the combined imagery of nature and human settlement implicitly suggests national progress.

Heysen’s entry did not find favour with modernist art critics. Haefliger, Gleeson and Shore respectively dismissed it as: “characteristic gumtree Australiana, where the view is more important than art,” “uninspired and conventional,” and “typical but repetitive.” Their scornful attitudes typify the outgrowth of the art world wars of the late 1930s and early 1940s, particularly as all three critics engaged with modernism in their own artistic practice. By contrast, the reviewer for the reactionary *Bulletin* preferred Heysen’s painting to

---

352 Heysen to Will Ashton, 2 February 1951, WA Papers.
354 “Art Contest Works Disappoint,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 August 1951; James Gleeson, “Rees’ Painting Dominates Jubilee Display,” *Sun* (Sydney), 16 August 1951; Arnold Shore, “£1,000 Prize to Sydney Artist;” *Argus* (Melbourne), 16 August 1951.
Rees’s landscape, observing: “it will be argued that Heysen is repeating himself; but, then, so is Lloyd Rees repeating a formula which he has made very familiar in recent years. Lloyd Rees’s simply happens to be the more fashionable formula at the moment.” Brackenreg made a similar point, advising Heysen that Rees “is at about the height of his popularity as a painter” and therefore it would be difficult for the judges “not to acknowledge” his work. Furthermore, during this period Rees was at the peak of his technical accomplishment. While *In the Flinders* possesses a strong composition, Heysen’s paintwork suffers from stodginess and lacks the verve of his earlier oil paintings. Despite the lack of enthusiasm for Heysen’s work from the new generation of tastemakers, his well-placed contacts nonetheless ensured it received official recognition. Through the efforts of McGregor, who directly approached Menzies, the work was purchased by the Commonwealth Government for 600 guineas and hung in the Australian Embassy in Paris.

As this incident demonstrates, despite a significant shift in aesthetic sensibilities, members of Heysen’s networks continued to promote his work. In 1949 John Brackenreg commenced work on a lavish volume *Hans Heysen: Watercolours and Drawings*, but due to production delays it was not released until mid-1952. The book’s appreciative essays by Lionel Lindsay and James MacDonald primarily concentrate upon relating Heysen’s work to the European

---

356 John Brackenreg to Heysen, 23 July 1951, HH Papers.
358 John Brackenreg to Heysen, letters, January 1949 to July 1952, HH Papers.
old masters rather than situating it in relation to contemporary Australian art.  

By contrast Sydney Ure Smith illustrated Heysen’s watercolour *Morning Light* (1938, whereabouts unknown) alongside various manifestations of modern Australian art in his revised edition of *Present Day Art in Australia* (1949). Although this book presents a pluralistic selection, the pastoral landscapes of Heysen, Charles Lloyd Jones and Gruner appear distinctly quaint alongside local variations of Post Impressionism, Neo-Romanticism, Surrealism and Social Realism. Although Heysen continued to receive some recognition as a current practitioner, he was more often regarded as a living link to an earlier generation whose works were no longer representative of contemporary cultural practice.

************************************************

A close examination of Heysen’s attitudes and actions serves to complicate, if not fundamentally change, the dominant narrative of the ascendency of modernism in Australia. Both he and key members of his networks are revealed as holding ambivalent, rather than entirely antagonistic attitudes towards the new developments. Similarly, their activities indicate that personal, factional and institutional loyalties were often just as significant as aesthetic considerations in influencing the position individuals took on particular issues. As part of the broader shift in attitudes, Heysen’s place in the cultural field changed from being regarded as an important contemporary practitioner, to someone primarily acclaimed in historical terms. Timothy van Laar and Leonard Diepeveen have

---

359 Sir Lionel Lindsay and James S. MacDonald, *Hans Heysen: Watercolours and Drawings* (Sydney: Legend Press, 1952), i-vi.
observed that the loss of art world status “is larger than the reputation of individual artists: modes of artmaking take a back seat, subject matters become banal, and forms of aesthetic experience lose their lustre.”360 Indeed, Heysen’s change in status occurred in tandem with an epochal changeover of art world powerbrokers, which saw the influence of his networks decline considerably. Despite these relegations, Heysen continued to enjoy a ready market for his work during the final two decades of his life on the basis of the cultural capital accrued from his earlier achievements.

360 van Laar and Diepeveen, Artworld Prestige, 5.
Chapter Five: Competing Values: Heysen and the Art Market

Hans Heysen frequently expressed ambivalent feelings regarding the art market, remarking regretfully to Nora in 1936: “Unfortunately one always has to look on the commercial side of these matters, for without sales the artist cannot go on.”¹ Nonetheless, his own practice as a professional artist was deeply entwined with the market, which played a significant role in shaping his career. This chapter considers the importance of art dealers in facilitating Heysen’s career and situates his engagement with commercial galleries in relation to broader changes in the Australian art market. Particular attention will be given to Heysen’s solo exhibitions, which were carefully stage managed in collaboration with members of his networks. The chapter thus resumes and extends upon themes introduced in Chapters One and Two, which examined Heysen’s breakthrough early Melbourne exhibitions and association with his first dealer William Henry Gill, continuing the investigation of his participation in the art market from 1916 until the 1960s. Recurring themes which emerge through Heysen’s correspondence include: his concern with his reputation; the financial uncertainties of earning one’s livelihood from art; the cost of supporting a large family; and his close monitoring of broader art market trends and the fortunes of other artists. The chapter concludes by considering Heysen’s social and epistolary interactions with art collectors and identifies sources which could be used to further investigate this facet of Heysen’s networks.

¹ Hans Heysen to Nora Heysen, 26 September 1936, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 64.
5.1. Examining the Art Market

As described in Chapter One, during the Edwardian period Heysen shifted from selling a few highly priced works to municipal galleries to selling a larger number of more moderately priced pictures to private collectors. In this respect his experience mirrored the broader shift in Western art patronage in which private citizens came to replace the state, church or aristocracy as the primary market for art.² Pamela Fletcher has observed that the concurrent development of commercial galleries brought about “a massive transformation of the experience of viewing art,” instigating “a new set of relationships, practices, and expectations” between artists, dealers and collectors.³ Dealers and galleries form an important part of what Howard Becker has termed “distribution systems which integrate artists into their society’s economy.”⁴ With regard to the Australian context, Heather Johnson has provided a perceptive study of the emergence of art dealers and private galleries in Sydney between 1890 and 1940, while Annette Van den Bosch and Christopher Heathcote have examined the activities of Australian commercial galleries following the Second World War.⁵ This chapter is focused upon a close examination of the activities of Heysen and his networks in relation to the developing infrastructure of the Australian art market.

---

⁴ Becker, Art Worlds, 93.
However, the ideas of several overseas scholars are also considered for the insights they provide into the fraught relationship between art and commerce.

With the predominance of private patronage, art works were situated more firmly in the realm of the commodity, although art was and is valued differently from other kinds of goods. Isabelle Graw asserts the relationship between art and the market can be characterised “as a dialectical unity of opposites, an opposition whose poles effectively form a single unit.” She sees the “art-work commodity” as being:

split into a symbolic value and a market value. The specific quality of its symbolic value lies in the fact that it expresses an intellectual surplus value generally attributed to art … that cannot be smoothly translated into economic categories … but artworks nevertheless have a price, at least when circulating on the art market.

Further revealing this entanglement, Graw reflects that an art work’s “symbolic value is not identical to its market value,” although its price “is justified with reference to a symbolic value that cannot be accounted for in financial terms.”

She also acknowledges that paradoxically for many artists, critics and gallerists, the “rhetorical rejection of the market is often a pre-condition for the successful marketing of artworks.”

Graw’s concept of symbolic value is informed by Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital. However, her observations regarding the relationship

---


8 Ibid., 10.

9 Ibid., 29.

10 Ibid., 9.

between symbolic and market value is at odds with Bourdieu’s description of the field of cultural production as an “upside-down economic world.” Bourdieu conceives of the field as defined by two opposing poles, the heteronomous (market-driven) and the autonomous (art for art’s sake), with art world participants occupying a continuum of positions between these opposing sets of aspirations, values and practices. Bourdieu argues that it is the art least concerned with courting market success which accrues the greatest symbolic capital, but Graw disagrees with his assertion that market and symbolic value are relatively independent of one another. Nonetheless, Graw concedes that for “Bourdieu, although the field of art develops its own rules, it never remains entirely untouched by what is happening in other fields, such as the economy.” His model also has the advantage of conceiving “of autonomy and heteronomy together,” within the same metaphorical space. In a reflection of this coexistence, Bourdieu observes that art dealers “need to possess, simultaneously, economic dispositions … and also properties close to those of the producers [artists] whose work they valorize and exploit.”

Julie Codell has argued that artists “negotiated the dialectic between economic success and aesthetic vision through the concept of professionalism.” Although her research examines nineteenth-century British artists, her observations are

13 Ibid., 38-45.
14 Graw, High Price, 32.
15 Ibid., 142-43. The intersections of aesthetic and economic considerations are also discussed by Jen Webb, Tony Schirato, and Geoff Danaher, Understanding Bourdieu (St Leonards, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 161-63.
applicable to many Australian artists during the first half of the twentieth century. Codell describes how in Victorian thought the motivations of artists and professionals were distinguished from a businessmen’s motives. Professionals were believed to possess both “a ‘calling’ or vocation,” and “a special expertise,” which like art “contained surplus value (public good)” not strictly measurable in economic terms. Furthermore, the professional’s high remuneration was regarded more as “recognition of service rather than payment for service.”

As the blatant exchange of money “was considered vulgar and ungentlemanly,” art dealers performed an important role as the intermediaries between the artist and buyer who handled sales transactions. This allowed artists to appear “unsullied” by commerce, and instead claim that their “proper rewards were honorific and symbolic capital (awards, titles, museum purchases).” Codell acknowledges the parallels between such a mindset and Bourdieu’s notion of “misrecognition,” a form of “self-deception, a lie told to oneself” which is “supported by a collective self-deception.”

This paradigm of professionalism is pertinent to Heysen’s self-image as an artist. Heysen and his network frequently read such British publications as The Studio, The Connoisseur and the Illustrated London News. Thus, they would have been familiar with the sorts of cultural representations considered by Codell, which presented artists as successful yet commercially disinterested. In their

---

18 Ibid., 134-35.
19 Ibid., 134.
correspondence and published writing, Heysen and his circle frequently claimed that their activities were motivated by a desire to advance the cause of Australian art, rather than financial or professional self-interest. Furthermore, the embodied cultural capital of Heysen’s academic style served as a signifier of his technical skill and years of diligent study, qualities valorised by other professionals. For financial as well as social reasons, many of the collectors who acquired Heysen’s works were educated professionals, such as doctors, lawyers or academics. Finally, like the British art market, the work of Australian artists was usually priced in guineas, as gentlemen and professionals dealt in guineas, whereas pounds were the currency of trade.

By acting as a buffer between Heysen and the necessary financial transactions, his dealers enabled him to maintain the public image of a successful, yet commercially disinterested artist. However, Heysen’s broader art world networks also performed an important role in facilitating his strategic engagement with the art market. Their correspondence demonstrates that several of Heysen’s friends provided him with regular information regarding: the merits of particular dealers and galleries; where various artists were choosing to exhibit; and the commercial and critical success of recent solo exhibitions. Bourdieu refers to “the vast amount of information which is linked to membership of a field … information

22 Julian Ashton to Heysen, 15 July 1920; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 23 June 1923; 30 January 1931; John Brackenreg to Heysen, 15 November 1940; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: 6 January 1941; 17 January 1945, HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 26 June [1931], LF Papers; Hans Heysen, "Artist’s Tribute to Lionel Lindsay,” Register, 8 December 1925; Heysen, "An Appreciation ” 7-8.
23 Bourdieu has considered the manner in which adherents of nineteenth-century academic precepts projected ethical imperatives onto certain stylistic qualities. Bourdieu, “Manet and the Institutionalization of Anomie,” 246-47.
about institutions … and about persons, their relationships, liaisons and quarrels.”

Graw has similarly characterised the art market as both a “networking market” and a “knowledge-based economy.”

Through their letters and posted news clippings, Heysen’s friends in the Sydney and Melbourne art worlds ensured that despite his geographical isolation, he still had access to the insider knowledge necessary to make informed decisions regarding his career.

5.2. The Art Boom, c.1916-1928

From the late 1910s the vogue for collecting Australian art which had originated in Melbourne during the previous decade spread to Sydney and later Adelaide. The 1920s in particular was a period of strong demand and positive critical appraisal for Heysen’s work, which appreciated in both symbolic and market value. Heysen’s naturalistic style and regionalist or domestic subject matter both aligned with and reinforced the dominant paradigms favoured by the art world’s traditionalist cultural gatekeepers. In addition to enjoying record sales from his exhibitions and the regular purchase of works by municipal collections he was awarded the Wynne Prize four times.

In the interests of sustaining and enhancing his critical and commercial standing within the cultural field, Heysen gave careful consideration to the location and timing of his solo exhibitions, together with the selection and presentation of his works. To achieve this he relied heavily upon information and advice sourced through his network. Although his correspondence demonstrates his close interest in the financial fortunes of other artists, in keeping with his professional image he endeavoured to

---

26 Bourdieu, "Field of Cultural Production," 31-32.
28 During this period Heysen received the Wynne Prize in 1920, 1922, 1924 and 1926.
eschew overt salesmanship. Consequently his dealers and exhibition managers performed an essential role by acting as his intermediaries with customers.

One key event credited with stimulating the market for Australian art was the sale of a significant portion of Professor Walter Baldwin Spencer’s art collection in May 1919. The auction was conducted by Arthur Tuckett & Son in conjunction with W. H. Gill, who displayed the collection at his Fine Art Society Galleries. Spencer wrote to Heysen explaining that the sale was necessary to enable him to retire and continue collecting, and that he hoped it would “serve to draw some public attention to Australian Art & will not in the long run hurt the artists.”

Total sales amounted to £4500; the works of several Australian artists achieved high prices, with the results for Jesse Jewhurst Hilder and Arthur Streeton showing the greatest increase. These substantial returns stimulated the art market by suggesting that Australian art was a good investment, but also led some to unfairly accuse Spencer of mercenary motives.

Heysen was represented in the auction by one oil, five watercolours and three pastels. His large watercolour *In Sunset Haze* (1909, Fig. 11) achieved the highest price, selling for 180 guineas, a threefold increase on the 60 guineas paid by Spencer. The remaining eight lots sold for between 19 and 30 guineas.
prices consistent with the lower value works in Heysen’s 1915 exhibition, but significantly above his 1908 prices when Spencer had acquired most of these pictures. With the assistance of his networks Heysen continued to monitor the prices his work achieved on the resale market, which included one watercolour selling for a record 425 guineas at auction in 1926.

During the late 1910s and 1920s Gill continued to act as Heysen’s main connection to the Melbourne art market. His letters regularly informed Heysen of the continuing demand for his works and ask him to send further paintings or drawings in response to customer demand. Gill would frequently request works depicting specific subjects or light effects, despite Heysen’s objection that “such subjects cannot be painted to order.” After one such entreaty Gill acknowledged, “Mrs Heysen once told me you went off ‘pop’ when you got such letters as this from me but like a good chap … I am sure you will help us out, so I don’t mind if you do cuss me.” Gill was also keen to remind Heysen of the services he provided and efforts he made on his behalf, asserting that “like every other business – managers of picture exhibitions require knowledge & years of

33 Spencer advised Heysen of the prices realised for his works. W. Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 6 June 1919, HH Papers.
34 Heysen’s The Farm on the Hill (c.1922) was purchased by E. F. De Groot when sold as part of the William Augustus Little collection in November 1926. Little had originally purchased the work for 150 guineas from the 1922 Society of Artists Annual Exhibition. “Australian Artist – Hans Heysen Tops List – Sale of W. A. Little Collection,” Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 24 November 1926; Heysen to James McGregor, 28 November [1926], JM Papers; Huda, Pedigree and Panache, 57-58.
36 W. H. Gill to Heysen: 24 June 1919; 17 July 1919; 23 July 1919; 2 July 1920; 5 October 1920; 28 September 1922, HH Papers.
37 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 2 August 1920, HH Papers.
training.”

He probably felt a greater pressure to demonstrate his abilities as from 1919 Heysen also sold works through the rival Melbourne establishment, Decoration Galleries. However, Heysen assured Gill that “although I would never bind myself in any shape or form I have always given you preference – because I feel you have dealt fairly with me … & treat art with the respect that is due to it.”

Heysen’s three Melbourne solo exhibitions of 1921, 1926 and 1929 were all staged by Gill. The Retrospective Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Hans Heysen of November 1921 was particularly significant. Together with his 1920 Wynne Prize victory and the publication of The Art of Hans Heysen (1920) it represented his return to art world prominence following the hiatus of the First World War. In addition to offering sixty works for sale, the exhibition featured 45 works borrowed from prominent collectors. This served to foreground Heysen’s versatility and stylistic development, thus pre-emptively addressing the criticism that his work was repetitive, while also demonstrating the appreciation of his art by tastemakers “distinguished in Society.” Gill emphasised the need for a large oil as the “great centre picture of attraction,” but also recommended the inclusion of many smaller works “as this is the era of small sizes – what with living in flats and ‘dog box’ rooms,” together with some lower-priced works to

39 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 5 May [1920], LF Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill: 18 May [1920]; 27 May [1924], WHG Papers; M. J. MacNally to Heysen, 20 May 1920, HH Papers; “Decoration Galleries,” advertisements in Art in Australia: no. 7 (1919); nos. 8, 9, 11 (1921): unpaginated; Oil Paintings, Etchings and Watercolours by Australian Artists, (Melbourne: Decoration Galleries, 1921).
40 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 7 June 1920, WHG Papers.
41 However, as considered in Chapter Two, residual anti-German sentiment was apparent in Heysen’s well-publicised contretemps with Lindsay Bernard Hall immediately prior to the exhibition’s opening.
cater for less wealthy collectors.\textsuperscript{42} Heysen’s 1921 and 1926 exhibitions were both commercially successful, with sales of £2300 and £2700 respectively, but as considered below, his exhibition of October 1929 achieved disappointing results.\textsuperscript{43}

From the late 1910s there was significant growth in the market for Australian art amongst Sydney collectors, reflecting the trend that had emerged in Melbourne a decade earlier.\textsuperscript{44} Following the financial success of the 1918 Society of Artists exhibition, Heysen observed to Lionel Lindsay, “it seems Sydney is taking the boom (art) out of Melbourne’s hands, as I hear the buyers there are beginning to show more discrimination than previously.”\textsuperscript{45} Heather Johnson has related this development to the increased patronage of the NAGNSW, which after 1914 devoted at least half of its annual acquisitions funds to purchasing Australian art and staged loan exhibitions of local works.\textsuperscript{46} Heysen also believed that the influence of \textit{Art in Australia} was “in a great part responsible.”\textsuperscript{47} The strong demand for the watercolours of Hilder following his untimely death in 1916 both reflected and amplified the art ‘boom’ in Sydney.\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{42} W. H. Gill to Heysen: 21 June 1921; 28 October 1921, HH Papers. Heysen included \textit{Into the Light} (1914-1921, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth) as his centrepiece work. This had previously been exhibited under the title \textit{In Sunset Haze} in 1914 and 1915, prior to being substantially repainted. However, he also provided a significant number of less expensive watercolours and charcoal drawings, with 25 exhibits priced between 15 and 50 guineas.\textsuperscript{43} Thiele, \textit{Heysen of Hahndorf}, 185. Heysen to James McGregor, 28 November [1926], JM Papers.
\textsuperscript{44} This belatedly followed an interest in collecting and preserving Australia’s literary heritage which emerged during the late nineteenth century, of which the Sydney collector David Scott Mitchell was a significant exponent. Eileen Chanin, \textit{Book Life: The Life and Times of David Scott Mitchell} (North Melbourne: Australian Scholarly 2011), 174-82, 219-44.
\textsuperscript{45} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 21 January 1919, LF Papers.
\textsuperscript{47} Heysen to Gayfield Shaw, 14 July 1919, Gayfield Shaw Papers, DLMS 211, SLNSW.
\end{footnotesize}
growth in the Sydney market were the establishment of several dealer galleries and a marked increase in the number of artists staging solo exhibitions in the city.\textsuperscript{49}

In comparison to his Melbourne shows, Heysen’s first Sydney solo exhibition was a modest affair. Heysen was introduced to the etcher and art dealer Gerrard Gayfield Shaw by Elioth Gruner and from 1918 regularly supplied him with watercolours to offer to Sydney clients.\textsuperscript{50} The Charcoal Drawings and Studies of Hans Heysen, staged at Shaw’s Gallery in November 1920, was hurriedly arranged at one month’s notice (Fig. 104). It featured fifty drawings priced between five and twenty guineas, together with proofs of Heysen’s etching Turing the Plough (1918). Heysen hoped that these drawings would appeal to collectors unable to afford his watercolours, describing them as small but nonetheless “complete in subject & are advanced beyond the sketch.”\textsuperscript{51} This suggests that Heysen first wished to test the state of the Sydney art market with less expensive works before attempting an exhibition of more costly finished paintings. However, he also acknowledged a degree of risk, “as the public demand for black & white work, excepting etchings – has never been good, somehow it has always

\textsuperscript{49} Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System, 23.
\textsuperscript{50} Elioth Gruner to Heysen, [annotated: 1 February 1918], HH Papers; Heysen to Gayfield Shaw: 20 March [1918]; 22 April 1918; 12 May 1918; 24 July [1918]; 18 October 1919; 6 February 1920; 14 July [no year], Gayfield Shaw Papers, DLMS 211, SLNSW. For Shaw’s activity as a dealer, see Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System: 79-80; Silas Clifford-Smith, “G. Gayfield Shaw: Peer Reviewed Biography,” https://www.daa.org.au/bio/g-gayfield-shaw/biography/.
\textsuperscript{51} Heysen to Gayfield Shaw, 22 October [1920]; Cf. Heysen to Gayfield Shaw: 2 November 1920; 27 November 1920, Gayfield Shaw Papers; Gayfield Shaw to Heysen, 27 October 1920, HH Papers.
been looked upon as an inferior art.”\(^{52}\) Despite this reservation the exhibition proved a success, achieving total sales of £420.\(^{53}\)

Heysen staged the first Sydney solo exhibition of his oils and watercolours in May 1926, shortly after Art in Australia’s March special issue devoted to his work.\(^{54}\) He showed 59 works in the Exhibition Hall of the retailer Farmer and Co. (Fig. 106). By the 1920s all of the major Sydney department stores featured galleries, following a trend that had emerged in Europe and the United States.\(^{55}\) Johnson has suggested that these display spaces were designed to attract visitors to the business and primarily concerned with public relations rather than profitmaking, functioning as part of a broader marketing strategy which presented shopping as a form of recreation.\(^{56}\) Like The Home they situated art alongside other consumer products, portraying it as part of a fashionable modern lifestyle.\(^{57}\)

Heysen had previously expressed reservations about the juxtaposition of art and merchandise which characterised the Anthony Horderns Gallery, feeling that “there are so many disturbing elements on the way to it, that it takes too long

\(^{52}\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 27 November [1920], LF Papers.

\(^{53}\) After Shaw’s 25% commission and the cost of framing was deducted, Heysen received £287/5/-.

Gayfield Shaw to Heysen, 29 December 1920, HH Papers.

\(^{54}\) The exhibition had originally been scheduled for October 1925, but was postponed after a maritime strike delayed the arrival of frames that Heysen had ordered from London. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 20 September [1925], LF Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 28 September 1925, WA Papers.


\(^{57}\) Taylor has considered how the commercial sector similarly utilised signifiers of art and studio culture as a marketing strategy. Taylor, Perils of the Studio, 187-91.
before one can settle in to a sufficiently peaceful state of mind so as to enjoy pictures.”

Similarly, upon visiting an exhibition of etchings at Farmers’ Lionel Lindsay discovered that “the chap placed in charge had been used to selling hats and hadn’t the faintest idea of handling pictures.” Upon Lindsay’s recommendation the art dealer Basil Burdett took over the role and was considerably more successful in realising sales. The management of Heysen’s 1926 exhibition was also outsourced to Burdett. It proved both a commercial and popular success, achieving sales of “£3750 for 36 pictures” and attracting crowds of visitors.

In addition to his solo exhibitions and showing annually with the Society of Artists, Heysen sold works through most of the Sydney galleries. This contrasts with his practice in Melbourne where Gill was his preferred dealer. Through his circle of Sydney friends Heysen received regular advice regarding the merits of the various dealers and galleries, helping him decide where it would be most

---

59 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, [postmarked: 28 November 1923], HH Papers. The Exhibition of Etchings by Lionel Lindsay and Sydney Ure Smith was held at the Farmer’s Exhibition Hall in November 1923.
60 Heysen advised Lionel Lindsay: “I believe it was a record for Sydney for a one man show … and judging by the attendance the exhibition as a whole was appreciated – for the room was full for the whole of the ten days.” Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, June [1926], LF Papers. He provided Will Ashton with the slightly higher sales figure of £3800. Heysen to Will Ashton, 26 July [1926], WA Papers
61 Heysen was frequently listed amongst the artists represented by various Sydney galleries in the advertisements which appeared in Art in Australia. These included: “Anthony Horderns’ Fine Art Gallery,” no. 2 (1917); “Gayfield Shaw – The Art Salon,” no. 4 (1918); “The New Art Salon (Directed by Basil Burdett),” series 3, no. 2 (1922); “The Collector’s Gallery,” series 3, no. 6 (1923); “Australian Art Salon” [later the Australian Fine Arts Gallery, directed by William Rubery Bennet], series 3, no. 7 (1923); “The Macquarie Galleries” [directed by John Young and Basil Burdett], series 3, no. 11 (1925); “Grosvenor Galleries” [directed by Adrian Feint and Walter Taylor], series 3, no. 23 (1928): all unpaginated. Johnson has identified George Lambert, Thea Proctor, Elioth Gruner and Norman Lindsay as artists who similarly exhibited with most of the Sydney galleries. Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System: 63.
advantageous to exhibit. As a sought-after artist whose pictures sold readily and commanded high prices, Heysen was frequently able to negotiate a lower rate of commission, below the 25% typically charged by dealers of the period. For his 1928 exhibition with the Grosvenor Galleries, Heysen arranged to pay a staggered commission of 20% on the first £1000, then 15% on all subsequent sales. Earlier that year Heysen had taken offence at a request from Burdett asking him to pay an increased rate of commission consistent with that charged to other artists represented by the Macquarie Galleries. As a mutual friend of both men, Lionel Lindsay endeavoured to resolve the misunderstanding.

The growing demand for Australian art was also evident in Adelaide by the early 1920s, leading to an increasing number of local and interstate artists staging solo exhibitions. In 1925 Heysen advised Lionel Lindsay: “In Adelaide too – one man shows are the order & follow one upon the other all too rapidly.” The booksellers Frederick and John Preece were important local facilitators of such independent exhibitions. Between 1919 and 1938 exhibitions were frequently

---

62 Elioth Gruner to Heysen: [annotated: 1 February 1918]; 26 August 1925; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 19 October 1922; James McGregor to Heysen, 6 October 1923; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 8 March 1925; 12 December 1927; 23 December 1928; Will Ashton to Heysen, 2 June 1928, HH Papers.
63 Albert Collins to Heysen, 17 March 1919; W. H. Gill to Heysen, 13 March 1926; Adrian Feint to Heysen: 20 October 1926; undated [c. July 1928]; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated draft [on the reverse of Ure Smith to Heysen, 1 January 1928], HH Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 11 October 1923, JM Papers.
64 Adrian Feint to Heysen, undated [mid-1928], HH Papers. This exhibition was considered in Chapter Three.
65 Basil Burdett to Heysen, 8 May 1928; Heysen to Basil Burdett, [draft, May 1928], HH Papers; Lionel Lindsay to Basil Burdett, 23 April 1928, Papers of the Macquarie Galleries, MS1995.9a, Capon Library. Interesting, Burdett’s initial letter which caused this disagreement has not been preserved and its content can only be inferred from the subsequent correspondence. For Lindsay’s awareness of Burdett’s financial difficulties at this time, see, Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, 175.
66 “Adelaide’s Art Boom – Local Artists Benefit – Purchases Exceed £6,000,” Mail (Adelaide), 10 November 1923; van Raalte, “Hans Heysen’s Exhibition,” 5-6.
67 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 4 July [1925], LF Papers; Heysen to Walter Baldwin Spencer, 20 November 1922, WBS Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 11 September [1922], WA Papers.
held in the gallery space within their bookshop F. W. Preece Ltd. (Fig. 107).  

Lionel Lindsay mounted five exhibitions here during the 1920s. In a mutually beneficial venture Heysen and George Lambert shared a small-scale joint exhibition at Preece’s gallery in August 1923. This pairing of an artist who had accrued significant popular and institutional recognition in Australia with a recently returned expatriate distinguished as an Associate of the Royal Academy served to elevate the eminence of both men.

The Preeces also managed larger exhibitions in external venues. Heysen employed them to manage his solo exhibition of September 1922 at the Institute Building (Fig. 105). This show acquired greater cachet and publicity through being opened by Dame Nellie Melba, as had Heysen’s 1915 and 1921 Melbourne exhibitions. It proved a commercial and popular success, attracting crowds of visitors. Heysen achieved more than £4000 in sales, setting a new record for a solo exhibition by an Australian artist. The public’s eagerness to see and

---

69 Lionel Lindsay held exhibitions at F. W. Preece Ltd. in March 1920, October 1923, December 1925, December 1927 and April 1928. John Preece travelled with the Lindsays on their 1926 journey from Australia to Italy. In the late 1920s Lionel entered into a loose agreement with Preece to teach Peter Lindsay the bookselling trade. See, Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 150, 64, 76.
70 Lambert and Heysen.
71 While praising their exhibition management, Heysen advised Will Ashton that Preece’s rooms “are too cramped & people do like to see pictures to advantage.” Heysen to Will Ashton, 9 July [1929], WA Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 11 December 1937, LF Papers: “Preece’s gallery is altogether too congested to give an exhibition of your work the setting it demands.”
72 Although only Frederick Preece is credited in the exhibition catalogue, news reports indicate that both father and son were involved. See, “Events of the Week – Exhibition of Pictures,” *Critic* (Adelaide), 13 September 1922.
73 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 24 September [1922], LF Papers; Heysen to Walter Baldwin Spencer, 20 November 1922, WBS Papers.
74 Writing in 1934 William Moore asserted that this exhibition achieved £3600. However, at the time he and other writers stated that over £4000 have been earned. Moore, *Story of Australian Art*, 2, 30. Cf. William Moore, “Gallery and Studio,” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 7 October 1922; “Hans Heysen’s Pictures,” *Register*, 22 September 1922. One writer claimed that sales reached £4200. “Mr. Heysen’s Water-Colours,” *Argus* (Melbourne), 3 October 1922.
acquire Heysen’s work was partly due to his recent absence from the local art world. Despite his status as South Australia’s most acclaimed artist, he had not shown any new paintings in Adelaide since the 1914 Federal Exhibition. However, during the 1910s and 1920s Heysen had continued to sell many works to local collectors directly from his studio, thus avoiding the cost of commission.75

Heysen was able to provide advice and assistance to a number of interstate artists who chose to exhibit in Adelaide, reciprocating the help rendered by members of his networks in Sydney and Melbourne. He counselled friends about the best time and the most suitable venues in which to hold their exhibitions.76 In 1928 Heysen advised Will Ashton: “I look upon John Preece as a cautious salesman and … agree with him that later in the year the chances of success would be far greater … If you decide to come with a show you can count on my doing my best to try & make it a success.”77 Due to Heysen’s renown, evidence of his interest in a fellow artist’s exhibition served as a significant aesthetic endorsement and gave local collectors confidence to buy.78 When Heysen purchased works from the exhibitions of George Coates in 1921 and Will Ashton in 1925 this was reported in local newspapers.79 Blamire Young similarly wrote

75 The Loan Exhibition of Work by Hans Heysen 1898-1930, (Adelaide: South Australian Society of Arts, 1931) demonstrates that Heysen’s work was represented in the collections of many prominent Adelaide citizens.
76 William Blamire Young to Heysen, Thursday [annotated: 1923], HH Papers; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, Wednesday [December 1925], HH Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 24 April [1927], SUS Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton: 5 December [annotated 1927, actually 1928]; 9 July [1929], WA Papers.
77 Heysen to Will Ashton, 1 July [1928], WA Papers.
78 Following his first solo exhibition Horace Trenerry stated that “Hans Heysen has taken a great interest in my work. I feel very proud that Mr Davidson has purchased one of my pictures to hang with forty of Hans Heysen’s.” A.P., “A Chat with Horace Trenerry [sic],” Sun (Adelaide), 21 June 1924. For Heysen’s association with Trenerry see, Klepac, Horace Trenerry, 13-14, 26-27, 131-34.
79 “Mr. and Mrs. George Coates’s Exhibition,” Register (Adelaide), 6 October 1921; “Exhibition of Pictures,” Advertiser, 6 October 1921; “Will Ashton’s Exhibition – The Official Opening,” Register, 25 June 1925; “Success of Will Ashton – Purchases Total £1,020,” News (Adelaide), 7
that Heysen’s purchase from his 1924 exhibition had “made all the difference to
the success of [his] show.” Heysen contributed forewords for the exhibition
catalogues of Lionel Lindsay (1928) and Thea Proctor (1929), praising their
work. He declined Proctor’s request that he should open her exhibition “as he
had refused everybody else.” However, the Heysens did invite her to stay with
them, thus making her visit to Adelaide more affordable.

Heysen’s brief engagement with etching was significantly influenced by both
his art world networks and awareness of trends in the cultural field. During 1911
and 1912 his interest in the art form was stimulated by friends, particularly
Gustave Barnes and Lionel Lindsay. He advised W. H. Gill that he found “the
medium full of problems and interminably fascinating,” indicating his ambivalent
response to its technical complexities. Heysen’s reengagement with etching
between 1918 and 1920 was motivated by commercial as well as aesthetic
considerations. In 1915 Gill had written advising him of the rapidly increasing
prices for British etchings. The medium was also actively promoted by Art in

July 1925; Dora Meeson Coates, George Coates: His Art and His Life (London: J. M. Dent and
Sons, 1937), 145-47. Heysen purchased George Coates’s watercolour study First Australian
Wounded at Gallipoli Arriving at Wandsworth Hospital, London (c.1915-1921, Canberra:
Australian War Memorial) and Will Ashton’s Notre Dame, Paris (c.1924, private collection).
See, Hans Heysen Collection, Lots 6, 192.
80 William Blamire Young to Sallie Heysen, Saturday [November 1924], HH Papers.
81 Heysen, “An Appreciation ” 7-8; “Foreword,” unpaginated.
82 Thea Proctor to Sallie Heysen, 25 August 1929, HH Papers. Ure Smith advised Heysen: “It
was very nice of you and Sally [sic] to have her. Without your invitation certainly she couldn’t
have gone to Adelaide.” Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 8 September 1929, HH Papers.
83 Carroll, Graven Images, 25-26; Roger Butler, Printed: Images by Australian Artists 1885-1955
(Canberra: National Gallery of Australia, 2007), 28. “Original Copper Plate Impressions of
France and Holland” are listed in the catalogue of Heysen’s 1904 Adelaide solo exhibition,
suggesting earlier experiments with etching. Catalogue of Pictures by Mr. Hans Heysen, 3.
When David Heysen compiled a list of his father’s etchings in 1967 he identified two plates as
dating from 1905. It seems likely this was a misdating of the works from a year earlier. See,
Klepac, Hans Heysen, 211.
84 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 27 March [1911], WHG Papers.
85 W. H. Gill to Heysen: 7 May 1915; 10 May 1915; 21 July 1915, WHG Papers.
Australia and the Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society.\textsuperscript{86} Heysen was briefly involved with the Society, but only participated in two of its exhibitions.\textsuperscript{87} Due to his informal and infrequent engagement with the medium Heysen did not follow the prescribed practices of numbering his prints, documenting the number of proofs pulled or cancelling his plates once an edition had been completed.\textsuperscript{88} Furthermore, both John Shirlow and Lindsay assisted Heysen by performing the skilled and physically demanding task of pulling proofs from his plates.\textsuperscript{89} Although Heysen etched his last plate in 1920, Lindsay continued printing proofs as late as 1924. Despite the ready market for Heysen’s etchings, he did not persist with the practice. He nonetheless retained a strong interest in the medium, with etchings and later mezzotints by other artists featuring prominently in his private collection.\textsuperscript{90}

The 1920s was the decade in which Heysen engaged with the broadest range of subject matter. In addition to his mainstays of eucalypts and grassy hillsides, from 1927 onwards his stark depictions of the Flinders Ranges developed as the second major facet of his oeuvre. During the early years of the decade Heysen continued his exploration of agricultural labour until the modernisation of farming techniques rendered such practices less picturesque.\textsuperscript{91} Other sub-themes included

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{86}
\bibitem{87}
Heysen showed works in the \textit{First Annual Exhibition of the Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society} (Sydney, 1921) and the \textit{First Adelaide Exhibition of the Australasian Painter-Etchers’ Society} (1922).
\bibitem{88}
W. H. Gill to Heysen, 22 May 1922, HH Papers. David Heysen subsequently issued posthumous restrikes of some of Heysen’s etchings in editions of 50 prints. In place of a signature these are inscribed “By Hans Heysen.”
\bibitem{89}
Heysen to W. H. Gill: 18 May 1911; 11 July 1911, WHG Papers; John Shirlow to Heysen: 24 February 1919; 14 September 1919; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen: [Postmark: 8 February 1924]; 2 April 1924, HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 5 May [1920]; Sunday [c. August 1920]; Sunday [late 1920]; 13 April [1921]; Friday [c.1924]; [postmarked: 29 April 1924], LF Papers.
\bibitem{90}
See, \textit{Hans Heysen Collection}.
\bibitem{91}
Thiele, \textit{Heysen’s Early Hahndorf}, 55.
\end{thebibliography}
flocks of turkeys, stone quarries and coastal scenes of the Fleurieu Peninsula (Figs. 36 & 116).\textsuperscript{92} Between the mid-1910s and early 1930s still lifes, particularly depictions of flowers, formed a prominent part of Heysen’s œuvre. Ann Elias describes the 1920s as a “flower-centric time” for European Australians, with flowers regarded as “the quintessential symbol of beauty.”\textsuperscript{93} Heysen was also conscious of the visual variety his fruit and flower subjects added to his solo exhibitions, advising Ure Smith that he intended his still lifes “to act as ‘relieving spots’ from the landscapes.”\textsuperscript{94}

Still lifes accounted for more than half Heysen’s oils during this period and were typically priced between 120 and 200 guineas. Heysen’s landscape oils generally ranged in price from 100 to 300 guineas. On two occasions he priced prominent compositions at 600 and 650 guineas, but neither work sold for these amounts.\textsuperscript{95} Watercolours constituted the greatest part of Heysen’s output and generally ranged in price from 40 to 200 guineas, with the majority costing between 60 and 90 guineas. In 1927 the average fulltime male wage was £5 per week, meaning that Heysen’s works were only affordable to upper-income earners.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{92} Andrews, \textit{Hans Heysen}, 72-78, 82. 
\textsuperscript{93} Elias, \textit{Useless Beauty}, 11. 
\textsuperscript{94} Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 21 March [1925], SUS Papers. Heysen was referring to his Sydney solo exhibition which was originally planned for October 1925, but ultimately postponed until May 1926. 
\textsuperscript{95} When shown in Heysen’s 1921 Melbourne solo exhibition \textit{Into the Light} (1914-1921) was priced 650 guineas. It was purchased by William Henry Vincent, a Perth merchant, for £450 in 1922 and donated to the Art Gallery of Western Australia. J. Hogan to Heysen: 29 December 1921; March 1922; 26 April 1922, HH Papers. 
When preparing his works for exhibition Heysen was particularly concerned that they should be framed sympathetically. He frequently asked Gill to ensure that the gilding of his frames was subtle in tone, thus avoiding a jarring “red or bronzy gold.” Similarly, in framing his watercolours he requested the use of clear white glass without any blue or greenish tint and stipulated that the mount should encroach upon the image as little as possible so as not to compromise the composition. For his 1912 exhibition of watercolours Heysen elected to use “only all gold mats.” However, from 1915 he began to employ white or cream mounts. By 1925 he had commenced having concentric lines ruled around the mount window, a practice he maintained for the rest of his career. Heysen’s paintings were regularly framed by John Thallon of Melbourne and S. A. Parker of Sydney. However, in 1925 James McGregor sourced sample frames for Heysen in Europe, advising him that the additional cost of quality frames could be passed onto the buyers. During the 1920s Heysen works were frequently shown in swept frames in the Louis XV revival style (Fig. 108). In a reflection of

97 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 3 August 1915; 7 July [1919]; 8 November 1920; 25 September 1921; 10 October 1921, WHG Papers. W. H. Gill to Heysen, 18 June 1920, HH Papers.
99 Heysen to W. H. Gill, undated [response of a letter of 25 April 1912], WHG Papers.
100 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 28 June 1915; 3 August 1915; 12 August 1916, WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen: 2 September 1916; 13 September 1916; 11 October 1916; 2 October 1924, HH Papers.
101 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 16 September [1925], WHG Papers; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 June 1928, HH Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 June 1928, SUS Papers.
103 James McGregor to Heysen, 6 August 1925 [typed duplicate], JM Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 25 April [1925], JM Papers.
changing tastes Ure Smith complained in 1928 that these distracted from the pictures, appearing “too ornate and heavy … the ones with the simplest mouldings look the best.”

As attested by the extensive discussion of the topic in his letters, Heysen found “the framing problem a very vexed affair.”

Although benefiting from the buoyant state of the art market, by the early 1920s Heysen and his friends often complained that many artists were allowing the pursuit of profit to compromise the quality of their works. Heysen and his network were scathing of artists who they believed were rushing out inferior work simply to supply the market. In their correspondence they particularly criticised Streeton, Harold Septimus Power and Norman Lindsay for “prostituting” their talent by producing superficial, facile pictures designed to appeal to the general public but lacking the qualities which had distinguished their earlier works. Heysen disdained the aesthetic judgement of the average Australian picture buyer, as distinct from those he regarded as true connoisseurs. This is evident in his warning to Lionel Lindsay that the latter’s “hurried” Spanish watercolours may “undermine your good name among those who are worthwhile. The public bought them I know – but they don’t count in this matter. It is the

---

104 Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 June 1928, HH Papers. He added that Adrian Feint, Leon Gellert and Thea Proctor all shared his view.
105 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 8 November 1920, WHG Papers.
106 In 1923 a number of acquaintances resigned from the Painter-Etchers Society, objecting to its increasingly commercial focus at the expense of aesthetic considerations. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 29 August 1923; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 16 October 1924, HH Papers; Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, 156. For early twentieth-century Australian attitudes towards “potboilers,” see Taylor, Perils of the Studio, 169-74.
107 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 20 June [1921]; 13 November [1921]; [postmarked: 29 April 1924]; [letter commenced January and completed 27 April 1927]; 22 August [annotated 1927, actually 1928], LF Papers; Heysen to Walter Baldwin Spencer, 20 November 1922, WBS Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 26 November [1923], JM Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 26 July [1926], WA Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 1 August [1926], SUS Papers; W. Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 8 September 1922; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 2 December 1923; Will Ashton to Heysen, 11 July 1928, HH Papers.
ones that do know whom we must consider.”

He similarly opined to Will Ashton that “people do not understand good painting. They want illustrative subject matter – dogs & horses & things that tell them a story.”

Heysen failed to recognise that although his inner circle may have appreciated his work for its refinement of technique and aesthetic effect, many collectors were attracted primarily by his subject matter.

Heysen was also concerned by the actions of some commercially successful artists. He condemned the frequency with which Australian artists held solo exhibitions, complaining to Ure Smith: “One man shows seem the order of the day – it is being altogether overdone – & as far as I can see the artists seem to show without selection. I mean – they go away to some place – produce a whole batch of sketches & come back & show the lot.”

In doing so, Heysen believed that they oversaturated the market and did not allow themselves adequate “time for contemplation” of their subject matter.

He similarly condemned Power following rumours that he had accepted 650 guineas from the National Gallery of Victoria for a painting catalogued at 1000 guineas, asserting: “I most thoroughly condemn this rotten policy of bargaining. A picture should not be catalogued above its value, & an artist should abide by what he considers the true worth of his work.”

However, Heysen also discretely sold works to public collections at

---

108 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 7 January [1926], LF Papers.
109 Heysen to Will Ashton, 1 July [1928], WA Papers.
110 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 11 June [1927], SUS Papers.
111 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 21 March [1925], SUS Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, [letter commenced January and completed 27 April 1927], LF Papers.
112 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 11 June [1927], SUS Papers. The work in question was Power’s *On the Moors* (1925, NGV).
a discount, viewing such concessions as altruistic gestures rather than commercial opportunism.

Heysen was concerned that overt displays of commercial motives would serve to undermine the greater cultural capital borne by art works, which served to differentiate them from other commodities and justify their market value. His sentiments align with Graw’s observation that professing disdain for the market often serves to enhance the saleability of an artist’s works. Heysen’s fears that the Australian art market would face a sudden downturn proved correct, although ultimately this had its basis in broader macroeconomic variables rather than the commercial conduct of local artists and dealers.

5.3. The Depression and Second World War, 1929-1945

Heysen was conscious of the effect economic conditions had upon the art market. He and his networks regularly discussed the negative impact of the Depression upon artists, together with the temporary decline in sales following the outbreak of the Second World War. Despite his fame, popularity and institutional recognition, Heysen was not immune from the effects of these political and economic forces. In early 1930 he reflected: “We are in for a bad & lean time … The artists especially are going to suffer … I find a very great difference in my sales … so how the rank & file are getting along it is difficult to say.” The Depression in Australia was characterised by falling wages and economic returns, business closures, unemployment, evictions and a 21% decline.

---

113 Graw, High Price, 9.
115 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [c. March or April 1930], SUS Papers.
in personal consumption.\textsuperscript{116} Furthermore, South Australia had already entered a recession a year prior to the US stock market crash, which intensified the downturn.\textsuperscript{117} Despite the reduced prospect of sales, Heysen, Lindsay and Ure Smith all maintained that artists should continue to hold exhibitions “to keep the public interested” in art.\textsuperscript{118} Similar claims were made following the outbreak of war.\textsuperscript{119} Indeed, two non-commercial loan exhibitions of Heysen’s work in 1931 and 1935 attracted crowds of visitors.\textsuperscript{120} Despite suffering a significantly reduced income relative to the 1920s, Heysen was to benefit from the gradual economic recoveries during the late 1930s and later years of the war.

Following pleasing sales from his 1928 Sydney exhibition, Heysen experienced less success between 1929 and 1932.\textsuperscript{121} Regarding his 1929 Melbourne exhibition, staged at the Fine Art Society, he lamented to James McGregor that “although I feel it was my strongest Exhibition it was not a financial success. I sold about £850 – but commission, framing & other expenses

\textsuperscript{117} Sendziuk and Foster, \textit{History of South Australia}, 117-25.
\textsuperscript{118} Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, [annotated: 1 December 1930]; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 10 August 1930, HH Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 11 March [1931], WHG Papers; “Editorial,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 3, no. 32 (1930): unpaginated.
\textsuperscript{119} Norman Carter to Heysen, 15 August 1942, HH Papers; Sydney Ure Smith, ”Introduction,” in \textit{Australian Art Annual 1939}, ed. Sydney Ure Smith (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1939), 9; John Longstaff, “Foreword,” in \textit{Australian Academy of Art: Fourth Annual Exhibition} (Melbourne: Australian Academy of Art, 1941), 4.
\textsuperscript{120} These were: \textit{Loan Exhibition of Works by Hans Heysen 1898-1930}, South Australian Society of Arts, 27 February to 19 March 1931; and \textit{Loan Exhibition of the Works of Hans Heysen}, NAGNSW, 28 March to 26 May 1935.
\textsuperscript{121} The sales records of the Macquarie and Grosvenor galleries reveal that the popular landscape painters John Eldershaw and Robert Johnson both similarly experienced a significant decline in their sales during the early and mid-1930s. Chanin and Miller, \textit{Degenerates and Perverts}, 130-31. For the hardships encountered by several Australian artists during the Depression, see Eagle, \textit{Australian Modern Painting}, 131.
were so high! – that it left but a small profit.”122  Heysen’s July 1930 exhibition at the Grosvenor Galleries similarly realised disappointing sales of around 600 guineas.123  His fortunes reached a low point the following year when he reported that: “I never sold one picture out of an Exhibition in 1931.”124

Heysen was conscious of the poor economic conditions when he staged another exhibition at the Grosvenor in 1932, the worst year of the Depression. More than half the works shown were charcoal drawings, most priced between 10 and 15 guineas.125  This proved a wise strategy, with the lower priced drawings accounting for eleven of the 14 pictures sold.  These sales had a total catalogue value of 287 guineas, but it is possible some works were purchased at reduced prices.126  Walter Taylor advised Heysen that several people had sought to bargain for his works.  He contacted Heysen regarding any offer he considered “in any way reasonable,” despite having previously complained that “this idea of the public offering prices … can be abused & is rather cheap.  There are people going around the various galleries these days who know lots of artists are hard up, & offering absurd prices for their work.”127

---

122 Heysen to James McGregor, 8 May [annotated: about 1928; actually 1930], JM Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 9 December 1929, WHG Papers.  Heysen received £591/3/11 after commission and expenses had been deducted.

123 Heysen wrote that he had sold “6 pictures altogether – about 600gs worth & with still a chance of selling two more flower studies.”  Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 5 August [1930], SUS Papers.

124 Heysen to Will Ashton, 15 January 1932, WA Papers.  However, he sold four pictures privately late in 1931.

125 The exhibition featured 3 oils, 18 watercolours and 28 charcoal drawings.

126 Walter Taylor to Heysen, 16 September 1932, HH Papers.  Taylor provided the catalogue numbers of the works sold, but did not provide the prices for which they were sold.

Despite the economic downturn, Heysen had elected to maintain his existing prices at both his 1929 and 1930 exhibitions. However, in 1931 he advised Gill that he was reducing his prices by a third and was now “pricing my 150 guinea flower studies down to 100 guineas, providing the commission does not exceed 15%.” He reflected on the “vexed question” of setting prices in a 1936 letter to McGregor, observing that:

> it has worried me for a long time, now, to fix a price – that will not let the buyers down who have bought in the past – and at the same time not cheapen your Art. It is certainly true, people do not treasure, that, which they can acquire cheaply. Also our Australian market is limited & soon supplied, but at the same time prices must come within the means of those who wish to buy, and most important, an artist cannot survive, if he cannot sell.

One compromise was to concentrate on producing smaller-scale watercolours which could be sold for lower prices without this appearing to depreciate their symbolic value. Heysen advised Ure Smith that “but for these smaller Watercolours I doubt whether I could have existed and brought up our big family.” The majority of watercolours in his 1936 Melbourne exhibition were priced at 35 guineas. Despite the advice that there were many buyers “who readily purchase up to 25 guineas,” Heysen rarely priced his works below 30 guineas.

---

128 Ure Smith wrote to Heysen: “The people are so scared, that I didn’t think anything would sell at normal prices – I note that you deemed it wise to stick to your prices – and it was because of this, that I was afraid of the reception.” Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 26 July 1930, HH Papers.
129 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 11 March [1931], WHG Papers.
130 Heysen to James McGregor, 1 October 1936, JM Papers.
131 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 April [1937], SUS Papers.
132 John Brackenreg to Heysen, 5 August 1938, HH Papers.
In response to the Depression both the state and federal governments increased taxation to fund relief programmes for the unemployed and destitute.\textsuperscript{133} During the early 1930s Heysen frequently lamented the pressure that such taxes placed upon his finances.\textsuperscript{134} In 1930 he fretted that: “The prospects for next year are rotten …. Last year I had to pay £240 income Tax! and now they threaten us with impossible increases …. It’s a rotten position when a big family must be considered.”\textsuperscript{135} With fewer sales, Heysen was fortunate to have prudently saved and invested money during the prosperous 1920s. He advised Lionel Lindsay that,

income from the sale of pictures is practically nil – a few dividends from Electric Light shares and Commonwealth stocks – have kept me going with the help of idle money I had lying in the Bank! – That means I am living mostly on my capital – which is a most uncomfortable position to be in.\textsuperscript{136}

In 1937 Heysen purchased a 500 acre rural property in the state’s South East for his eldest son David.\textsuperscript{137} He advised McGregor: “the outlay was bigger than I had bargained for – still I am glad I made the decision & given him his real start in life …. Altogether 1937 has developed into an excellent year for me … but it also makes me gasp to realise how easily the money slips away!”\textsuperscript{138} Thus, Heysen continued to face significant financial demands even as economic conditions began to improve in the mid-1930s.

\textsuperscript{134} Heysen to W. H. Gill: 21 August 1929; 11 March [1931], WHG Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 14 September [1930]; 30 September [1930], SUS Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 5 November [1930]; 26 June [1931], LF Papers. Ure Smith used an editorial in \textit{Art in Australia} to condemn the negative impact of the 6% sales tax on artists. Sydney Ure Smith, “Editorial Notes,” \textit{Art in Australia} series 3, no. 45 (1932): 6-7.
\textsuperscript{135} Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 14 September [1930], SUS Papers.
\textsuperscript{136} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 26 June [1931], LF Papers. Heysen advised Will Ashton that he was “thankful that nearly ¾ of my investments are holding good.” Heysen to Will Ashton, 12 February [1933], WA Papers.
\textsuperscript{137} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 3 June 1937, LF Papers.
\textsuperscript{138} Heysen to James McGregor, 24 November [1937], JM Papers.
Despite Heysen’s concerns, he and his family never experienced serious financial hardship and maintained an enviable quality of life. The 1933 census revealed that two-thirds of male breadwinners had earned less than the basic annual wage of £163 during the previous year. However, in 1930 Heysen spent nearly that amount on works from George Lambert’s Memorial Exhibition and in 1934 six members of the family enjoyed a holiday in Europe. Such expenditure indicates that Heysen experienced greater financial security than his often fretful letters might suggest. This supports David Potts assertion that it is necessary to consider the full overview of an individual’s life, rather than just isolated episodes of hardship, when evaluating their experiences during the Depression.

The Depression led to a decline in Heysen’s business relationship with Gill due to his failure to achieve sales. When Heysen staged his next Melbourne exhibition in 1936 it was placed under the management of another dealer, Harry Fern. In April 1937 Heysen advised Ure Smith that “Gill, who was my principle seller has not sold a picture for me – for at least five years!” However, after this discouraging interregnum, Gill successfully facilitated the sales of several works by Heysen later that year. Heysen also declined

140 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 3 September [1930]; 14 September [1930]; 30 September [1930]; 18 November [1930]; 12 December 1930, SUS Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 14 September [1930], JM Papers.
142 This exhibition was staged at the Victorian Artists’ Gallery from 26 October to 7 November 1936.
143 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 April [1937], SUS Papers.
144 Heysen to W. H. Gill: 12 October 1937; 28 November 1937, WHG Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 24 November [1937], JM Papers.
invitations from Gill to stage solo exhibitions with him in 1936 and 1939.\textsuperscript{145} The latter request was made as Gill wished to hold one final Heysen exhibition as his swansong prior to retiring from art dealing. Without realising this ambition, the Fine Art Society closed in early 1940, after 28 years as a fixture of the Melbourne art world.\textsuperscript{146} During the late 1930s and early 1940s Heysen mainly sold his works through Fern, the Sedon Galleries and Decorations in Melbourne and the Grosvenor and Macquarie Galleries in Sydney.

In response to declining sales in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, Heysen began showing works in Brisbane and Perth. Although these centres had less established cultures of art patronage, few of the collectors there already owned examples of his work making them untapped markets. In 1930 and 1937 Heysen contributed works to Brisbane exhibitions organised with the intention of encouraging art appreciation in the city.\textsuperscript{147} This appears to have stimulated some demand for his work in Brisbane. Commencing in 1940 he began supplying works to the Brisbane dealer John Cooper. However, this association was short-lived after Cooper failed to either pay for or return watercolours Heysen had placed with him, obliging Heysen to involve his friend and lawyer Frederick Joyner to recover payment.\textsuperscript{148}

\textsuperscript{145} Heysen to W. H. Gill, 18 January 1936, WHG Papers; W. H. Gill to Heysen: 19 January 1939; 2 February 1939, HH Papers. In contrast to Heysen’s sidelining of Gill, Lionel Lindsay steadfastly supported his London dealer Harold Wright throughout the Depression. Mendelssohn, \textit{Lionel Lindsay}, 181.

\textsuperscript{146} W. H. Gill to Heysen, 13 March 1940, HH Papers; “Auctions – Announcement – The Fine Art Society Pty. Ltd.,” \textit{Herald} (Melbourne), 4 May 1940.

\textsuperscript{147} Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen: 6 July 1930; 9 June 1937; 12 June 1937, HH Papers. These were the \textit{Exhibition of Loan Pictures}, organised by the Queensland Art Fund in July 1930 and the \textit{Society of Artists Brisbane Exhibition} at Parbury House, 19 May to 5 June 1937.

\textsuperscript{148} Heysen to John Cooper: 14 August [1940]; 28 August 1940; 11 September 1940, John Cooper Correspondence, 1937-1950, OM64-22, State Library of Queensland; John Cooper to Heysen: 7 August 1940; 19 August 1940; 4 September 1940; Heysen to John Cooper [drafts]: undated; 20 March [1941]; 7 April 1941; 28 April 1941; Frederick Joyner to Heysen: 24 October 1941; 31
More significantly, during Heysen’s 1932 Sydney exhibition at the Grosvenor Galleries, William Bustard, a Queensland artist, stained-glass designer and gallery trustee, requested to show a selection of the unsold works in Brisbane later that year.\textsuperscript{149} In October Heysen’s first Brisbane solo exhibition took place at Heindorff House under Bustard’s management. The display of 23 works was opened by Brisbane’s Lord Mayor.\textsuperscript{150} At the show’s conclusion Bustard thanked Heysen “for allowing the show to come to Brisbane for educational purposes,” suggesting it was not primarily intended as a commercial venture.\textsuperscript{151} Nonetheless, the Queensland Art Gallery commenced fundraising to acquire \textit{Zinnias and Fruit} (1932, Fig. 109), after Heysen agreed to a reduction on its catalogue price.\textsuperscript{152}

Heysen’s introduction to the Perth art market followed a similar pattern. In 1932 he contributed works to a special exhibition of the Society of Artists.\textsuperscript{153} This was under the management of the artist John Brackenreg who also organised Heysen’s first Perth solo exhibition at Newspaper House in March 1933.\textsuperscript{154} In contrast to Brisbane, Heysen already enjoyed the promotional benefit of having

\textsuperscript{149} Walter Taylor to Heysen: 5 August 1932; 18 August 1932; 12 October 1932, HH Papers. For Bustard’s contribution as an artist, teacher and administrator, see Madeleine Hogan, \textit{William Bustard: Painting with Light} (Brisbane: Museum of Brisbane, 2015).
\textsuperscript{150} “Art of Hans Heysen,” \textit{Brisbane Courier}, 25 October 1932.
\textsuperscript{151} William Bustard to Heysen, 23 November 1932, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{152} “Art Gallery – Heysen Picture Fund,” \textit{Brisbane Courier}, 26 November 1932; William Bustard to Heysen: 8 November 1932; Friday [November 1932], HH Papers. Heysen did not receive the final payment for this work until 1935. Walter Taylor to Heysen, 15 February 1935, HH Papers. The Queensland Art Gallery has previously purchased Nora Heysen’s \textit{A Mixed Bunch} (1930) in 1930, a rare example of an art museum acquiring a work by Nora before they owned one of her father’s pictures.
\textsuperscript{153} John Brackenreg to Heysen, 14 [or 24] March 1932, HH Papers.
\textsuperscript{154} John Brackenreg to Heysen: 2 March 1933; 27 March 1933; 31 March 1933, HH Papers.
two oil paintings in the Art Gallery of Western Australia. Thus, he ventured a larger exhibition featuring 56 works. However, only six works were sold, realising a total of £344-18-6, results Brackenreg considered “very encouraging as regards the future of Art in WA.”\(^\text{155}\) He reflected that:

> Many people nearly purchased a picture but just could not make up their own minds about it. You see here in Perth there are very few homes in which you will find good drawings and paintings. I do believe that if Mrs Smith had a good watercolour on her walls – that Mrs Jones would not rest until she had one too. It only needs one or two families to become interested in having good examples of Australian Art.\(^\text{156}\)

Given the high cost of transporting works to Perth and other expenses, Heysen complained that the undertaking was “certainly not worth all the trouble & bother as far as the money goes.” However, he was gratified by the interest generated, with extensive newspaper coverage and over 4000 people visiting the exhibition. Like Brackenreg he hoped it had “paved the way for something better – not only for myself but for others as well.\(^\text{157}\)

Heysen benefited from the gradual economic improvement during the late 1930s. In 1937 he reflected to Ure Smith: “it looks almost like the return of old times – or is it but a flash in the pan – the result of temporary high wheat & wool prices. Still it does look as if people are once again spending on so called ‘luxuries’ for pictures are unfortunately regarded as such.”\(^\text{158}\) This is evident in the sales from his solo exhibitions in Melbourne (1936, 880 guineas), Adelaide

\(^{155}\) Later that year Brackenreg brokered the sale of another Heysen watercolour for 100 guineas, John Brackenreg to Heysen: Saturday [date stamped: September 1933]; 21 September [1933]; 25 September [1933], HH Papers.  
\(^{156}\) John Brackenreg to Heysen, 27 March 1933, HH Papers.  
\(^{157}\) Heysen to Will Ashton, 22 June [1933], WA Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 26 June 1933, LF Papers.  
\(^{158}\) Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 20 April [1937], SUS Papers.
(1937, over 2000 guineas), and Sydney (1938, around £1000). Furthermore, he sold 16 of the 36 works in his 1935 London exhibition and three of his watercolours were purchased for New Zealand public collections.

As in previous years, the advice and encouragement of his networks was crucial to the success of these ventures. Heysen’s London exhibition took place after McGregor and Ure Smith persuaded him to take a collection of watercolours to London during his 1934 visit. It was handled by Harold Wright of P & D Colnaghi, who was the close friend and British agent for Lionel Lindsay (Fig. 110). The preparations for Heysen’s 1938 Sydney exhibition generated an

159 An annotated catalogue for Heysen’s 1936 exhibition held by the National Gallery of Australia Research Library suggests that he sold 26 works with a total value of 880 guineas. Regarding his 1937 Adelaide exhibition, Heysen advised Will Ashton that “sales went over the £2000 mark – 33 pictures were sold.” Heysen to Will Ashton, 26 November [1937], WA Papers. He reported to McGregor: “Total sales amounted to £2300.” Heysen to James McGregor, 24 November [1937], JM Papers. Colin Thiele states that sales reached £2,200. However, as £2300 equates to 2190 guineas, this may explain this discrepancy. The only indications of sales from Heysen’s Sydney exhibition are Thiele’s assertion that during the first few days sales “had almost reached £1,000,” and a news report claiming “Hans Heysen has sold more than £1000 worth of paintings in three days.” “Thousands Paid for Pictures,” Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 14 October 1938; Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 244, 47.

160 Heysen advised Lionel Lindsay: “In all the sales amounted to about £475 in English money – splendid I think. The big ‘White Gum’ was sold for £60 – and the average for the others was 25gs each – They ranged from 20 to 30gs.” Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 2 October [1935], LF Papers. Hans had earlier reported to Nora, “Last week I had a cable from Colnaghi’s – that they were returning 24 of my watercolours which means they sold 18 altogether, jolly good news I think.” However, he had neglected to allow for the two works which Nora was keeping in her London studio. Heysen to Nora Heysen, 14 September 1935, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 44. Cf. Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 18 November [1935], SUS Papers. In 1936 Heysen sent a group of eight paintings for exhibition at the recently opened National Art Gallery, Wellington, to be shown in association with a loan exhibition of works from the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. The Old White Gum was purchased by J. R. McKenzie Ltd. and donated to the Wellington collection and Mount Samuel, Flinders Range, Far North was purchased by the Dunedin Public Art Gallery. The Red Gum was purchased by Dr Robertson on behalf of the Sarjeant Gallery, Whanganui in 1937. “Art Notes: Wellington,” Art in New Zealand 9, no. 1 (1936): 55.; “For the National Art Gallery,” Evening Post (Wellington), 23 November 1936; “Australian Picture Purchased for Dunedin,” Evening Post, 1 December 1936. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay: 10 January 1934; 8 February 1934, LF Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 7 January 1934, SUS Papers; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 22 January 1934; Harold Wright to Heysen: 2 October 1934; 24 April 1935; 27 June 1935; 22 August 1935; 25 September 1935, HH Papers. For Lindsay’s personal and professional association with Wright, see Mendelsohn, Lionel Lindsay, 157-59, 65, 69-72; David Maskill, “Imperial Lines: Harold Wright (1885-1961): Printmaking and Collecting at the End of Empire,” Melbourne Art Journal, no. 11/12 (2009): 90-92, 98-102; Lindsay, Comedy of Life, 252-53.
extensive correspondence with Ure Smith and Brackenreg. The latter, who had relocated to Sydney, acted as the exhibition’s manager. After considerable discussion it was decided to stage it at the David Jones’ Gallery in the firm’s recently opened Market Street store. From the mid-1930s the company increasingly promoted Australia art, after Charles Lloyd Jones, the chairman of directors, was appointed a trustee of the NAGNSW. Although no more than an acquaintance of Heysen’s, Lloyd Jones was closely tied to his broader Sydney network.

In addition to the Depression, Heysen and some of his circle attributed the decline in patronage to the bewilderment caused by modern art. Humphrey McQueen argued that the financial difficulties experienced by artists during the 1930s created an atmosphere where “jealousy and meanness could flourish.” These conditions thus served to consolidate the aesthetic objections to modernism considered in the previous chapter. In 1937 Heysen complained to Ure Smith:

It is little wonder that the public are losing interest in picture exhibitions – you cannot expect them to ‘think in paint.’ It is not their job and the artists cannot force them to their point of view – After all the artist depends for a living by the public support through the sale of his work – and the public sooner or later are the final judge. They rightly demand illustration of surrounding life – the landscape they live in – seen with normal eyes, it is life they ask for – and not dull & dead patterns.

162 Charles Lloyd Jones was also an amateur artist, member of the Society of Artists and co-founder and underwriter of Art in Australia. Johnson, Sydney Art Patronage System, 95-99; Bruce Ramage, “A Gallery within a Department Store: Origins and Development of David Jones’ Art Gallery, Sydney” (Fine Arts thesis, University of Sydney, 1982), 11-12, 16-17; Cullen, No Other Man, 43-54, 109-13, 99-201; Underhill, Making Australian Art, 133-38, 62-63.
163 McQueen, Black Swan of Trespass, 17.
164 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 12 March [1937], SUS Papers. Cf. Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 2 September 1935; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith [draft], January 1935; Will Ashton to Heysen, 12 September 1940, HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 14 July [1941], LF Papers.
However, Johnson has observed that amongst Sydney collectors the patrons of modern art were not a separate group, but primarily “the supporters of traditional art who occasionally bought a modern painting.”

Furthermore, during the late 1920s and 1930s the same dealer galleries frequently handled the works of both naturalist landscape painters and early modernists. For example, in 1934 the Fine Art Society exhibited Heysen’s work alongside paintings by Grace Crowley, Rah Fizelle and Arnold Shore. Nora Heysen’s art, which pursued a mid-course between naturalist and modernist concerns, was also sought by the same dealers and collectors who admired her father’s work. Such practices refute the assertion that modernism had destabilised the art market.

Additionally, several of Heysen’s associates lamented that due to the aesthetics of modern interior design, people were hanging fewer pictures in their homes. Lindsay emotively condemned,

the employment of cubic forms and geometrical patterns … the uncomfortable use of glass, metals, and engine room fittings for the drawing room … out go all the pictures – the Streeton’s, Lambert’s, Heysen’s and Gruner’s – to the garret. Nothing must interfere with the colour scheme.

However, Ure Smith more constructively suggested that to suit a modern interior pictures “must have a strong feeling for design,” and that the “artist must learn to

---

166 Ibid., 107, 64-65.
169 Lindsay, “Rembrandt V. Kalsomine,” 55-56.
adapt himself to the needs of the day.” 170 At the same time that some authors were lamenting these developments in *Art in Australia*, its sister publication *The Home* was actively promoting modern furnishing. 171 In view of these changing tastes, the bolder forms and colour contrasts of Heysen’s Flinders works were better suited to the clean lines of contemporary rooms. However, there is no evidence of Heysen consciously recognising this correlation. Furthermore, any suggestion that his Flinders pictures were more saleable is contradicted by his complaint that “buyers for this type of work are extremely limited.” 172 However, from the mid-1930s Heysen increasingly showed his works in simpler, pale coloured frames more sympathetic to modern interiors. 173

Following the outbreak of the Second World War Heysen predicted that “the first shock of this calamity” and associated expenses would lead to an initial downturn in the art market. However, he expected that as during the previous conflict the public would gradually recommence spending: “anyway I sincerely hope so – for all our sakes. Unfortunately Art is the first to suffer.” 174 The anticipated decline in art sales did occur, with Brackenreg advising Heysen against holding an exhibition of his drawings during 1941 as the “whole atmosphere of Sydney” was dominated by “worry over an unknown quantity of

---

172 Heysen to W. R. Sedon, 1 September 1942, Sedon Galleries.
173 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 22 August [1936], SUS Papers; Heysen to James McGregor, 1 October 1936, JM Papers; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 30 August 1936; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 17 February 1937, HH Papers.
174 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, Tuesday [November 1939], SUS Papers; Heysen to John Brackenreg, [draft] late 1939, HH Papers.
taxation and considerations for economy.” However, by late 1942 the art market began experiencing a revival. As Haese has considered, this ‘art boom’ was largely stimulated by economic rather than aesthetic considerations. These included higher wages from war-related industries, the lack of other opportunities for consumer spending due to wartime austerity measures, the belief that investing in art offered a safeguard against inflation and the desire to disguise profits from black market trading in rationed goods.

Although grateful for this boost in income Heysen had mixed feelings about the upturn. He observed to Lionel Lindsay:

> From all accounts & also from personal experience, the picture market is flourishing – but – unfortunately the bad is going with the good … Just imagine [Ernest] Buckmaster selling up to £2000 worth … & Power also – both of whose work is entirely commonplace … it shows the lack of discrimination shown among the public.

Indeed, Haese observes that the wartime market conditions “produced fertile ground for the mediocre and the meretricious,” with Australian landscape subjects “undistinguished by aesthetic merit” especially popular with buyers. Heysen was also upset that some of his works were being acquired by profiteers who

---

175 John Brackenreg to Heysen, 9 January 1941, HH Papers. Cf. Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 August 1940, HH Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 14 July [1941], LF Papers; Heysen to W. R. Sedon, 4 February 1942, Sedon Galleries.

176 Heysen to W. R. Sedon: 1 September 1942; 29 April 1943; 27 August 1945, Sedon Galleries; Robert H. Croll to Heysen, 30 October 1943; Harry Fern to Heysen: 4 November 1943; 13 November 1943, HH Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 20 April [1944], WA Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 23 May [1944], LF Papers.

177 Haese, Rebels and Precursors, 217-18; Mendelssohn, Lionel Lindsay, 207; Tink, Australia, 155-56; Stuart MacIntyre, Australia’s Boldest Experiment: War and Reconstruction in the 1940s (Sydney: NewSouth, 2015), 101-04, 09-13; Michael McKernan, All In! Australia During the Second World War (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1983), 166-70.

178 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 25 October [1943], LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 15 September [1943], LF Papers.

bought them to onsell. Aware of Heysen’s concern, Harry Fern sought to reassure him when requesting further works, writing: “there is a constant enquiry for trees!! I could do with at least 20 – and buyers without resale ideas – Would you let me have any that you have ready?”

From the middle of the war there was also an increased demand for Heysen’s works as gifts to foreign officials. Heysen’s correspondence with Thomas Clayton Davis, the High Commissioner for Canada, documents the spread of appreciation and ownership of his art amongst a network of Australia-based diplomats. In late 1943 Davis acquired a work from Heysen during a visit to The Cedars; he also wrote that he would like Nora Heysen to paint a portrait of his wife. Over a year later Davis contacted Heysen on behalf of a group in Canberra who wished to present one of his pictures to Nelson T. Johnson, the outgoing United States minister, and his wife, writing: “Everyone knew of their great admiration of your work and … wish that they might someday possess a picture of yours.” Heysen sent the committee a selection of three works; they purchased two for the Johnsons, while the third was bought by W. P. Montijn, the counsellor for the Dutch Legation. Following the war’s end, Davis acquired another work from Heysen as a farewell gift for his departing secretary. Other prominent foreign visitors who were presented with pictures by Heysen during the war years included: the Most Reverend Doctor John Panico, the Vatican’s

---

180 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 25 October [1943], LF Papers; J. L. Irwin to Heysen, 24 May 1945, HH Papers.
181 Harry Fern to Heysen, 4 November 1943, HH Papers.
182 T. C. Davis to Heysen, 6 December 1943, HH Papers.
183 T. C. Davis to Heysen: 24 February 1945; 21 March 1945; Nelson T. Jonson to Heysen, 31 March 1945, HH Papers.
184 T. C. Davis [signature misidentified as F. Forde] to Heysen, 25 February 1946, HH Papers.
Apostolic Delegate to Australia; Lord and Lady Gowrie, the outgoing Governor General and his wife; and the British entertainer Gracie Fields. Brackenreg also advised Heysen that there was a steady demand for colour prints of his work from US servicemen stationed in Australia.

The war was a period of reduced productivity for Heysen. Maintaining his large property in the absence of hired help and caring for his adopted granddaughter placed considerable demands upon his time. Additionally, this was a time of mental distress engendered by the death of his eldest daughter, his disillusionment at the proliferation of modernism and despair at the human and cultural destruction of modern warfare. Although Heysen did not experience the same prejudice due to his German heritage as during the First World War, he nonetheless felt dismay at finding his native and adopted homelands at war. As during the previous conflict he donated pictures to be raffled for humanitarian war-related causes. He also produced a design of Mount Patawerta for a fundraising badge issued by the Tubercular Soldiers Aid Society. During this period of unease Heysen found comfort in the calm and beauty of nature. He reflected to Will Ashton that in the “present day atmosphere … the eyes want ‘peace’ to rest on. I notice this with the choice people make when buying w. colours today.” Although modernist critics condemned Heysen’s works as irrelevant for failing to confront contemporary social issues, it was precisely their...

---

185 Rachel McGirr to Heysen, November 1942; Henry Rymill to Heysen, 15 May 1944; Will Ashton to Heysen, 14 August 1945, HH Papers.
186 John Brackenreg to Heysen, 25 May 1944, HH Papers.
190 Heysen to Will Ashton, 22 September [1943], WA Papers.
avoidance of unpleasant subject matter which provided a source of solace to both the artist and his collectors during these troubled times.

The financial uncertainty produced by the Depression and Second World War had implications for Heysen’s development as an artist. Shortly before his 1934 visit to Europe, he complained that he was suffering from “staleness” and “a distinct slackening in the urge to produce. Both ideas and energy are lacking.” Heysen hoped that his creative impulse would be “quite refreshed from all the wonderful things I will see” while abroad. In the mid-1920s he had expressed similar sentiments prior to his exploration of the Flinders Ranges, which enabled him to develop his art in a new direction. However, the declining sales encountered during the Depression made Heysen risk-averse and disinclined to investigate new aspects of style or subject matter that might not enjoy a ready market. This preference for persevering with his established approach in response to popular demand would have significant implications for Heysen’s output and reputation during the final decades of his life. His letters demonstrate that he was ever conscious of the expense entailed in providing for his large family. However, through the assistance of his networks, engagement with untapped markets and production of more modestly-priced works Heysen was able to continue earning his livelihood from the sale of his art.

---

191 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [late 1933], SUS Papers.
192 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 10 January 1934, LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to W. H. Gill, 14 January 1934, WHG Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 8 February 1934, LF Papers.
5.4. The Post-War Period, 1946-1968

The Australian art market experienced an upswing in the decades following the Second World War. This was the consequence of several factors, including a strong national economy; the proactive development of new audiences for the arts; and a shift in values whereby intellectual and cultural pursuits were increasingly valued rather than disdained as elitist. The vogue for collecting Australian art gained further momentum as record prices at auctions signalled its investment potential, while the acclaim enjoyed by a handful of Australian modernists in London suggested the imprimatur of international validation. From the 1950s, the greatest critical and commercial success was enjoyed by artists working in figurative modes of modernism, rather than those practising abstraction or figurative realism, although these were also prevalent artistic practices during this period. Nonetheless, those members of Heysen’s network who occupied a more traditionalist niche within the art market found that his works sold readily to collectors who did not share the modernist tenets of the cognoscenti.

As considered in the previous chapter, by the early 1950s Heysen was increasingly regarded as the final representative of an earlier generation of landscape painters. However, he continued to enjoy a strong demand for his work. By the 1950s his pictures were once again commanding the prices he had enjoyed during the first art boom of the 1920s, although when allowing for inflation these did not equal their former value. Heysen’s canonical status,

194 Van den Bosch, *Australian Art World*, 42.
earned on the basis of his earlier achievements, ensured that his later works were able to attain a significant market value, despite having declined in symbolic value amongst the new generation of tastemakers. This reflects Graw’s observation that “the symbolic importance attributed to an artist’s early work can function as long-lasting credit … allowing even works that have since lost some of their artistic relevance to shine in the light of a former significance.”

Furthermore, during the post-war period there was a great interest in Australian folklore, with the bush and Central Australia regarded as important sites of national identity. Margaret Plant has observed that: “In the 1950s bush culture entered every living room in some form, whether by record, book or image, in folk song or Namatjira reproduction.” This tendency not only aided the market for original works by Heysen. His views of regional Australia were also introduced into many suburban homes through the colour prints of his landscapes published by John Brackenreg’s Legend Press.

The post-war period saw the emergence in Australia of what Graw has termed the “fixed-profile format” gallery. Whereas many galleries had previously handled the works of both modern and traditionalist artists, from the 1950s dealers increasingly maintained a core “stable” of artists whose works displayed shared aesthetic characteristics. While most galleries showed an allegiance to

---

197 Graw, *High Price*, 120; Wally Caruana and Jane Clark, “Buying and Selling Australian Art: A Brief Historical Survey,” in *The Cambridge Companion Australian Art*, ed. Jaynie Anderson (Port...
particular manifestations of modernism, Heysen’s principal dealers favoured art that was traditional in style and subject matter. These included: the Sedon Galleries, Melbourne; the Moreton Galleries, Brisbane; and later the Artlovers Gallery, Sydney, established by Brackenreg in 1956 as an extension of his art publishing activities. Brackenreg’s reactionary tastes are evident in his wish to provide a gallery “where sound works are not hung alongside ‘Contemporary Paintings.’”

Of Heysen’s preferred galleries only the David Jones’ Art Gallery continued to exhibit a broad range of Australian artists. His affiliation with this establishment was cemented when Will Ashton was appointed its first director, from 1944 until 1947, following his retirement from the NAGNSW. Ashton had hoped to launch the redesigned gallery with a Heysen solo exhibition, but having insufficient works available Heysen declined this honour. Heysen’s main Adelaide dealer was less typical. In 1928 George Holman had opened an antique business and from 1944 Heysen supplied him with works on a regular basis. While most art dealers celebrated the contemporary and innovative, by placing his works alongside antique furniture and decorative arts, Heysen’s art was being

Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 299-300. Christopher Heathcote considers several commercial galleries which aligned themselves with particular styles or sensibilities during the 1950s and 1960s. Heathcote, Inside the Art Market.


John Brackenreg to Heysen, 5 October 1956, HH Papers.


Will Ashton to Heysen, 16 March 1944, HH Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 23 March [1944], WA Papers. Instead, the refurbished gallery opened with The Works of William Dobell on Loan from Private Collections, which in the wake of the controversy surrounding the Archibald Prize attracted over 53,000 people. Ramage, “A Gallery within a Department Store,” 15.

David Dridan has described George Holman as Heysen’s main Adelaide dealer. This is supported by Holman’s regular letters to the artist. David Dridan, interview by Ralph Body, Strathalbyn, 20 October 2014.
marketed to collectors who admired the values, aesthetics and craftsmanship of an earlier era.

Heysen’s solo exhibitions at the Sedon Galleries in 1951 and David Jones’ Art Gallery in 1952 are widely known. By contrast, his two solo exhibitions at the Moreton Galleries in 1960 and 1963 have been largely forgotten. James Wieneke had taken over the enterprise from John Cooper in mid-1950 and the Moreton Galleries handled Heysen’s work between 1952 and 1963 (Fig. 112). Wieneke also staged exhibitions by Lionel Lindsay and Nora Heysen. Heysen’s two Brisbane exhibitions featured both recent and older works. The art critic Dr Gertrude Langer praised both exhibitions, observing that the later pictures showed greater “assurance,” but “if the poetry does not come through as in the early work, it is because one feels that everything has been discovered long ago.”

---

203 These were the Exhibition of Paintings by Hans Heysen, O.B.E., at the Sedon Galleries, opened by Lady Latham on 23 October 1951; and Hans Heysen: 1902-1952, at the David Jones’ Art Gallery, from 19-29 March 1952. The latter is particularly celebrated for achieving rapid sales; eleven works were purchased within the first half hour despite only 14 of the 44 exhibits being offered for sale. “Rush for Heysen Paintings,” Sydney Morning Herald, 20 March 1952; “Sale of Pictures Sets a New Record,” Daily Telegraph (Sydney), 20 March 1952.

204 These were the Exhibition of Watercolours by Sir Hans Heysen, which opened 21 March 1960 and the Exhibition of Drawings and Water Colours by Sir Hans Heysen, 4-16 March 1963. Catalogues have not been located for either exhibition.

205 “Galleries Acquired by Critic,” Brisbane Telegraph, 7 July 1950; James Wieneke to Heysen: 11 August 1951; 24 May 1952; HH Papers. Wieneke continued to ask for further works, but Heysen was unable to meet these requests. James Wieneke to Heysen: 23 March 1964; 6 May 1964; undated [1966], HH Papers; David Heysen to James Wieneke, 24 February 1966, MG Files.

206 Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 28 October 1954, HH Papers; Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 4 October 1953, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 226.

The Moreton Galleries favoured more traditional styles, which differentiated it from its local rival, the Johnstone Gallery, which concentrated upon figurative modernism. Wienke advised Heysen in 1962 that he aimed to “help counter the vast amount of absolute rubbish which is being thrust at the public by the avalanche, and mostly from the brushes of the incompetent.” His letters demonstrate that there was a steady demand for Heysen’s pictures amongst Brisbane collectors during the 1950s and 1960s. Aware of the competition for Heysen’s work, he frequently sent the artist payment in advance, thus placing him under an obligation to supply him first. Wienke also frequently stipulated the types of works he would like or advised Heysen which qualities would be most saleable. In 1958 he asked Heysen to consider adding “just a little further colour” to two drawings, as buyers were more likely to consider purchasing a drawing “if some suggestion of colour is added.”

As Julie Robinson has considered, it had long been Heysen’s practice to develop his finished landscapes in the studio based upon earlier sketches. However, from the 1940s onwards Heysen increasingly concentrated upon completing unfinished works or replicating successful earlier compositions. He advised Lionel Lindsay that he was engaged with “reconstructing & finishing old Watercolours which had been begun & never carried through,” but which he

---

209 James Wienke to Heysen, 4 January 1962, HH Papers.
211 James Wienke to Heysen, 30 January 1958, HH Papers.
212 Robinson, *Hans Heysen*, 5-10, 16.
now felt able to resolve due to his “added experience over those years.”

Several of these works were commenced after collectors had admired the associated sketches during a visit to Heysen’s studio and commissioned him to produce a finished work. Thus he was resuming the practice of taking commissions based upon preliminary drawings that he had employed around 1909 to 1913.

Heysen was also preoccupied with recreating some of his earlier stylistic effects. He informed Will Ashton in 1960: “I find myself going back to older ideas, to simplify and yet get more into them – in fact I find an ever increasing interest in recreating my earlier impressions.” Writing to the collector Victor Wilson in 1948, Heysen described his newly completed watercolour as being “based on a long standing impression I made in pastel – and belongs to my ‘romantic period’ of 1920-25.” Sometimes Heysen’s later works were inscribed with misleading dates, which pertained to when the work was commenced, or possibly when the initial sketch was made, rather than when the picture was completed. For instance, Heysen’s watercolour *The Camp on the Wonoka Creek, Flinders Ranges* (private collection) is dated 1932, but from his letter to James McGregor, who purchased the work, it is clear it was not completed until 1957.

Heysen painted another version in oils, dated 1938,

---

213 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 2 May [c.1943 or 1944], LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 4 May 1948, LF Papers.


215 Heysen to Will Ashton, 11 January 1960, WA Papers.

216 Heysen to Victor Wilson, 2 December 1948, Letters from Hans Heysen to Victor Wilson, 1948-1951, MS 8836, NLA.

217 Heysen to James McGregor, 17 December 1957, JM Papers.
reflecting his practice of duplicating successful compositions in different media (Figs. 113 & 114).\textsuperscript{218}

Heysen was also increasingly type-cast as a painter of gum trees. Letters from his dealers frequently report that collectors were most interested in acquiring more “characteristic” Heysen’s featuring his signature subject matter.\textsuperscript{219} Lucy Swanton of the Macquaire Galleries wrote in 1946 describing the sort of work requested by a client: “The trees, the light, the sheep, the grass, in fact, what people mean when they say a ‘Heysen’ landscape.”\textsuperscript{220} Despite concerns that he might be accused of repeating himself, Heysen nonetheless sought to meet his dealers’ requests and his letters suggest that he was increasingly willing to paint for the market.

Heysen would frequently advise clients that if a work did “\textit{not} come up to your entire satisfaction,” they were under no obligation to accept it.\textsuperscript{221} However, there is evidence that his works of this period were uneven in quality. George Holman wrote in 1949 requesting two more works, “Only please pick them \textit{now} – so that I may not have second best as I know what demands are made on you … The main

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{218}This work is reproduced in Klepac, \textit{Hans Heysen}, 187. Other examples of Heysen duplicating successful compositions are: his watercolour \textit{The Two White Gums, Ambleside} (1944, AGSA), which closely follows his earlier oil \textit{Morning Light} (1913, NGA); his large oil \textit{The Promenade} (1953, NGA) is a reworking of his watercolour \textit{Bronzewings and Saplings} (1921, AGSA).
\item \textsuperscript{220}Lucy Swanton to Heysen, 10 September 1946, HH Papers. Cf. James Wieneke to Heysen, 22 March 1954, HH Papers.
\item \textsuperscript{221}Heysen to Victor Wilson, 2 December 1948, Letters from Hans Heysen to Victor Wilson, 1948-1951, MS 8836, NLA. Cf. Heysen to Ernest Levinson, [draft, c. April or May 1945], HH Papers; Heysen to James McGregor: 5 April [c.1949-1951]; 11 September 1956, JM Papers.
\end{itemize}
thing I stress is that I want your best examples, & you know & I know them!”

Furthermore, during his final three decades Heysen periodically complained of trouble with his eyesight. Nora Heysen asserts that in the final years of his life Hans’s perception of colour deteriorated, affecting “some of father’s northern landscapes and that wasn’t good.” If some of Heysen’s watercolours were weaker during these decades, his later drawings often display a greater freedom and energy. Ultimately, however, Heysen’s late works, which were not only outmoded but uneven in quality, have served to compromise his reputation.

During the post-war period Heysen’s friend James McGregor was one of his most important patrons. The wealthy and successful wool broker was Adelaide-born, but had been based in Sydney since 1908 where he became an important supporter of the visual arts. His extensive collection featured works by Australian and British artists, which ranged in style from the academic to figurative, non-avant-garde modernism. Heysen first met him in 1919 after McGregor purchased one of his watercolours through W. H. Gill. They established a rapport which was further bolstered by their shared tastes and circle of mutual friends. Writing to Lionel Lindsay, Heysen praised McGregor, reflecting: “his generosity & bull dog nature gains my respect and if we only had

---

222 George Holman to Heysen, 20 July 1949, HH Papers. In 1961 Holman complained to Heysen about the inferior standard of some of the works he had supplied. George Holman to Heysen, 2 March 1961, HH Papers.


224 Nora Heysen, interview by Heather Rusden, 25-26 August 1994, ORAL TRC 3121, NLA.


227 W. H. Gill to Heysen, 17 July 1919, HH Papers.
a few more like him Australian Art would be the richer. His is a generous soul – and gains our admiration & love.”

During the 1950s McGregor purchased or facilitated commissions for many works by Heysen to be sent overseas. These included pictures for business associates in Britain, Japan, Germany and the United States. By predominantly commissioning pastoral subjects McGregor was favouring imagery which represented the industry where he had made his fortune. Ironically, his purchase of several of these peaceful scenes corresponded with the Korean War wool boom. McGregor’s preference for a particular image of the Australian landscape is demonstrated by his declining to purchase Heysen’s *Drought Sheep* (1916-1921, Fig. 115) for an American friend because of its “grim” subject matter. However, recognising the merits of the watercolour, he used his position as a trustee to successfully propose its acquisition by the NAGNSW.

Like McGregor, Nora Heysen regularly acted as an intermediary, conveying requests for works by Hans from Sydney dealers and collectors. Two of Heysen’s sons also became involved with his presence in the art market during the

---

228 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 16 June [1952], LF Papers. Cf. Heysen to Will Ashton: Sunday [November or December 1943]; 11 January 1960, WA Papers. For Lionel Lindsay’s friendship with McGregor, see Mendelsohn, *Lionel Lindsay*, 219-21, 27-29; Lindsay, *Comedy of Life*, 239-40.


post-war years. In 1938 and 1939 his youngest son, Stefan, undertook art lessons with Frederick Millward Grey and studied bookkeeping and business behaviour by correspondence, with the view to pursuing a career as an art dealer.\textsuperscript{233} These plans were interrupted by Stefan’s wartime service with the RAAF. However, following his discharge in 1946, Stefan began looking for suitable rooms in which to start his venture.\textsuperscript{234} This fortuitously corresponded with plans by the John Martin’s Department Store to open a gallery as part of their business. Sarah Gibson-Walker has argued that this was the initiative of the store’s art-loving co-director, Edward Hayward, who was an acquaintance of the Heysen family.\textsuperscript{235} Stefan was duly appointed the inaugural director of the John Martin’s Gallery which opened in June 1946, remaining in this role until early 1949.

Stefan was able to benefit from his father’s art world networks, approaching them for advice or to source works. He wrote to and visited Sedon, Brackenreg and Will Ashton.\textsuperscript{236} Heysen was optimistic about his son’s prospects, declaring that “he has good taste and will with time and experience make a success of his job – he has the right temperament – and attitude towards his clients to make it so.”\textsuperscript{237} Both Hans and Nora Heysen were amongst the artists whose pictures Stefan handled. On one occasion Hans substantially repainted one of his earlier still lifes which Stefan had acquired at auction, so that his son could resell it at a

\textsuperscript{233} Heysen to James McGregor, 16 May [1938], JM Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 20 August [1938], LF Papers; Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 3 March 1939, SUS Papers.

\textsuperscript{234} Heysen to Will Ashton, undated [February to April 1946], WA Papers; Will Ashton to Heysen, 29 January 1946; John Brackenreg to Heysen, 27 March 1946, HH Papers.


\textsuperscript{236} Ibid. W. R. Sedon to Heysen, 25 November 1946; Will Ashton to Heysen, 4 December 1946; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, 16 August 1947, HH Papers.

\textsuperscript{237} Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 14 August [annotated 1948-49, more likely 1947], LF Papers.
profit through the gallery.\footnote{Hans Heysen to Nora Heysen, 1 December 1948, Speck, \textit{Heysen to Heysen}, 186.} In February 1948 George Holman complained: “I am jealous of John Martin’s handling [the] work of our greatest artist … I know you want to be loyal to your son, but please I want first choice.”\footnote{George Holman to Heysen, 11 February 1948, HH Papers.} However, by August 1948 Stefan had reduced his involvement with John Martin’s to part time, after his father purchased a property in Hahndorf for him, in which to establish his own gallery.\footnote{Heysen to Will Ashton, August [1948], WA Papers.}

The Heysen Gallery opened in July 1949, housed in an old stone cottage which was once a coffin-maker’s workshop (Fig. 111).\footnote{Ivor Francis, “Hahndorf Art Gallery has Charm,” \textit{News} (Adelaide), 23 July 1949; “New Gallery is 100 Years Old,” \textit{Mail} (Adelaide), 23 July 1949; Lisette Kohlhagen, “Picturesque New Gallery in the Heysen Country,” \textit{Express} (Adelaide), 29 July 1949.} The gallery’s name was intended to capitalise upon Hans Heysen’s nationwide fame and popularity, while its location suggests a desire to benefit from Adelaide and interstate visitors making excursions to the Hahndorf region. The gallery handled mainly non-modernist, Australian pictures, but also sold glassware, china and antique furniture.\footnote{Heysen Gallery, \textit{First Anniversary Exhibition of the Heysen Gallery} (Hahndorf: Heysen Gallery, 1950); \textit{Second Anniversary Exhibition} (Hahndorf: Heysen Gallery, 1951); Gwendoline Fay Gilding, “The German Settlement of Hahndorf” (BA (Hons) thesis, University of Adelaide, 1951), 80-81. The letters Stefan Heysen wrote to W. R. Sedon and Clifford Sedon-Thompson give an indication of the artists handled by the Heysen Gallery. See, Inward Correspondence re. Exhibitions and Sale of Pictures – Heysen, Stephen [sic], Box 2484-g, Sedon Galleries.} In December 1949 it staged an exhibition of small drawings and eight watercolours by Hans Heysen, which achieved sales of between £400-500.\footnote{Ivor Francis, “Heysen Sketches at Hahndorf,” \textit{News} (Adelaide), 8 December 1949; Heysen to Will Ashton, 29 December 1949, WA Papers; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 31 December 1949, LF Papers.} Stefan staged a successful exhibition of Nora Heysen’s oil paintings in 1951 and another show of Hans Heysen’s works in June 1953.\footnote{Esmond George, “Nora Heysen’s Art – Colour Magic of Flowers,” \textit{Mail} (Adelaide), 3 November 1951; Elizabeth Young, “‘Development of a Sincere Artist,’” \textit{Advertiser}, 10 June 1953;} However, after
some initial success, from November 1951 onwards the gallery experienced a serious decline in sales. By mid-1953 Stefan had amounted significant debts and finally confessed to his father his impecunious circumstances. Hans Heysen was obliged to make a significant personal outlay both to liquidate his son’s debts and help establish him on a farm as an alternative means of supporting his family.

Nonetheless, Stefan maintained an involvement with the art world, brokering sales as an independent art agent and acting as a critic for The News during 1956 and 1957. There are indications that his dealings were sometimes ethically questionable. David Dridan alleges that Stefan sometimes took and sold works by his father without Hans’s knowledge or permission and that he also sold some of his own drawings claiming they were by Hans Heysen. George and Frank Holman appear to be alluding to Stefan when they wrote rather cryptically to Heysen that: “It is a terrible shame … that so many pictures have disappeared from your studio & some of these do not add to your reputation as they are unfinished or finished by another artist! … I believe that all of your family know what has been taking place.” Stefan continued to incur debts during the 1950s and 1960s and regularly needed to seek financial assistance from his father.

---

Esmond George, “Choice Works by Heysen,” Mail (Adelaide), 13 June 1953; Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 15 December 1951, LF Papers.
245 Stefan Heysen to Hans Heysen: 4 June [1953]; Friday [annotated 1959, actually 1953], HH Papers.
247 Osborne, “Progressives and Provincialism,” xi-xii.
249 George and Frank Holman to Heysen, undated [filed with 1961 correspondence], HH Papers.
250 Several letters and documents pertaining to Stefan Heysen’s financial problems are contained in Folder 230 of the HH Papers. Correspondence between Stefan and the Sedon Galleries in 1957-58 regarding money owed to them is included in the Pat Corrigan Collection, Capon Library.
During the 1960s David Heysen assumed a larger role in managing his father’s career, regularly travelling to Hahndorf from his farm at Kalangadoo to assist with various tasks. Most significantly, he organised a loan exhibition of Hans Heysen’s art at Millicent in March 1961 and a joint exhibition of Hans and Nora Heysen’s works, which included works offered for sale, at the City of Hamilton Art Gallery in April 1963. Letters from Holman show that David delivered works by his father to the Adelaide dealer during his visits. He also took responsibility for cutting the mounts for works on paper, so that Hans could instead concentrate on producing new pictures. During the decade David sought advice from both Brackenreg and Dridan about how to remove foxing and mould from some of this father’s works, a task he undertook without any formal training in art restoration. In 1966 David and his wife Lyly moved into The Cedars to help look after the aging Hans. The following year David commenced producing colour prints of his father’s pictures. This placed him in competition with Brackenreg, who had been issuing Heysen prints since 1939. However, Nora suggested that David approach Brackenreg as his Sydney distributing agent to help “extend sales” as “he has a big clientele.”

251 Loan Exhibition of Works 1895-1960 by Sir Hans Heysen and Contemporary Art Display, (Millicent: South Eastern Festival of Arts, 1961); Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Sir Hans Heysen and Nora Heysen, (Hamilton, Vic: City of Hamilton Art Gallery, 1963); Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 267, 68, 91, 94, 97.
252 George and Frank Holman to Heysen, undated [filed with 1961 correspondence]; George Holman to Heysen, 19 March 1962; 12 June 1962, HH Papers. Several letters from John Brackenreg also show that David Heysen was in regular contact with him during the 1960s with regard to his father’s work. See, John Brackenreg to Hans Hesyen, letters 1960-1965, HH Papers.
253 Hans Heysen to James Wieneke, 15 September 1962; David Heysen to James Wieneke, 17 September 1962, MG Files.
254 John Brackenreg to Heysen, 15 March 1963, HH Papers; David Dridan, interview by Ralph Body.
role in maintaining his father’s links with the art world was undoubtedly a factor in his father’s decision to entrust him, rather than Stefan or Nora, with the posthumous management of his artistic legacy.

The 1954 promotional film *Adelaide Advances* juxtaposed footage of Heysen painting a watercolour of eucalypts with scenes showing factories, scientific research and the local export industries. During the post-war decades South Australia experienced a significant expansion of manufacturing, power generation and urbanisation. Such developments, together with the pre-eminence of modernism, made Heysen’s vision of his local landscape appear increasingly nostalgic. However, just as Heysen found comfort in imagery which evoked an earlier era, so too did a sizable sector of the art buying public. Heysen was better able to reach such collectors by showing his works in galleries which favoured traditionalist aesthetics, even though the dominant critical discourse of the Australian art world increasingly affirmed modernism. During the same period Heysen’s sons Stefan and David also played important roles in facilitating Heysen’s participation in the art market, variously placing them in cooperation or competition with Heysen’s existing dealers. Heysen experienced a steady demand for his work, but the commercially-aligned members of his networks encouraged him to produce rather than innovate. His later output is often repetitious and uneven in quality, as he increasingly concentrated upon recreating his earlier subjects and stylistic effects.

258 Sendziuk and Foster, *History of South Australia*, 130-42, 57.
5.5. Heysen and Collectors

In keeping with the emphasis upon Heysen’s immediate networks, this chapter primarily focuses upon those who managed the infrastructure of the market, rather than the purchasers of Heysen’s works. Nonetheless, regular sales to art collectors were essential in enabling Heysen to maintain his career as a fulltime artist. Olav Velthuis has identified aesthetic, financial and social considerations as the three different “motivational categories” for collectors, but acknowledges that “in practice, a mixture of all three tends to motivate buyers to acquire art.”

A detailed consideration of the tastes or motivations of Heysen’s collectors falls outside the scope of this thesis. However, several prominent collectors who owned his work have been the subject of specific studies. Should future researchers wish to investigate Heysen’s collectors, valuable information is provided by both the artist’s correspondence and cashbooks. Additionally, the original owners of many of his pictures were identified when these were reproduced in Art in Australia or included in loan exhibitions during the interwar period. Pictures by Heysen featured in twelve of the 18 private collections


261 See Appendix Six; Loan Exhibition of Australian Paintings, (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1925); Loan Exhibition of Work by Hans Heysen 1898-1930, (Adelaide: South Australian Society of Arts, 1931); Catalogue: Loan Exhibition of Works of Hans Heysen, (Sydney: National Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1935). Several collectors also loaned works
described by the artist Alexander Colquhoun in a series of articles written for *The Age* in 1930. These also provide insights into which other artists, subject matter and styles were favoured by the Victorian collectors who acquired Heysen’s works. By contrast, the present chapter will consider Heysen’s social and epistolary interactions with art collectors.

Informal networks of friends and social contacts helped to both establish connections between Heysen and prominent collectors and to reinforce their desire for his works. Around 1920 Elioth Gruner advised Heysen that “when you come to Sydney again you must not fail to meet another dear friend Mr Howard Hinton of whom you must have heard.” During the next three decades Hinton established himself as a major cultural philanthropist, donating over one thousand works of art to the NAGNSW and the Armidale Teachers’ College. These included eight by Hans Heysen and significant early works by Nora Heysen. The formation of Hinton’s collection was guided by advice from Norman Lindsay, who shared his brother Lionel’s admiration of Hans Heysen. Similarly, Will Ashton facilitated the introduction of Heysen to Norman and

---


263 Elioth Gruner to Heysen, undated [annotated: 1913; actually c.1920], HH Papers.


Margaretta Burdekin in 1926, advising him that they would “probably spend several hundred pounds with you.”

Even after the establishment of Heysen’s national reputation his networks remained valuable advocates. In 1953 Heysen was contacted by Dr Donald Sheumack, who went on to purchase several pictures and became a regular correspondent and visitor to The Cedars. Sheumack’s taste and the development of his collection was guided by his friends Will Ashton and Norman Lindsay, together with the dealer John Brackenreg. This reflects the concurrent role of both social and commercial contacts in advancing Heysen’s interests.

The peer networks of collectors also helped promote Heysen’s work, as demonstrated by the interactions of the Sydney dentist Dr Oscar Paul. In 1925 Heysen sent him a selection of five watercolours from which to select a picture (Fig. 116). However, after showing these to his wider circle two of his doctor friends also purchased works. The following year Heysen thanked Paul for “your hospitality & your help towards making the Exhibition a success,” suggesting he had promoted Heysen’s 1926 Sydney show to prospective buyers.

---


267 Christie and Miller, *The D. R. Sheumack Collection: Eighty Years of Australian Painting*, catalogue 38-42.


269 Heysen to Oscar Paul, 13 October [1925]; 1 November [1925], Letters received by Oscar Paul, 1922-1943, MS 1825, NLA; W. Oscar Paul to Heysen, 1 October 1925, HH Papers. Oscar Paul’s collection was subsequently gifted to the National Gallery of Australia by Henriette von Dallwitz and Richard Paul in 1965.

270 Heysen to Oscar Paul, 30 May [1926], Letters received by Oscar Paul.
purchase a large still life by Heysen which had originally been painted for Anna Pavlova.  

Paul’s actions correspond with scholarship regarding the social component of collecting and the formation of taste. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal have argued that through assembling collections, collectors are also formulating expressions of their identity. However, rather than being purely subjective, their selection often reflect “the criteria inculcated by one’s generation and class.” As fashions and critical opinions changed this sometimes counted against Heysen. Kym Bonython, an Adelaide entrepreneur, bon vivant and later art dealer, recalled that when he commenced collecting in the 1940s his tastes were “predictably conservative,” buying works by “such good but conventional artists as Hans Heysen, George Whinnen and Max Ragless.” He later preferred expressive modernists like Sidney Nolan and Clifton Pugh, whose works were increasingly being championed by the art establishment.

In a reflection of this interpersonal aspect of collecting, a substantial portion of Heysen’s inward correspondence was from collectors. Several topics recur in such letters. Collectors regularly wrote to advise Heysen of how much they

---

271 Heysen to Oscar Paul, 6 May [1929]; 11 November 1929, Letters received by Oscar Paul. The painting in question, Souvenir, was reproduced in Art in Australia, series 3, no. 21 (1927), 2. For Pavlova’s commissioning and rejection of this painting, see: Victor Dandré to Heysen: 2 August 1926; 13 June 1928, HH Papers.


274 Kym Bonython, Ladies' Legs and Lemonade (Adelaide: Rigby, 1979), 106-09. For Bonython’s activities as an art dealer see, Heathcote, Inside the Art Market, 177-85.
admired their new purchase, how it had been framed, where it was hung and which other artists featured in their collection.\textsuperscript{275} Prospective collectors would also write requesting to purchase one of Heysen’s works. They would frequently stipulate the type of subject, colour scheme or light effect which they preferred and nominate the price they were prepared to pay, regularly underestimating the market value of his works.\textsuperscript{276} Often existing collectors would submit requests for pictures on behalf of friends of family members, hoping that their prior patronage and demonstrated appreciation of Heysen’s art would lead him to prioritise their associate’s request.\textsuperscript{277} In other letters visitors from overseas would frequently described Heysen’s works as a cherished “reminder of our most pleasant stay in sunny Australia.”\textsuperscript{278} Heysen would have regarded this as admiration of his ability to capture the light and atmosphere of Australia, but it also carries the unfortunate implication that his works were primarily appreciated as glorified souvenirs.

Several collectors maintained an extended correspondence with Heysen over a number of years.\textsuperscript{279} Many of their letters reflect what Janet Altman has termed the “epistolary pact,” whereby “the letter’s ingrained assumption of reciprocity,”

\textsuperscript{275} Lady Margaret Stanley to Heysen, 8 November 1917; Dr Aeneas J. McDonnell to Heysen, 27 August 1925; Evelyn Watt to Heysen, 19 May 1926; J. Mutton to Heysen, 26 October 1932; Charles Fenner to Heysen, 6 January 1947; Victor George Wilson to Heysen, 25 August 1948; Lloyd Dumas to Heysen, 13 February 1952; J. J. Almond to Heysen, 13 April 1954, HH Papers. \textsuperscript{276} Ernest A. Haskell-Smith to Heysen: 27 September 1917; 8 February 1918; Edward Knox to Heysen, 4 May 1926; Dion Boucicault to Heysen, 24 July 1928; L. W. Chant to Heysen, 8 September 1943; P. L. Ashley to Heysen, 14 March 1945; Miss K. H. Evans to Heysen, 25 June 1946; J. J. Almonds to Heysen: 11 July 1952; 9 October 1963; Donald Sheumack to Heysen, 29 October 1953, HH Papers. \textsuperscript{277} Alfred S. McMichael to Heysen, 20 January 1920; Beatrix de Crespigny to Heysen, 10 August [1920]; T. R. Raine to Heysen, 11 March 1925; Robert Godall to Heysen, 5 January 1933; Niels Storaker to Heysen, 19 July 1944; Charles Lloyd Jones to Heysen, 5 January 1948; Victor Wilson to Heysen, 12 December 1950; James McGregor to Heysen, 5 January 1952, HH Papers. \textsuperscript{278} Derek Schreiber to Heysen, 16 March [1946], HH Papers. Cf. Lady Margaret Stanley to Heysen, 8 November 1917; Nelson T. Johnson to Heysen, 31 March 1945; Deidre McKéay to Heysen, 12 December 1949, HH Papers. \textsuperscript{279} Collectors who wrote 12 or more letters to Heysen include: Professor Baldwin Spencer, letters 1909-1922; Alfred McMichael, 1912-1938; Nellie Melba, 1914-1931; Lady Maria Carola Galway, 1915-1930; Mary Isabel and Tom Barr Smith, 1915-1939; James McGregor, 1920-1967; Howard Hinton, 1921-1947; Dr Aeneas McDonnell, 1922-1940; Albert Jewell, 1942-1949; J. L. Irwin, 1943-1949; Donald Sheumack, 1953-1957; J. J. Almond, 1952-1965, HH Papers.
anticipates and obligates a reply.\textsuperscript{280} This had implications for Hans, as evident when Sallie Heysen reported to Nora in 1954: “Daddy’s time in the studio is a good deal taken up with letter writing unfortunately.”\textsuperscript{281}

Heysen also nurtured and maintained connections with collectors through welcoming them as visitors to The Cedars.\textsuperscript{282} The manner in which visits to The Cedars reinforced the public image of Heysen as a family man and artist close to nature has been considered in earlier chapters, as have Sallie Heysen’s abilities as a hostess. As their daughter Deirdre Cowell recalled, Sallie also protected her husband from everyone who wanted to see him, as he “was often very soft-hearted and couldn’t say no, but mother had a good business head.”\textsuperscript{283} Sallie was insistent that Hans retain key works that signalled new developments in his art, standing her ground when her husband was pressured by dealers or collectors to sell them.\textsuperscript{284} Following Sallie’s death, Heysen’s adopted granddaughter Jill continued to provide hospitality to guests when caring for Hans between mid-1962 and late 1965.\textsuperscript{285}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[281] Sallie Heysen to Nora Heysen, 16 May 1954, Speck, \textit{Heysen to Heysen}, 234.
\item[282] F. W. Bell to Heysen, 13 May 1919; Alfred McMichael to Heysen, 27 December 1919; Mary Isobel Barr Smith to Heysen, 26 March [1927]; Samuel Fitzpatrick to Heysen, 14 March 1934; Norman Schureck to Heysen, 8 May 1941; Claude Hotchin to Heysen, 15 April 1945; Albert Jewell to Heysen, 12 April 1946; Eugene Goossens, 16 November 1950; J. J. Almonds to Heysen, 6 August 1952; Donald Sheumack to Heysen, 20 September 1954 [misfiled as 1953], HH Papers.
\item[284] This provoked resentment during the 1919 Australian Arts Club exhibition in Sydney, where two of Heysen’s watercolour were listed as “Not for Sale,” leading to rumours that he was not prepared to sell his best works. W. H. Gill to Heysen, 2 July 1919; M. J. MacNally to Heysen, [annotated: 3 July 1919]; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 15 July 1919, HH Papers.
\item[285] David Dridan, interview by Ralph Body, Strathalbyn, 20 October 2014.
\end{footnotes}
Graw has observed that an art work “promises a closer connection to its ‘master,’ allowing the owner to imagine that an intimate relationship exists” between themselves and the artist.286 This sense of closeness was further enhanced by providing access to the artist and his home environment. Given Heysen’s aversion to overt salesmanship, visits to this congenial domestic setting allowed the purchase or commissioning of works to assume the character of a personal favour rather than a business transaction, deflecting attention from the financial aspect of the exchange. In Heysen’s relationships with collectors, as with other sections of his art world networks, there was frequently an intersection of the personal and the professional, as the affections and loyalties of friendship coexisted with commercial considerations.

*******************************************************************************************

Throughout his career Heysen sought to maintain the image of a successful yet commercially disinterested artist. However, his engagement with the art market was essential in enabling him to maintain his livelihood as a full-time artist. During the six decades considered in this chapter the Australian art market underwent significant changes. Heysen’s art world networks performed an important service in keeping him informed about the changing state of the cultural field, providing valuable information and advice regarding the respective merits of various dealers and commercial galleries and how to present his work to best effect. By acting as intermediaries, his art dealers played an important role by facilitating sales and handling transactions, thus distancing Heysen from an overt

display of commercial motives that might compromise the symbolic value of his art.

The high prices and regular sales which Heysen enjoyed during the ‘art boom’ of the late 1910s and 1920s gave him the confidence to explore a broader range of subject matter and stylistic effects. However, the economic downturns of the Depression and early years of the Second World War made him risk-averse and disinclined to adopt new approaches that may not prove readily saleable. Despite the upsurge of the art market during the post-war decades, Heysen preferred to persist with his established manner, as the commercially-aligned members of his networks encouraged him to produce rather than innovate. For both better and worse his art world networks played an essential role in helping Heysen to negotiate the fraught relationship between art and commerce and the changing infrastructure of the Australian art market.
Conclusion

Hans Heysen passed away at the age of 90 in July 1968. In a tribute for the Adelaide News, Lou Klepac wrote that his death “marked the end of a great period in Australian art,” which had embodied “the optimism and self-assurance of the young, emerging nation.”\(^1\) Indeed, by 1968 many longstanding members of Heysen’s networks had also died, with the deaths of Lionel Lindsay in 1961 and Will Ashton in 1963. Selma Heysen had also predeceased her husband in May 1962. At the same time, there was a resurgent pride in Heysen’s achievements amongst South Australians. During the 1960s Walter Wotzke, David Dridan and David Heysen organised exhibitions of his work, together with associated publications which celebrated Hans Heysen as a veteran artist.\(^2\) In 1966 Heysen was introduced to the author Colin Thiele, who commenced writing his biography of the artist.\(^3\) Thiele would subsequently assume the role, formerly held by Lindsay, of “Australia’s interpreter of Hans Heysen.”\(^4\) For many years Thiele’s *Heysen of Hahndorf* (1968) shaped the popular image of Heysen’s art, life and career. This dissertation both expands upon Thiele’s research and questions several of his assertions.

---

Traditionally, the prevalent image of Heysen has been of an artist living in rural seclusion, who was close to nature but largely detached from the artistic and technological developments of the twentieth century. By contrast, this dissertation has emphasised his significant connections to the urban art worlds where his work was exhibited, appraised and sold. Its principal concern has been investigating the role of Heysen’s art world networks in establishing, shaping and maintaining his career and reputation. This has been assessed through a thematic investigation of Heysen’s professional life from the Edwardian period until the 1960s. In doing so, the activities of Heysen and his networks have been situated in relation to broader changes taking place in the Australian art world during these seven decades. This research provides a greater appreciation of the role of cultural institutions and strategic networking in advancing Heysen’s reputation and commercial fortunes, thus extending an understanding of the artist beyond existing biographical and art historical studies.

This dissertation has employed Howard Becker’s conceptualisation of art as the product of collaborative activity to better understand the operations of Heysen’s networks, together with Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of a “Field of Cultural Production,” to situate these in relation to the changing dynamics of the Australian art world. Accordingly, it has considered the changing character and positioning of Heysen’s nexus of art world associates. The first significant expansion of Heysen’s professional networks beyond Adelaide developed in tandem with his 1908 Melbourne exhibition. His proactive involvement with the Melbourne art world during the late Edwardian period corresponded with the growing vogue for collecting Australian art emergent in that city. However, from
the late 1910s, Heysen was in closer contact with art circles in Sydney, in part because he encountered more welcoming attitudes from its artists during a time of prevalent anti-German sentiments. His ties to the Sydney art world were further reinforced through his involvement with the Society of Artists and *Art in Australia* magazine.

During the interwar period Heysen’s networks encompassed significant art world tastemakers and cultural gatekeepers, including the directors and trustees of various state galleries. However, from the 1940s onwards, the influence of his networks declined as several key contacts died, retired or were replaced by a new generation who were more sympathetic towards modernism. During the final two decades of his career, Heysen succeeded in maintaining an enviable degree of art world prominence. However, this largely stemmed from acknowledgement of his earlier achievements, together with his continued commercial success. As this dissertation has considered, Heysen’s networks not only assisted him in establishing and advancing his career, their support also enabled Heysen to withstand the threats presented by: anti-German prejudice during the First World War; the impact of the Depression on the art market; and changing tastes stemming from the ascendency of modernism. While he generally benefitted from his networks, the conservatism or overtly commercial concerns of some of Heysen’s associates proved detrimental to his reputation.

In order to achieve the prices and regular sales that would render a career as a professional artist viable, Heysen first had to elevate his status within the Australian art world. This dissertation has examined the means by which
Heysen’s work received the ‘consecration’ of art world authorities. An important source of prestige early in his career was the sale of works to municipal art galleries, the highest form of validation that could be accorded locally to an artist. Thus, after having sold a small number of highly priced paintings to public collections, Heysen was better placed to sell a larger number of less expensive works to private collectors. Similarly, being awarded the Wynne Prize in 1904 (and on eight subsequent occasions), conferred further institutional recognition and cultural capital upon Heysen’s art. The interest shown in Heysen and his work by high-profile figures was another marker of prestige and source of publicity. Indeed, during the First World War the prominent support of both Nellie Melba and members of the vice-regency helped alleviate the impact of anti-German sentiments. However, the status of being associated with the short-lived Australian Academy of Arts ultimately proved a curse rather than a blessing. Heysen’s involvement with this well-intentioned but anachronistic institution instead contributed to his type-casting as a recalcitrant conservative.

This dissertation also considered the manner in which Heysen’s networks assisted his engagement with the changing infrastructure of the Australian art market. During the Edwardian period he regularly exhibited with Australian artists’ societies. Such exhibitions enabled Heysen to establish his place in the cultural field by positioning his works alongside those of his peers. However, by the 1910s few of Heysen’s sales were realised through such groups. Thus, his resignation from three societies during the First World War is unlikely to have disadvantaged him financially. Particular attention has been given to the format, success and significance of the two solo exhibitions that Heysen staged in
Melbourne in 1908 and 1912. During the later Edwardian period such solo exhibitions came to signify serious professional intent. Throughout his career, Heysen, in collaboration with his networks, carefully stage managed his solo shows in order to present his works to best effect. Commencing in 1909 through his association with the Melbourne dealer William H. Gill, Heysen regularly sold works, secured commissions and staged exhibitions with commercial galleries. During the ‘art boom’ of the 1920s, dealer galleries assumed greater prominence in the Australian art world. Significantly, by acting as the intermediaries who handled sales transactions, art dealers helped distance Heysen from any overt display of commercial motives that might have compromised the symbolic value of his art.

Like dealers and galleries, art publications are also examples of what Becker termed “distribution systems which integrate artists into their society’s economy.” Early in his career, Heysen recognised the prestige associated with having his art reproduced in the widely-read British periodical *The Studio*. Later, *Art in Australia* magazine became a major means of circulating an awareness of Heysen’s work throughout the country. This dissertation has considered Heysen’s close ties to the Sydney-based circle of artists and writers affiliated with this publication, particularly his friendship with the artist, editor and administrator Sydney Ure Smith. Heysen’s art corresponded with the nationalist and *juste milieu* preferences which guided Ure Smith’s editorial selection and thus received substantial coverage in his publications. Indeed, special issues of *Art in Australia* dedicated to Heysen’s work also served to promote his Sydney solo exhibitions.

---

5 Becker, *Art Worlds*, 93.
Lionel Lindsay was the critic who most frequently wrote on Heysen’s art, authoring several favourable assessments of his friend’s work between 1909 and 1952. Lindsay’s appreciative writing served to both bolster Heysen’s reputation and foreground those traditionalist characteristics that he esteemed. While this close association of Heysen’s art with Lindsay’s views proved beneficial during the interwar period, from the 1940s onwards it served to reinforce perceptions of both men as anti-modernist conservatives. Heysen’s art also reached a broader audience by being circulated as photomechanical colour prints, although this further contributed to his classification as a popular rather than a serious artist.

Through a close examination of both Heysen’s private correspondence and public statements, this dissertation has presented a more nuanced understanding of his views on art. These destabilise beliefs that he was both an ardent nationalist and intractable conservative. While Heysen’s own landscape imagery has become linked to nationalistic discourse, writers from Lindsay onwards have also acknowledged the basis of his compositions in the European landscape tradition. Furthermore, Heysen’s still life paintings are consistently non-specific to Australia and demonstrate his reverence for European exemplars. Heysen regularly advised art students to study the historic art of Europe, believing that it provided paragons by which they could approach their local subject matter. At the same time, he was disdainful of artists who slavishly followed international styles, believing that art must develop in relation to its local environment. Similarly, Heysen’s integration of modern pictorial qualities into his otherwise naturalistic depictions of the Flinders Ranges challenges simple distinctions between the modernist and traditional. Indeed, Heysen was more tolerant of
certain modern characteristics in the works of other artists than his own art might suggest. However, he insisted upon sound technique and was hostile to distorted or discordant form and colour. As considered, Heysen’s variegated views on modernism were developed in dialogue with other key members of his networks.

Throughout this dissertation attention has been given to the essential role of letters in facilitating Heysen’s long-distance management of his career. This epistolary contact enabled him to co-organise interstate exhibitions, secure sales and commissions and participate in art world debates. Furthermore, this correspondence with his networks allowed Heysen to monitor the changing shape of the cultural field. Such letters demonstrate his active interest in the critical and commercial success of other Australian artists, the character of their solo exhibitions, the respective merits of various dealers and galleries and recent acquisitions by public collections. This dissertation has further extended an understanding of Heysen by examining his written exchanges with William H. Gill and Will Ashton, sources largely overlooked by previous scholars. New insights have also been gleaned from his better known correspondence with Lionel Lindsay and Sydney Ure Smith. One potential risk of equating Heysen’s art world networks with his correspondents is that inadequate recognition may have been given to significant contacts who rarely wrote letters. However, by utilising other sources acknowledgement has been made of the importance of Harry Pelling Gill, Frederick Joyner and Ronald Finlayson, together with Frederick and John Preece, despite few of their letters having survived.
The original purpose of this research was to foreground Heysen’s professional networks, in contradistinction to existing biographical accounts which emphasise his family life. However, it quickly became apparent that no simple distinction could be made between the two. As acknowledged, from the 1910s onwards, both Heysen’s home life and identity as a family man formed an integral part of his public image. Concomitant with this were Sallie Heysen’s social skills, knowledge of etiquette and abilities as a hostess. Furthermore, Heysen’s sons David and Stefan were both involved in the sale of his work, while Nora acted as an important intermediary conveying information and messages from Sydney. As an avenue for future research, it is likely that a more intensive study of Heysen’s family papers would uncover additional insights into the contribution made by his relatives to advancing his career.

In keeping with Heysen’s domestic environment, another topic meriting further investigation are his activities as an art collector. Heysen assembled a large private collection that was unfortunately dispersed after his death.\(^6\) Valuable insights into both Heysen’s views on art and the role of his networks would be provided by a consideration of what he collected, how this compared with the collections of his peers, and the channels through which he made these acquisitions. Similarly, the limits of this dissertation did not permit a detailed investigation into the private collectors who acquired Heysen’s art. However, when discussing his social and epistolary contact with collectors, several sources

---

\(^6\) See, *Hans Heysen Collection*. A small number of works from Heysen’s private collector remain at The Cedars or in the collections of relatives. Heysen also sold some works from his collection during the 1950s.
were identified that could be utilised by future scholars to examine this component of Heysen’s networks.

This research into Heysen is particularly timely. Since the 2008 retrospective curated by Rebecca Andrews, there has been a resurgence of interest in Heysen and his art. Most significantly, the Heysen family property, The Cedars, was recently purchased by the Hans Heysen Foundation. This charitable trust is currently raising funds in order to restore the historic home and construct a visitors’ centre and gallery in which to display the works of both Hans and Nora Heysen. Consequently, this is an important juncture at which to re-evaluate Hans Heysen’s career and address some popular misconceptions.

This dissertation has provided a valuable counterbalance to existing accounts which mainly consider Heysen in relation to the local environment of his landscape paintings. Instead, it has established that in contrast to the apparent timelessness of his regional subject matter, Heysen’s art circulated in the urban spaces and rapidly changing cultural field of the Australian art world. Many previous authors have accounted for Heysen’s success in terms of his talent, hard work and love of nature. While Heysen undoubtedly possessed these qualities, they alone are insufficient to explain his nationwide acclaim or levels of critical and commercial approbation. Instead, throughout his lengthy career, Heysen’s extensive and often influential networks played an essential role in assisting his long-distance career management and advancing his standing within the cultural field. Furthermore, key associates occupied pivotal roles in the very cultural

---

institutions which conferred symbolic capital and helped shape public taste.

Accordingly, this dissertation has discredited the sentimental image of Heysen as a solitary genius and instead demonstrated the crucial importance of his art world networks in establishing, shaping and maintaining both his career and reputation.
Behind the Scenes

Hans Heysen’s Art World Networks

Volume Two

Ralph Body
Department of Art History
School of Humanities
Faculty of Arts
University of Adelaide

February 2019
# Table of Contents - Volume Two

Images.................................................................................................................................................1

Appendix I: Chronology of Key Events, 1903-1968 .................................................................77

Appendix II: Works by Hans Heysen acquired by Public Collections 1904-1915 .................................101

Appendix III: Works by Hans Heysen included in Group Exhibitions, 1899-1921 .........................................................105

Appendix IV: Heysen’s Lecture “Observations on Art,” 1906 ...............................................123

Appendix V: Hans Heysen and Lionel Lindsay’s Collaborative Review of the 1909 Federal Exhibition .................................................................135

Appendix VI: Hans Heysen in Sydney Ure Smith’s Publications, 1916-1949 ...143

Appendix VII: Hans Heysen and the Collection of the National Gallery of South Australia before 1940 ...........................................................................................................161

Bibliography ..............................................................................................................................................193

  Primary Sources ..................................................................................................................................193

  Secondary Sources ...............................................................................................................................210
Images

Fig. 1  Hans Hasenpflug, *Hans Heysen against Gums*, 1937, toned gelatin-silver photograph, 25.2 x 18.8 cm, printed by Harold Cazneaux. Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of the Cazneaux Family, 1978.
Fig. 2  Hans Heysen, *Interior, St. Marks, Venice*, 1902, watercolour, 34 x 24.5 cm, private collection. This is the watercolour version of the untraced oil discussed in Chapter One.

All images by Hans Heysen are © C. Heysen.
Fig. 3  Hans Heysen to Selma Bartels, undated letter [mid-May 1904], Hans Heysen Papers, MS 5073/2/104a, NLA.  Diagram showing the proposed layout of Heysen’s first solo exhibition, held in his studio in the Adelaide Steamship Company’s building.
Fig. 4  Hans Heysen, *Mystic Morn*, 1904, oil on canvas, 122.8 x 184.3 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Elder Bequest Fund, 1904.

Fig 5  Hans Heysen, *Sunshine and Shadow*, 1904-05, oil on canvas, 115.6 x 178.8 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1906.
Fig. 6  Hans Heysen, [Cover Design], *Exhibition of Paintings by Hans Heysen*, Melbourne, 1908.

Fig. 7  Hans Heysen, *A Lord of the Bush* and *Midsummer Morning* reproduced in *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art* 14, no. 193 (1909): 249-50.
Fig. 8  Hans Heysen, *Midsummer Morning*, 1908, watercolour over pencil, 56.4 x 78.7 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1908.

Fig. 9  Hans Heysen, *Summer*, 1909, pencil and watercolour on ivory wove paper, 56.5 x 78.4 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1909.
Fig. 10  Hans Heysen, *Hauling Timber*, 1908-11, oil on canvas, 102 x 135 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1911.
Fig. 11    Hans Heysen, *In Sunset Haze*, 1909, watercolour, 55 x 76 cm, private collection.

As reproduced in *The Baldwin Spencer Collection of Australian Pictures and Works of Art*. Melbourne: Fine Art Society’s Galleries, 1919, Fig. 15.
Fig. 12  Hans Heysen, [Cover Design], *Exhibition of Watercolours by Hans Heysen*, Melbourne: E. Whitehead and Co., 1912.

Fig. 13  Hans Heysen, *The Pomp of Parting Day*, 1912, watercolour over pencil, 47.6 x 61.6 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, gift of John H. Connell, 1914.
Fig. 14  Hans Heysen, *Red Gold*, 1913, oil on canvas, 129.5 x 174.5 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Booth, 1913.
Fig. 15  Arthur Streeton, *Sydney Harbour*, 1907, oil on canvas on plywood, 122.2 x 122 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1910.
Fig. 16  Will Ashton, *The Old Tree, Narrabeen, N.S.W.*, c. 1908-09, reproduced in South Australian Society of Arts, *Catalogue of the 12th Federal Art Exhibition*, Adelaide: Vardon & Sons, 1909.

Fig. 17  Lionel Lindsay, *Hans Heysen’s First Studio, Ambleside, South Australia*, 1920, 2nd state of 2, etching and plate-tone on wove paper, 11 x 15.6 cm (plate-mark), National Gallery of Australia, Alan Queale Bequest, 1982. © National Library of Australia.
Fig. 18  Ernest Gall (photographer), *The Adelaide Steamship Company Building, Currie Street*, 7 October 1903, photograph, 24.2 x 19 cm, PRG 631/2/8, State Library of South Australia.

Fig. 19  Photographer Unknown, *National Gallery of South Australia, North Terrace*, c. 1911, photograph, 20.3 x 15 cm, B 4367, State Library of South Australia.

Right: Fig. 21  Harry Pelling Gill, *Self-Portrait*, 1890s, oil on wood panel, 28 x 20.5 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of Mrs J. Handford, 1944.
Fig. 22  Hans Heysen, *Sallie (The Artist’s Wife)*, 1912, charcoal on paper, 37.5 x 27.9 cm, private collection.

Fig. 23  Sir Hans and Lady Selma Heysen, from Noni Rowland, “Knight of the Gum Trees,” *Australian Women’s Weekly*, 8 July 1959, 8.
Fig. 24  Freda Sternberg, “A Visit to Heysen,” *The Home*, 2, no. 4 (December 1921): 16-17. Photographs by Alfred Wilkinson.
Fig. 25  State Recruiting Committee of South Australia, *Australians, Arise!*, c. 1916-1918, poster, 152 x 102 cm, Pic Screen 104, National Library of Australia.
Fig. 26  Hans Heysen, *In Sunset Haze*, 1914, oil on canvas, 122 x 155 cm, in *Catalogue of Pictures by Hans Heysen*, Melbourne: Athenaeum, 1915: 2.

Fig. 26a.   Hans Heysen, *Droving into the Light*, 1914-1921, oil on canvas, 122 x 155 cm, State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, gift of Mr W. H. Vincent, 1922.  *In Sunset Haze* as it appears today, after being substantially repainted.
Fig. 27  Hans Heysen, *White Gums*, 1914, oil on canvas, 159 x 128 cm, reproduced in *Catalogue of Pictures by Hans Heysen*, Melbourne: Athenaeum, 1915: 5.

Fig. 27a.  Hans Heysen, *The Three Gums*, 1914-1920, oil on canvas, 159 x 128 cm, Art Gallery of Ballarat, purchased with funds from the Laurence Clark Bequest, 1921. *White Gums* as it appears today, after being partially repainted.
Fig. 28  Hans Heysen, *Zinnias*, 1914, oil on canvas, 63 x 50.6 cm, private collection (formerly in the collection of Dame Nellie Melba).

Fig. 29  Hans Heysen, *Fruit (Still Life – Sunlit Quinces and Grapes)*, 1921, oil on canvas, 49.7 x 72.8 cm, private collection.
Fig. 30  Hans Heysen (and Ronald Finlayson) to Herbert Edward Powell, 14 October 1916, typed draft with annotations, Hans Heysen Papers, MS 5073/1/532, National Library of Australia.
Fig. 31  Hans Heysen, *The Toilers*, 1920, watercolour on paper, 40.4 x 51.8 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Bequest of the Artist, 1969.
Fig. 32  Harold Cazneaux, *Peace After War and Memories*, 1918, gelatin silver photograph, 26.4 x 32.4 cm (image size), Art Gallery of New South Wales, gift of the Cazneaux family, 1975.

Fig. 33  Norman Lindsay, “‘On, On!’ – ‘The German offensive will last all summer.’ – Cable,” *The Bulletin*, 16 May 1918, 12.
Fig. 34  Photographer Unknown, Selection Committee of the Society of Artists Exhibition in London, 1923, Records of the Society of Artists (1895-1965), MS 2002.7, Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archives, AGNSW.

Fig. 35  Photographer unknown, *Adelaide Artists’ Week, 1924*, (left to right: Harold Herbert, Sydney Ure Smith, Hans Heysen, Charles Wheeler, Lionel Lindsay and Henri van Raalte), 1924, gelatin silver print, 14.9 x 20.1 cm, PIC Box PIC/7247, National Library of Australia.
Fig. 36  Hans Heysen, *Bronzewings and Saplings*, 1921, watercolour on paper, 56.7 x 76.4 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australian Government Grant, 1937.

Fig. 37  Lionel Lindsay, *Heysen's Birds*, 1923, wood engraving, 14.5 x 15.2 cm (block), National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1938. © National Library of Australia.
Fig. 38  Hans Heysen, *The Barn*, charcoal drawing, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 15 (1926): Plate 23.
Fig. 39  Sydney Ure Smith, *Ambleside Farmyard*, c. 1924-25, etching and plate-tone, 17 x 31.4 cm (plate), National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1925.

Fig. 40  Lionel Lindsay, *Old Ambleside Barn*, 1925, drypoint and plate-tone printed in brown ink, 22.5 x 30.2 cm (plate), National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1925. © National Library of Australia.
Fig. 41  Hans Heysen, *The Village Smithy*, charcoal drawing, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 15 (1926): Plate 14.
Fig. 42  Sydney Ure Smith, *The Blacksmith's Shop*, 1925, etching and plate-tone, 23.3 x 30.6 cm (plate), National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1925.

Fig. 43  Lionel Lindsay, *The Smithy Window*, 1924, etching with plate-tone, 17.5 x 20 cm (plate), National Gallery of Victoria, purchased 1925. © National Library of Australia.
Fig. 44  *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 27 (March 1929): advertisements for *The Home*; a coloured print of Heysen’s *Australian White Gums* (1926) and Charles H. Bertie’s *Old Colonial By-ways* (1928).
Fig. 45  Hans Heysen, *The Sheltered Pool*, reproduced on the cover of *Australia Beautiful: The Home Pictorial Annual* 1927.
Fig. 46 Harold Cazneaux, photographs in “The Home of Heysen,” *The Home*, 17, no. 1 (January 1936): 40-41.
Fig. 47  Dickinson-Monteath (photographers), “In the Dining Room. A serving table of simple design is painted green, and has a Hans Heysen painting hung above it. The oval tray is of Sheffield plate.” in Freda Sternberg, “The House of Song,” The Home, 9, no. 12 (December 1928): 54.

Fig. 48  Harold Cazneaux, “A corner of the drawing room in Mrs. Reading’s flat. On the right is an old English writing desk of flame mahogany; the bowl on the top is Florentine. At each side hang pictures by Hans Heysen.” in “On a Field of Green,” The Home, 12, no. 8 (August 1931): 25.
Fig. 49  *The Art of Hans Heysen*. Special Number of Art in Australia, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920.

Fig. 50  Hans Heysen, *Delphiniums*, 1917, oil, reproduced in *The Art of Hans Heysen*. Special Number of Art in Australia, Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920, Plate VIII.
Fig. 51 Lionel Lindsay’s article, “Heysen’s Flower Pieces,” and Heysen’s *Autumn Bunch*, oil, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 12 (1925): unpaginated.

Fig. 52 Advertisement for colour print of Heysen’s *Flowers and Fruit* (1921), reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 22, (1927): unpaginated.
Fig. 53  *The Home* 19, no. 4 (April 1938): cover showing Hans Heysen’s *White Gums*, watercolour, dimensions and whereabouts unknown.

Fig. 54  “A Celebrated Artist Pays his Tribute to the Engraving of his Work in Colour,” in *The Home* 19, no. 7 (July 1938): 70.
Fig. 55   Advertisement for colour print of Heysen’s *Australian White Gums* and two works by Margaret Preston, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 26 (1928): unpaginated.
Fig. 56 Advertisement for “Australian Artists’ Xmas Cards,” *The Home* 12, no. 9 (September 1931): 20.
Fig. 57  John White, *Land of the Salt Bush*, 1898, oil on canvas, 55.8 x 82.5 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Elder Bequest Fund, 1898.

Fig. 58  George Lambert, *Barada Gorge*, 20 September 1918, 1919-21, oil, 72 x 92 cm, Australian War Memorial, Canberra.
Fig. 60 “Sixteen Pictures to Represent Australia at the Imperial Gallery of Art, London, in April,” *The Home* 9, no. 2 (February 1928): 18-19.
Fig. 61  Adrian Feint, cover design for ‘Recent Watercolours of Hans Heysen,’ 1928, *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 24 (1928): cover.
Fig. 62  Hans Heysen, *Mountain Peaks, Flinders Range*, 1927, watercolour, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 24 (1928): Plate No. 3.
Fig. 63  *Hans Heysen’s Recent Watercolours: Including Paintings of the Flinders Range*, Sydney: Grosvenor Galleries, 1928: catalogue cover, showing Hans Heysen, *A Skyline of the Far North*, 1927, watercolour.
Fig. 64  Hans Heysen, *The Guardian of Aroona*, watercolour, reproduced in *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 24 (1928): Plate No. 11. This watercolour was purchased by the NAGNSW in June 1928. However, in September 1929 the trustees returned the work in part payment for Heysen’s *The Hill of Creeping Shadow* (1929, AGNSW).

Fig. 65  Hans Heysen, *The Three Sisters of Aroona*, 1927, watercolour on paper, 40.6 x 54 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1930.
Fig. 66  Margaret Preston, *Rifle Birds*, 1928, reproduced on the cover of *The Home* 9, no. 7 (July 1928): cover.

Fig. 67  Donald MacKay, photographs of Central Australia, in *The Home* 9, no. 1 (January 1928): 24-25.
Fig. 68  Elioth Gruner, *On the Murrumbidgee*, 1929, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 123.2 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1930.
Fig. 69  Frederick Joyner, *Heysen in the Flinders*, 1927, bromide photograph, 22.3 x 32.2 cm (image), Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of Mrs Max Joyner, 1981.

Fig. 70  Frederick Joyner, *Foothills of Arkaba*, c. 1928-30, bromide photograph mounted on card, 15 x 26.1 cm (image), Art Gallery of South Australia, gift of Mrs Max Joyner, 1981.
Fig. 71  Hans Heysen, *The Land of the Oratunga*. 1932, watercolour on paper, 47.3 x 62.6 cm (sight size), Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australian Government Grant, 1937.
Fig. 72  Norman Carter, *Hans Heysen, Esq.*, 1938, oil on canvas, 93 x 77 cm, ML 242, State Library of New South Wales, presented by Norman Carter, 1962. © C. Evans.
Fig. 73  Nora Heysen, *Self Portrait*, 1938, oil on canvas laid on board, 39.5 x 29.5 cm (sight), Queensland Art Gallery, purchased 2011 with funds from Philip Bacon AM through the Queensland Art Gallery Foundation. © L. Klepac.
Fig. 74  Hans Heysen, Lionel Lindsay and Will Ashton at the opening of Lionel Lindsay's Adelaide exhibition at the RSASA Gallery, from *The Adelaide Chronicle*, 17 November 1938.
Fig. 75  Hans Heysen and Ursula Hayward at the opening of the *French Painting Today* exhibition at the National Gallery of South Australia, June 1953, unsourced newspaper clipping in the Kay Brownbill papers, PRG 1296/3, State Library of South Australia.
Fig. 76  Vincent van Gogh, *Portrait of Alexander Reid*, 1887, oil on board, 42 x 33 cm, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, Glasgow.

Fig. 77  Paul Cézanne, *The Card Players*, 1892-96, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm, Courtauld Gallery, London, gift from Samuel Courtauld, 1932.
Fig. 78  Stanley Spencer, *The Meeting*, 1933, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 61 cm, private collection.

NOTE: This image is included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping.  
https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives

Fig. 79  James Bateman, *The Harvest*, 1934, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 136 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, purchased 1934, Special Picture Fund.
Fig. 80  Stanley Anderson, *Gleaners*, c. 1932, tempera on canvas, 48.6 x 67.5 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Fig 81  Harry Epworth Allen, *A Derbyshire Well Blessing*, 1934, tempera on panel, 47.3 x 60 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.
Fig. 82  Arthur Murch, *Allen*, 1933, oil on canvas on hardboard, 48 x 39.7 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1933. © M. and J. Murch.

Fig. 83  Alexandre Iacovleff, *Fara Ali, Afdem*, 1928, pastel on paper, 75 x 55.5 cm, private collection. Image: Christie’s, London. *Important Russian Art*, 26 November 2012, Lot 154. Formerly owned by Hans Heysen.
NOTE: These images are included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping. https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives

Left: Fig. 84 Margaret Preston, *Banksia*, 1925, oil painting, “In the possession of Sydney Ure Smith, Esq.” in “Margaret Preston Number,” *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 22 (1927): Plate 21.

Right: Fig. 85 Margaret Preston, *Still Life*, 1926, oil painting, “In the possession of Elioth Gruner, Esq., Sydney,” in “Margaret Preston Number,” *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 22 (1927): Plate 8.

This painting was purchased by the NGSA from Gruner’s estate. It is now titled: *Flower Piece*, 1926, oil on canvas, 48.9 x 43.8 cm (sight size), Art Gallery of South Australia, Elder Bequest Fund, 1940.
Fig. 86  Matthew Smith, *Model Reclining*, 1933, oil on canvas, 54.3 x 65 cm, Manchester Art Gallery, purchased 1934.

Fig. 87  Paul Nash, *Kinetic Feature*, 1931, oil on canvas, 66 x 50.8 cm, Tate, London, presented by the Friends of the Tate Gallery, 1965.
NOTE: This image is included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping. https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives

Fig. 88  Karl Hofer, *Freundinnen*, 1923-24, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle, acquired 1924, confiscated in 1937, reacquired in 1947.

Fig. 89  Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Bauernmittag*, 1920, oil on canvas, 133 x 166 cm, private collection (formerly collection of the Hamburger Kunsthalle).
Fig. 90  Arthur Boyd, *Progression*, 1941, oil on composition board, 91.2 x 56 cm, Heide Museum of Modern Art, purchased from John and Sunday Reed, 1980. Reproduced with the permission of Bundanon Trust.

Fig. 91  William Dobell, *The Red Lady*, 1938, oil on canvas, 77 x 66.2 cm, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1977.
Fig. 92  Russell Drysdale, *Woman in a Landscape*, 1949, oil on composition board, 101 x 66.3 cm, Art Gallery of South Australia, South Australian Government Grant, 1949.

NOTE: This image is included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping.
https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives

Fig. 93  Sidney Nolan, *Inland Australia*, 1950, oil on hardboard, 122 x 152 cm, Tate, purchased 1951.

NOTE: This image is included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping.
https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives
Fig. 94  Hans Heysen, *Study for: Bald Hills of Rapid Bay*, 1938, pencil and wash, 25 x 36 cm, as reproduced in *Hans Heysen: Watercolours and Drawings*, Sydney: Legend Press, 1952: Plate 4.

Fig. 95  Albert Namatjira, *Mount Giles*, c. 1938, watercolour over pencil, 14.5 x 37.5 cm, National Gallery of Australia, gift of Gordon and Marilyn Darling, 2008. Formerly owned by Hans Heysen.
Fig. 96  The meeting to found the Australian Academy of Art, Canberra, 20 June 1937. Left to Right: Daphne Mayo, W. B. McInnes, Norman Carter, Hans Heysen, Sydney Ure Smith, R. H. Croll, Robert Gordon Menzies, Harold Herbert, Raynor Hoff, William Rowell, J. R. Eldershaw.

Fig. 97  Hans Heysen, *The Farmyard Gum*, 1936, watercolour and pencil on paper, 33 x 40.2 cm (sheet size), Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1938.
Fig. 98  Lionel Lindsay, *Addled Art*, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942, cover of the first edition.

Fig. 99  Hans Heysen, *In Brachina Gorge*, 1927, watercolour, as frontispiece for volume two of William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art* (1934).
Fig. 100 *Exhibition of Drawings by Hans Heysen*, Sydney: National Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1943: 4-5, showing Lionel Lindsay’s catalogue essay.

Fig. 101 Hans Heysen, *In the Aroona Valley*, 1940, charcoal, watercolour wash, pencil, 45.8 x 63.4 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Felton Bequest, 1943.
Fig. 102  Hans Heysen, *In the Flinders – Far North*, 1951, oil on canvas, 102 x 141 cm, National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1959.

NOTE: This image is included in the print copy of the thesis held in the University Archives and Recordkeeping.  
https://www.adelaide.edu.au/records/university-archives

Fig. 103  Lloyd Rees, *Sydney 1951*, 1951, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 121.9 cm, National Gallery of Australia.
Fig. 104  *The Charcoal Drawings and Studies of Hans Heysen*, Sydney: Gayfield Shaw’s Gallery, 1920, catalogue cover showing Heysen’s *Plough Horses*, charcoal.
Fig. 105  *Hans Heysen: Catalogue of Exhibition*, Adelaide: F. W. Preece, 1922, titlepage showing Heysen’s *Lifting the Harrow*, watercolour.

Fig. 106  *Catalogue of Oils & Water-colours by Hans Heysen*. Sydney: Farmers & Company, 1926. Showing Heysen’s *Milking Sheds*, watercolour, and an excerpt from Lionel Lindsay’s *Art in Australia* article of March 1926.
Fig. 107  “Preece’s – The rendezvous of lovers of Art and Literature,”  *The Home* 5, no. 5 (December 1924): 60.  Advertisement and detail.
Fig. 108  Hans Heysen, *The Track to the Farm*, 1926, oil on canvas, 55.3 x 62.5 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1926. The frame is a 4” swept ogee in the Louis XV revival style with composition ornaments, produced by S. A. Parker Ltd.
Fig. 109  Hans Heysen, *Zinnias and Fruit*, 1932, oil on canvas, 70.1 x 82.8 cm, Queensland Art Gallery, gift by public subscription 1934.

Fig. 110  Lionel Lindsay, *Ex libris, Harold J. H. Wright*, 1943, wood engraving, 10.3 x 9.1 cm (block), National Gallery of Victoria, gift of Mr Peter Lindsay, 1961.
© National Library of Australia.
Fig. 111  Photographer unknown, “Mr. and Mrs. Stefan Heysen photographed at the opening of the Heysen Gallery at Hahndorf,” in Lisette Kohlhagen, “Picturesque New Gallery in the Heysen Country,” *The Express*, 29 July 1949.

Fig. 112  Photographer unknown, James Wiencke in the Moreton Galleries, c. 1950s, 7609 James Wiencke Collection of Photographs, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.
Fig. 113  Hans Heysen, *The Camp on the Wonoka Creek, Flinders Ranges*, dated 1932 (not completed until 1957), watercolour, 54 x 72 cm, private collection.

Fig 114  Hans Heysen, *The Camp of Wonoka Creek, Flinders Ranges (near Hawker)*, 1938, oil on canvas, 59 x 74 cm, private collection.
Fig. 115  Hans Heysen, *Drought Sheep*, 1916-1921, watercolour and pencil on paper, 57.6 x 79 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1950.

Fig. 116  Hans Heysen, *Petrel Cove*, 1925, watercolour over pencil, 33.2 x 41 cm, National Gallery of Australia, the Oscar Paul Collection, gift of Henriette von Dallwitz and of Richard Paul in honour of his father, 1965.
Appendix I: Chronology of Key Events, 1903-1968

As this dissertation takes a thematic rather than chronological approach to Heysen’s career, key events are presented here in sequential order for greater clarity. This is not a comprehensive chronology of Heysen’s life and is primarily concerned with events which are discussed in this dissertation. Thus it complements rather than duplicates the chronologies included in North, Andrews, Speck and Klepac.¹

1903

29 September: Hans Heysen arrives back in Adelaide, following four years of art studies in Europe.

November: Heysen elected a Fellow of the South Australian Society of Arts.

1904

January: Alfred Felton bequeaths £189,000 to the National Gallery of Victoria.

January: Heysen establishes a studio in the Adelaide Steamship Company Building and announces plans for art classes.

18-21 May: Solo Exhibition of Heysen’s work, held in his studio in the Adelaide Steamship Company’s Building. Sales reached £23.

September: Purchase of The Coming Home by the NAGNSW for 150 guineas.

November: Purchase of Mystic Morn by NGSA for 150 guineas.

December: Heysen awarded the Wynne Prize, valued at £35, for Mystic Morn.

15 December: Heysen marries Selma Bartels.

1905

January: Hans and Sallie Heysen visit Sydney. They are introduced to local artists, including Lionel and Norman Lindsay, Julian Ashton and Norman Carter.

Early 1905: Heysen sends his oil painting *Interior of St. Marks, Venice*, to Gustave Barnes in London to submit to the Royal Academy of his behalf. However, the work was not selected for exhibition.

May: Second solo exhibition in his Adelaide Steamship Company’s Building studio. 104 works exhibited, including 57 monotypes. Achieves £29 in sales.

October: Heysen elected to the council of the SASA at its Annual General Meeting.

1906

16 August: Heysen gives a paper titled “Observations on Art,” at the monthly general meeting of the SASA.

December: Margaret McPherson and Bessie Davidson return to Adelaide after pursuing studies in Munich and Paris.

1907

January to April: Heysen travels and paints in New Zealand. Deposits works with the McGregor Wright Gallery in Wellington and H. Fisher and Son in Christchurch. Secures a commission from the Department of Tourist and Health Resorts, which agreed to fund most of his travel expenses in exchange for two oil paintings of scenic views.

Early 1907: McPherson and Davidson establish a joint studio on the top floor of the Adelaide Steamship Company Building.

April: While passing through Sydney, Heysen secures work as a freelance illustrator for *The Lone Hand* magazine.

April: Arthur Streeton’s solo exhibition at the Hibernian Hall, Melbourne. This achieves sales of £2000 and marks the start of an ‘art boom.’

17-29 July: Will Ashton’s *Exhibition of English, French and Australian Landscape and Marine Pictures* at the Guild Hall, Melbourne.

August: First exhibition of the reconstituted Society of Artists in Sydney.
**1908**

March: E. Phillips Fox’s solo exhibition at the Guild Hall, Melbourne.

April – July: The Heysen family visits Sydney. Heysen makes a painting trip to Narrabeen with Will Ashton and James F. Scott.

May: Heysen is introduced to E. Phillips Fox in Sydney.

May: The Board of Governors of the NGSA adopts the policy “that not more than three oils of water colour paintings by one artist be purchased.”

8-22 August: Heysen’s solo exhibition at the Guild Hall, Melbourne. Opened by the Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin. More than 136 works exhibited. Achieves over £750 in sales, including two works purchased by the NGV for 200 guineas.

November: Hans, Sallie and their two daughters move to a rented cottage in Hahndorf.

**1909**

March: Heysen resigns from the council of the SASA following his move to Hahndorf.

August: Heysen is awarded the Wynne Prize for *Summer* (1909, AGNSW).

November: H. P. Gill forced to retire as honorary curator of the NGSA.

**1910**

October: Heysen nominated, but not elected, as the SASA’s representative on the Board of Governors of the Library, Museum and Gallery.

October: Visit to Melbourne to see the Victorian Artists’ Society’s annual exhibition.

**1911**

August: Heysen and Nellie Melba meet during her visit to Adelaide.

November: Heysen in awarded the Wynne Prize for *Hauling Timber* (1908-1911, AGNSW).

1912

April: William Henry Gill resigns from Robertson and Moffat.

9-20 July: Heysen’s solo exhibition at the Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, under the management of W. H. Gill. 63 watercolours exhibited. Achieves £1,544-11-0 in sales.

2 August: Purchase of The Cedars, a thirty-six acre property in the Hahndorf district.

August: W. H. Gill opens a private gallery, the Fine Art Society, in Melbourne.

1913

February: Heysen’s stone studio at The Cedars in completed.

1914

February: John Connell donates a significant collection of furniture, decorative arts and pictures to the NGV. This includes three watercolours by Heysen. It is placed on public display in September.

June: Heysen visits Melbourne to attend the Australian Art Association’s exhibition.

4 August: Beginning of Australia’s involvement in the First World War, after the government pledges full support for Britain.

October: The War Precautions Act comes into effect.

October: Heysen and his home are placed under surveillance by the Mt. Barker police.

November: Heysen donates a watercolour to the Melbourne Savage Club to be sold by raffle with the proceeds donated to the Lord Mayor’s Patriotic Fund.

December: Heysen visits Melbourne and stays with Nellie Melba at Coombe Cottage, Coldstream.
10 December: Nellie Melba opens an exhibition of Arthur Streeton’s work at the Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne.

1915

4-13 March: Heysen’s solo exhibition at the Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, under the management of W. H. Gill. 84 works exhibited. Achieves £1086-15-0 in sales. Opened by Nellie Melba. *The Rainbow* is purchased by Sir John Winthrop Hackett for presentation to the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery. However, the NGV renge on their decision to purchase the large oil *In Sunset Haze*.

7 May: Sinking of the RMS Lusitania by a German U-boat.

12 May: Publication of the “Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages,” also known as the “Bryce Report.”

July: Walter Schmidt interned in Melbourne.

September: Heysen resigns from the Australian Art Association.

18 October: Death of Emanuel Phillips Fox.

December: Rudolf Schneider interned in the Holsworthy Internment Camp, Liverpool, NSW.

1916

April: Hermann Heinicke resigns as conductor and violin teacher at the Elder Conservatorium.

10 April: Death of Jesse Jewhurst Hilder.


27 May: Death of Harry Pelling Gill.

July: The Governor of Victoria, Sir Arthur and Lady Margaret Stanley visit The Cedars.


August: Heysen is contacted by the SASA, advising him that they have received repeated reports of him voicing disloyal sentiments.
October: Heysen resigns from the Royal Art Society of New South Wales.

October: First Conscription referendum defeated.


November: Heysen resigns from the SASA.

December: First issue of *Art in Australia* magazine published.

**1917**

April: Heysen visits Sydney and is introduced to Bertram Stevens, Elioth Gruner and Sydney Ure Smith.

June: Heysen declines to have his work included in a loan exhibition at the NAGNSW after taking offence at a request for a confirmation of his loyalty.

July: Board of NAGNSW decides to decline works “offered by persons of enemy origin” for their forthcoming loan exhibition.

September: Heysen donates £100 to the South Australian Wounded Solders’ Fund as part of Hahndorf’s Australia Day celebrations.

September-October: Heysen and his home are again placed under surveillance by the Mt. Barker police following anonymous accusations of disloyalty.

October: Heysen is invited to exhibit with the Society of Artists in Sydney.

November: Passing of the Nomenclature Act (1917), replacing South Australian place names of German origin.

December: Second Conscription referendum defeated.

**1918**

January: Nellie Melba appointed Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her wartime charity work.

April: The *Loan Exhibition of Australian Art* opens at the NAGNSW. Heysen is not amongst the 126 artists included.
November: Germany signs an armistice with the Allies.

1919

19-21 May: Auction sale of a significant portion of Professor Walter Baldwin Spencer’s collection in Melbourne. The sale includes 313 lots of fine and decorative art works, with the total sales amounting to £4500.

June: Signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

December: Rudolf Schneider released from Holsworthy, but must continue to report weekly to the police until July 1920.

1920

February: First issue of The Home magazine published.

March: Lionel Lindsay visits The Cedars for the first time to research his article for The Art of Hans Heysen (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920). This visit also corresponds with the Exhibition of Water-colours and Etchings by Lionel Lindsay at Preece’s Gallery, his first Adelaide solo exhibition.

November: Heysen is awarded the Wynne Prize for The Toilers (1920, AGSA).


December: Publication of The Art of Hans Heysen. Special Number of Art in Australia (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1920).

December: The War Precautions Act is repealed.

1921

March: George Lambert returns to Australia after twenty years living abroad.

June: Sydney Ure Smith elected president of the Society of Artists.

June: Art in Australia Ltd. formed as a publishing company.

7-25 June: The First Annual Exhibition of the Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society at the Education Department Gallery, Sydney. This includes two etchings by Heysen.
28 September – 11 October: George Coates and Dora Meeson Coates hold an exhibition of their paintings in the SASA Gallery, Adelaide. Hans Heysen purchases a watercolour by George Coates.

November: Hans Heysen serves as judge of the inaugural Melrose Prize for the best figure painting exhibited with the SASA, awarding the prize to May Grigg.


Lindsay Bernard Hall recommends the still life *Fruit* for purchase by the NGV, but Heysen instead sells the work privately in protest of Hall’s refusal to acknowledge him.

**1922**

January: Henri van Raalte arrives in Adelaide and commences work as curator of the NGSA.

6-23 September: Heysen’s solo exhibition at the Institute Building, Adelaide, under the management of Frederick and John Preece. The exhibition of 55 works is opened by Dame Nellie Melba. Achieves over £4000 in sales, reputedly a new record for a solo exhibition by an Australian artist.

November: Heysen is awarded the Wynne Prize for *The Quarry* (1922, AGNSW).

**1923**

April: Heysen travels to Melbourne to select works by Victorian artist for the *Exhibition of Australian Art* being sent to London.

May: Heysen travels to Sydney to select works by NSW artists for the *Exhibition of Australian Art*.


October: *Exhibition of Australian Art* opens at the Royal Academy, London.
1924

July – August: Lionel Lindsay and Sydney Ure Smith visit Adelaide for the city’s Artists’ Week and stay at The Cedars.

December: Heysen is awarded the Wynne Prize for Afternoon in Autumn (1924, AGNSW).

1925

24 June – 10 July: An Exhibition of Oil Paintings by Will Ashton Painted on his Recent Tour in Europe at the SASA Gallery, Adelaide. Heysen purchases Ashton’s painting Notre Dame, Paris (c.1924, private collection).

September: Henri van Raalte resigns as curator of the NGSA.

1926

March: Publication of Art in Australia, series 3, no. 15, the “Heysen Number.”

March: Lionel Lindsay departs for a lengthy visit to Europe, returning to Australia in October 1927.

5-15 May: Heysen’s first major Sydney solo exhibition, Oils and Watercolours by Hans Heysen at Farmer’s Exhibition Hall, under the management of Basil Burdett. 59 works exhibited. Achieves £3750 in sales.

August: Leslie Wilkie is appointed the curator of the NGSA. He continues in this position until his death in September 1935.


November: Heysen makes his first visit to the Flinders Ranges.

23 November: Heysen’s watercolour The Farm on the Hill (c.1922) sells for a record 425 guineas when sold at the auction of the W. A. Little Collection in Sydney.

December: Lionel Lindsay reappointed a trustee of the NAGNSW.
December: Heysen awarded the Wynne Prize for Farmyard, Frosty Morning (1926, whereabouts unknown).

1927

June: Heysen makes a second trip to the Flinders Ranges in the company of Frederick Joyner.

September: Sydney Ure Smith appointed a trustee of the NAGNSW.

December: Publication of Art in Australia, series 3, no. 22, the “Margaret Preston Number.”

1928

April: Heysen contributes an appreciative foreword for the catalogue of Lionel Lindsay: An Exhibition of Water-Colours Painted During his Recent European Tour at Preece’s Gallery, Adelaide.

June: Publication of Art in Australia, series 3, no. 24, “Recent Watercolours by Hans Heysen.”


October: Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Alexandre Iacovleff held at the Macquarie Galleries, Sydney. James McGregor purchases a pastel drawing on Heysen’s behalf.

November: James Stuart MacDonald appointed director of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.

November: Publication of Randolph Bedford’s Inland Australia: A Series of Photographs (Sydney: Art in Australia, 1928).

1929

February – March: Hans and Sallie Heysen visit Tasmania with Sydney Ure Smith and Hera Roberts.


June: Anna Pavlova visits Heysen at The Cedars.
October: Thea Proctor stays with the Heysen’s while *Thea Proctor’s Exhibition of Fan Designs, Paintings on Silk, Watercolours, Drawings, and Woodcuts* is held at the Argonaut Galleries, Adelaide. Hans Heysen contributes a brief foreword for the exhibition catalogue.

15-26 October: *Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Watercolours by Hans Heysen* at the Fine Art Society, Melbourne. 45 works exhibited. Achieves sales of about £850.

29 October: New York stock market crash, marking the beginning of the Great Depression.

1930

29 May: Death of George Washington Lambert.

15-31 July: *Exhibition of Oil Paintings and Watercolours by Hans Heysen* at the Grosvenor Galleries, Sydney. The exhibition features 34 works and achieves sales of around 600 guineas.

22 July: Opening of an *Exhibition of Loan Pictures* organised by the Queensland Art Fund, Brisbane. This includes paintings by Hans and Nora Heysen, submitted under the auspices of the Society of Artists. *A Mixed Bunch* (1930) by Nora Heysen is later purchased for the Queensland Art Gallery.

August: Publication of *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 33, “Lambert Memorial Number.”


1931

27 February – 19 March 1931: *Loan Exhibition of Works by Hans Heysen, 1898-1930* at the SASA’s Gallery, the Institute Building, Adelaide. 77 works exhibited. Opened by Mrs Lavington Bonython. 7d charged for admission, with half of the nett proceeds donated to the Queen’s Home, Rose Park.

March: Heysen is awarded the George Crouch Memorial Prize, valued at £100, in a competition organised by the Ballarat Art Gallery.
20 November 1931 – 20 January 1932: Loan Exhibition of the Works of Arthur Streeton at the NAGNSW.

1932

January: Heysen is awarded the Wynne Prize for 1931 for Red Gums of the Far North (1931, AGNSW).

8 – 24 March: Perth exhibition of Australian Art at Boans department store. The exhibition is under the management of John Brackenreg, held in association with the Society of Artists, Sydney and the Australian Art Association, Melbourne. It includes works by both Hans and Nora Heysen.

June: Publication of Art in Australia, series 3, no. 44, “Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen.”

21 July – 6 August: Exhibition of Oils, Water Colours and Drawings by Hans Heysen at the Grosvenor Galleries, Sydney. 49 works exhibited, with sales of about 287 guineas.

28 September: Heysen’s article “Our Art is Bright and so is its Future,” published by the Adelaide News.

26 October: An exhibition of Heysen’s work opens at Heindorff House, Brisbane, under the management of William Bustard. 23 works exhibited. Opened by the Lord Mayor, John William Greene.

21 December 1932 – 21 February 1933: Loan Exhibition of the Works of Elioth Gruner at the NAGNSW.

1933

January: Heysen is awarded the 1932 Wynne Prize by Brachina Gorge (1932, whereabouts unknown).

January: Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.

1-22 March: Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen at Newspaper House, Perth, under the management of John Brackenreg. 56 works exhibited, but only six are sold, realising a total of £344-18-6.

April – May: Heysen visits the Flinders Ranges with his son David. After visiting the Ranges at least once a year between 1926 and 1933, he will not visit again until 1947.
6-20 December: *Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Nora Heysen* at the SASA Galleries, Adelaide. This is Nora’s first solo exhibition and achieves nearly £600 in sales.

**1934**

March: Hans, Sallie and their four daughters depart for Europe.

May: The Heysen family arrive in London.

June: Hans, Sallie and Nora Heysen spent a week in Wales with Dr Shirley Jones; Heysen sees the *Unit One* exhibition at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

July: The Heysen family travel around Germany, visiting Hamburg, Berlin, Nuremberg, Wiesbaden and Cologne.

August: The Heysens briefly visit Bruges before returning to England.

19 August: Adolf Hitler abolishes the office of President and declares himself Führer, achieving the status of absolute dictator.

16-21 September: Hans and Sallie Heysen visit the Netherlands.

10 October: Hans, Sallie and three of their daughters depart Rotterdam for Australia. Nora Heysen remains in London to pursue her art studies.

October: Publication of William Moore’s *The Story of Australian Art* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934).

8 October – 15 December: *The Centenary Art Exhibition* is held at the Commonwealth Bank Chambers, Melbourne, in association with the centenary of Victoria. The exhibition features 287 works by 118 artists, including nine by Heysen.

November: Fairfax & Sons Ltd. purchase Art in Australia Ltd.

**1935**

14 January: Death of William Blamire Young.

14 February: Death of Lindsay Bernard Hall in London.
28 March – 26 May: *Loan Exhibition of Works by Hans Heysen* at the NAGNSW, Sydney. 98 works exhibited.

May: Hans and Sallie Heysen visit Sydney and are introduced to Harold Cazneaux.

June: *An Exhibition of Water-Colours of Australian Landscapes by Hans Heysen* at P. & D. Colnaghi & Co., London. 16 of the 36 works exhibited are sold, realising about £475 sterling.

October: Harold Cazneaux stays at The Cedars.

September of October: Dorrit Black returns to Adelaide.

December: Passing of the Nomenclature Act (1935) restoring the place names of Klemzig, Hahndorf and Lobethal.

**1936**

February: Robert Gordon Menzies, the Attorney-General, is granted the approval of Federal Cabinet to seek a Royal Charter for the proposed Australian Academy of Art.

May: Louis McCubbin commences work as director of the NGSA.

July: Heysen’s specially-commissioned large oil painting *White Gums* (1936) is installed in the first class music room of the passenger liner TSMV Manunda.

September: James S. MacDonald appointed as director of the NGV.

26 October – 7 November: Heysen’s solo exhibition at the Victorian Artists’ Gallery, Melbourne, under the management of Harry Fern. More than 30 watercolours exhibited. Achieves sales of around 880 guineas.

**1937**

January: Will Ashton appointed as director of the NAGNSW.

March: Heysen accepts a foundation membership of the proposed Australian Academy of Art.

19 June: Heysen represents South Australia at a conference held in Canberra responsible for founding the Australian Academy of Art.
July: *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) exhibition opens in Munich.

July: Heysen purchases a 500 acre rural property at Kalangadoo, South Australia, for his son David to farm. He also spends several hundred pounds of stock and farm equipment.

July: Heysen visits an exhibition of paintings by Rex Batterbee at the RSASA Gallery, which includes three watercolours by Albert Namatjira. Later in 1937 Heysen begins corresponding with Pastor Friedrich Wilhelm Albrecht regarding Namatjira’s work.

August: Publication of *Art in Australia*, series 3, no. 68, “Drawing and Drawing in Australia.”

17 August: The opening of the Melrose Wing of the NGSA, a significant extension to the gallery building.

14-30 October: *Hans Heysen: Exhibition of Paintings* at the RSASA Gallery, Adelaide, under the management of M. H. Bayly. 65 works are exhibited, realising sales of over 2000 guineas.

October: Nora Heysen returns to Australia, after three years in Britain.

1938

27 January – 25 April: The exhibition *150 Years of Australian Art* is held at the NAGNSW in association with the 1938 Sesquicentennial celebrations. The exhibition features 826 artworks, including 16 pictures by Heysen.

April: First exhibition of the Australian Academy of Art, Sydney.

June: Contemporary Art Society established in Melbourne.

July: *Exhibition of Oils, Watercolours and Lino Cuts by Dorrit Black* opens at the RSASA Gallery, one of the first exhibitions of modern art in Adelaide.

October: *The Art of Hans Heysen: An Exhibition of Oils and Watercolours* at David Jones’ Galleries, Sydney, under the management of John Brackenreg. 47 works exhibited with sales exceeding £1000.

21 October: Josephine Williams (nee Heysen), Hans and Sallie’s eldest daughter, dies from septicaemia in a private hospital at Mentone, Victoria, following the birth of her daughter by caesarean section a week earlier. The daughter is also
named Josephine, but known as Jill. She is raised by Hans and Sallie Heysen, who formally adopt their granddaughter in 1944.

November: Sydney Ure Smith forced to retire as editor of *Art in Australia* and *The Home*.

**1939**

January: Nora Heysen is awarded the 1938 Archibald Prize for her portrait of *Madame Elink Schuurman*, becoming the first woman to receive the award.

February: Sydney Ure Smith’s new publishing company Ure Smith Pty Ltd. is established.

April: Robert Menzies become Prime Minister.

June: First exhibition of the Contemporary Art Society, opens at the NGV, Melbourne.

June or July: John Brackenreg establishes the Legend Press company.

21 August – 17 September: *Exhibition of French and British Contemporary Art* opens at the NGSA, before touring to Melbourne (16 October – 1 November) and Sydney (20 November – 16 December).

3 September: Britain and France declare war on Germany. Menzies declares Australia is also at war.

17 October: Death of Elioth Gruner.

November: A solo exhibition of Albert Namatjira’s work is held at the RSASA Gallery, Adelaide. Heysen purchases the watercolour *Mount Giles* (c.1938-39, NGA) for his collection.

**1940**

January: Heysen is appointed to the inaugural board of the NGSA. He retains this position until his death.

*circa* April: After 28 years of operation, W. H. Gill closes the Fine Art Society, Melbourne.

August: A Sydney branch of the Contemporary Art Society is established.

16 October: Lionel Lindsay writes a letter to the editor of the Sydney Morning Herald condemning the Contemporary Art Society’s exhibition and arguing that “modernism was organised in Paris by the Jew dealers.”

1941

January: Lionel Lindsay receives a knighthood in the New Year’s honours.

October: The Art of Australia, 1788-1941 exhibition commences its tour of art galleries in the United States and Canada. It features 134 works, including four pictures by Heysen.

November: The Northern Division of the Australian Academy of Art recommends “that the Academy goes into recess for the duration of the war.” However, the members of the Southern Division wish to persist with the endeavour. The Academy continues as a Melbourne-based entity, holding four further exhibitions between 1943 and 1946.

December: Australia declares war on Japan. Conscription is introduced.

1942

March: Daryl Lindsay appointed as director of the NGV.

19 March – 16 April: Margaret Preston and William Dobell Loan Exhibition at the NAGNSW.

June: Final issue of Art in Australia published.

June: A collection of works from Hans Heysen’s private collection is placed on display at the NGSA.

July: Hans Heysen loans a collection of 56 of his drawings to the NGSA.

July: First Exposition: Royal S.A. Society of Arts Associate Contemporary Group exhibition held in the RSASA Gallery.

September: Final issue of The Home published.

December: Contemporary Art Society’s Anti-Fascist Exhibition, at the Athenaeum Gallery, Melbourne.
1943

January: Contemporary Art Society’s *Anti-Fascist Exhibition* shown at the Society of Arts Gallery, Adelaide. The NGSA purchase three works from this exhibition, becoming the first state gallery to acquire works from the CAS.

February: Nora Heysen and Stella Bowen are the first Australian women appointed as official war artists.

June: Publication of Lionel Lindsay’s *Addled Art* (dated 1942).

August – October: *Exhibition of Drawings by Hans Heysen* at the NAGNSW. 57 works exhibited.

1 September: Death of Sir Arthur Streeton.

18 October: Nora Heysen commences in her position as an official war artist.

November: Will Ashton resigns as director of the NAGNSW, but remains in the role until April 1944.

1944

January: The 1943 Archibald Prize is awarded to William Dobell for his portrait of Joshua Smith.

February: The *Exhibition of Drawings by Hans Heysen* is displayed at the NGV.

June: Will Ashton is appointed the director of the new David Jones Art Gallery in the firm’s Castlereagh Street store. He remains in this position until October 1947.

July: Hans Heysen loans his collection of reproductions of etchings by Rembrandt to the NGSA.

November: Equity Court rules that Dobell’s portrait was eligible for the Archibald Prize, dismissing a suit brought by Mary Edwards and Joseph Wolinski against the trustees of the NAGNSW.

1945

January: Hans Heysen is made an OBE (Officer of the Order of the British Empire) in the New Year’s honours.
11 February: Death of Harold Herbert.

May: War in Europe officially ends.

July: Hal Missingham appointed as the director of the NAGNSW.

15 August: Japanese surrender. World War II ends.


December: Death of Frederick Joyner.

1946

June: The John Martin’s Gallery opens in Adelaide, with Stefan Heysen as its inaugural director. He remains in this role until early 1949.

June and July: Bernard Smith’s article “The Fascist Mentality in Australian Art and Criticism,” is published in the *Communist Review*, published under the pseudonym “Goya.”

1947

March – April: Heysen visits the Flinders Ranges with his son David. This is his first visit since 1933.

1948

23 January: Death of Howard Hinton in Sydney.

15 April – 23 May: The *Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings by Henry Moore* is shown at the NGSA.

July: Douglas Dundas elected the President of the Society of Artists, following the resignation of Sydney Ure Smith due to ill health.

October 1948 – January 1949: Hans Heysen loans his collection of David Lucas mezzotints after John Constable to the NGSA.
1949

March – April: Heysen makes his final visit to the Flinders Ranges, again in the company of David Heysen.

May: Russell Drysdale’s *Woman in a Landscape* is controversially awarded the 1949 Melrose Prize. The judges were Hans Heysen, Professor Joseph Burke and Louis McCubbin. Drysdale’s painting is also purchased for the NGSA.

22 July: The opening of the Heysen Gallery in Hahndorf, run by Stefan Heysen.

11 October: Death of Sydney Ure Smith.


December: The Heysen Gallery stages a small exhibition of Hans Heysen’s drawings and watercolours, achieving sales of between £400-500.

December: Lionel Lindsay resigns as a trustee of the NAGNSW.

1950


July: James Wieneke acquires the Moreton Galleries, Brisbane. Between 1952 and 1963 the gallery handles Heysen’s work.

13-24 November: The first exhibition of the Fellowship of Australian Artists is held at Tye’s Gallery, Melbourne. It includes one painting by Hans Heysen.

1951

3 January: Death of Harold Septimus Power.

February: Robert Campbell appointed as director of the NGSA.

March – December: The *Jubilee Exhibition of Australian Art* tours to galleries throughout Australia, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Federation. It features 156 works, including two watercolours by Heysen.
July: Heysen, Ivor Francis and Robert Campbell select paintings for South Australia’s entries in the Jubilee Open Art Competition. They choose works by Jeffrey Smart, Jacqueline Hick and Max Ragless.

August: The Commonwealth Jubilee Art Prize is awarded to Lloyd Rees’s painting *Sydney 1951* (1951, NGA). Heysen had painted the large oil *In the Flinders – Far North* (1951, NGA) as his entry for this invitational competition.


November: The Heysen Gallery stages an exhibition of 26 oil paintings by Nora Heysen.

1952

19-29 March: *Hans Heysen, 1902-1952* exhibition at David Jones’ Art Gallery, Sydney. 44 works exhibited, of which 14 are for sale.

April or May: The Commonwealth Government purchases Heysen’s *In the Flinders – Far North* (1951, NGA) to display in the Australian Embassy in Paris. The sale is finalised after James McGregor directly approaches Robert Menzies about the matter.


1953

April: Ursula Hayward becomes the first woman appointed a trustee of the NGSA.

June: The Heysen Gallery stages an exhibition of Hans Heysen’s work. Around this time Stefan Heysen confesses to his father that the gallery has not been profitable and that he has accumulated significant debts.

1956

John Brackenreg opens the Artlovers Gallery in Artarmon, Sydney.
1957

*circa* July: Heysen is awarded the First Prize for a Watercolour (£100) in the inaugural Maude Vizard-Wholohan Art Prize for his work *Hills of Rapid Bay* (1957, AGSA).

1959

12 June: Heysen receives a knighthood in the Queen’s Birthday honours.

1960

13-26 March: *An Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Water Colours and Drawings by Sir Hans Heysen* is held at the Hahndorf Gallery as part of the inaugural Adelaide Festival of Arts. The non-commercial exhibition is organised by Walter Wotzke and features 25 works by Heysen. It is opened by Sir Richard Boyer, the chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

21 March 1960: *Exhibition of Watercolours by Sir Hans Heysen* opens at the Moreton Galleries, Brisbane.

1961

4-12 March: The *Loan Exhibition of Works 1895-1960 by Hans Heysen and Contemporary Art Display*, is held at Millicent, organised by David Heysen as part of the South Eastern Festival of Arts. The exhibition features 37 works by Heysen lent by the Heysen family and other private collectors, together with 25 works by other South Australian artists.

22 May: Death of Sir Lionel Lindsay in Sydney.

1962

23 May: Death of Lady Selma Heysen at the age of 83.

1963

4-16 March: *Exhibition of Drawing and Water Colours by Sir Hans Heysen* at the Moreton Galleries, Brisbane.

April: The *Exhibition of Paintings and Drawing by Sir Hans Heysen and Nora Heysen* at the City of Hamilton Art Gallery. The venture is organised by David Heysen and features 18 works by Hans and 12 by Nora.
1 September: Death of Sir John William (Will) Ashton in Sydney.

1966

9-30 March: *Hans Heysen: Retrospective Exhibition 1901-1965* is staged at the John Martins Art Gallery as part of the Adelaide Festival of Arts. This non-commercial exhibition is curated by David Dridan and features 94 works by Heysen.

1967

David Heysen starts producing colour prints of his father’s work.

8 October: The exhibition *Historic Hahndorf* opens at the Hahndorf Academy, featuring 114 works by Heysen, fifteen of which are for sale. It is arranged by David Heysen and Walter Duncan. Dr. J. F. Ritter, the German Ambassador, Canberra, opens the exhibition, which also marks Heysen’s 90th birthday.

1968

2 July: Death of Sir Hans Heysen in the Mt Barker Hospital at the age of 90.
Appendix II: Works by Hans Heysen acquired by Public Collections 1904-1915

The figure numbers supplied in square brackets refer to the “Images” section of this dissertation.

National Gallery of South Australia

*Mystic Morn*, 1904, oil on canvas, 153 x 215 cm
Elder Bequest Fund, 1904. [Fig. 4]

*The River Path*, 1904-05, monotype printed in brown ink on paper, 20.6 x 30.8 cm
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1905.

*A Corner of Rouen*, c.1905, monotype printed in brown ink on paper, 23.8 x 16.4 cm (image)
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1905.

*A Pastoral*, 1907, oil on canvas, 126.6 x 154 cm
Elder Bequest Fund, 1907.

*Red Gold*, 1913, oil on canvas, 129.5 x 174.5 cm
Gift of the Right Honourable Sir Charles Booth, 1913. [Fig. 14]

School of Design, Painting and Technical Arts, Adelaide

*Zinnias*, c.1908, oil, (whereabouts unknown)
Purchased on Suspense Account, 1908.1

Port Adelaide Art Gallery

*The Hay Wagon*, (whereabouts unknown)
Purchased 1910.2

---

1 The decision to purchase this work was made by the Fine Arts Committee of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery.

**National Art Gallery of New South Wales**

_The Coming Home_, 1904, oil on canvas, 106.4 x 184.5 cm (stretcher)
Purchased 1904.

_Summer_, 1909, watercolour and pencil on ivory wove paper, 56.5 x 78.4 cm (sheet)
Purchased 1909. [Fig. 9]

_Hauling Timber_, 1908-11, oil on canvas, 102 x 135 cm (stretcher)
Purchased 1911. [Fig. 10]

**National Gallery of Victoria**

_Sunshine and Shadow_, 1904-05, oil on canvas, 115.6 x 178.8 cm
Felton Bequest, 1906. [Fig. 5]

_Midsummer Morning_, 1908, watercolour over pencil, 56 x 76.6 cm (sheet)
Felton Bequest, 1908. [Fig. 8]

_A Lord of the Bush_, 1908, oil on canvas, 135.4 x 105.3 cm
Felton Bequest, 1908.

_Silver and Grey_, 1910, watercolour over pencil, 31.2 x 40 cm (image)

_The Pomp of Parting Day_, 1912, watercolour over pencil, 47.6 x 61.6 cm (image)
Gift of John H. Connell, 1914. [Fig. 13]

_A Summer’s Day_, 1912, watercolour over pencil, 54.6 x 73.6 cm (image)

**Geelong Art Gallery**

_The Bush Track_, 1912, watercolour, 38.2 x 31 cm (sight size)
Purchased 1913.

_Gums in Morning Light_, watercolour, (dimensions unknown)
Purchased 1913; Stolen 1982.³

---

Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery

*The Rainbow*, 1914, oil on canvas, 71.1 x 91.5 cm.
Gift of Sir John Winthrop Hackett, 1915.

National Art Gallery of Tasmania (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery).

*Late Midsummer Afternoon*, 1909, pencil and watercolour on paper mounted on cardboard, 28.5 x 36.8 cm.
Purchased by Public Subscription, 1911.⁴

⁴ The Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery has this work catalogued as “Presented by subscribers, 1934.” However, both Heysen’s cashbook and contemporary newspaper reports demonstrate it was acquired in 1911. See, “Mr. Hans Heysen’s Picture,” *The Mercury* (Hobart), 26 August 1911; “Picture for the Museum,” *Daily Post* (Hobart), 26 August 1911; Hans Heysen, Cashbook 1902-1923, The Cedars.
Appendix III: Works by Hans Heysen included in Group Exhibitions, 1899-1921

Where works are described as “illustrated,” this refers to reproductions in the original exhibition catalogues. The figure numbers supplied in square brackets refer to pictures reproduced in the “Images” section of this dissertation. In instances where the same work was exhibited on multiple occasions, the figure number is only provided in relation to the first exhibition.

1899

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 13 July - 5 August 1899.

15. Gums 3-10-0
39. Botanical Park 2-10-0
42. Church at Mount Barker 3-10-0
43. Creek in the Woods 10-10-0
92. Gums in Sunlight 3-10-0
100. In an Old Garden 10-10-0
112. Gums 3-0-0

South Australian Society of Arts, Second Federal Exhibition, 10 November - 9 December 1899.

H. Heysen exhibiting as member of Adelaide Easel Club.¹

111. Freesias 10-10-0
112. Study of a Head 30-0-0
128. Dunn's Old Mill, Mount Barker 6-6-0

1901

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, opened 4 July 1901.

56. Rocky View 50-0-0

¹ The Adelaide Easel Club was a society founded by a group of artists disaffected with the SASA in 1892. They amalgamated with the SASA in 1901.
60. Autumn 80-0-0

1902

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, opened 24 July 1902.²

The Dunes³ 50-0-0
Meadow Sweet 50-0-0

South Australian Society of Arts, Fifth Federal Exhibition, 7-29 November 1902.

28. Blue Bells 50-0-0
35. A Scene in Paris 50-0-0

1903  – No works included in group exhibitions.

1904

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, opened 24 June 1904.

2. Santa Maria Della Saluta, Venice 8-0-0
19. Twilight Effects, Holland 9-0-0
23. The Cloud [unpriced]
28. Dutch Interior [unpriced]
34. The Cloud – Holland 3-10-0
41. The Coming Home 150-0-0
71. Coast of Capri 40-0-0
73. In Luxenburg [sic] Gardens, Paris 4-4-0
74. Glimpses of Holland, Lent by McDiarmid, Esq.
76. The Windmill 3-10-0
101. A Bit of Old Paris 6-0-0
105. A Study (Pencil) 4-4-0

² No catalogue of this exhibition has been traced.
³ This Dutch landscape had been exhibited in the conservative ‘Old’ Salon in 1901 under the title Les pins de marais [The marshland pines]. Andrews, Hans Heysen, 32.
Victorian Artists’ Society, Winter Exhibition, opened 9 July 1904.

12. An Australian Spring Morning 15-0-0
88. A Bit of Old Rouen 5-0-0
106. A Venetian Courtyard 15-10-0

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 5 September 1904.

Oil Paintings:
4. A Dutch Interior 20 guineas
7. Blue Bells, Springtime, Scotland 50 gns
34. Interior of St. Mark’s, Venice 100 gns [Cf. Fig. 2]
42. “An Idyll of the Southern Sea” 80 gns
46. “Mystic Morn” 150 gns [illustrated p.10] [Fig. 4]
80. The Coming Home⁴ 150 gns

Watercolours:
195. “Santa Maria della Salute” Venice 8 gns
232. “A Venetian Wellhead and Gothic Door” 15 gns

Black and White:
267. Bit of Old Paris 8 gns
282. Pencil Study 5 gns

South Australian Society of Arts, Seventh Federal Exhibition, 12 November - 3 December 1904.

37. Mystic Morn⁵ 157-10-0 [illustrated, b&w]
57. Saplings 125-0-0
116. Interior of St. Mark's, Venice 100-0-0

1905

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 22 June - 15 July 1905.

16. The Brook 10-10-0
35. Sunshine and Shadow 157-10-0 [illustrated, b&w] [Fig. 5]
53. Poplars 6-6-0

⁴ Purchased by the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.
⁵ Purchased by the National Gallery of South Australia, from the Elder Bequest Fund.
62. River Poplars 5-0-0
64. The River (Monotype) 4-10-0
65. Australian Landscape 5-5-0
138. Gums 8-8-0
139. Saplings 15-15-0

Victorian Artists’ Society, Winter Exhibition, opened 14 July 1905.

250. A Dutch Interior 21-0-0
253. Saplings 100-0-0

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 26 August 1905.

Oil Paintings:
3. Morning Sunshine 50 guineas
23. In an Old Garden 25 gns
50. The Picnic 75 gns
54. Sunshine and Shadow 150 gns
75. Poplars 6 gns

Watercolours:
177. “The Brook” 10 gns
237. Saplings 15 gns

Black and White:
298. Moonrise (Monotype) 5 gns
327. River Poplars (Monotype) 5 gns

South Australian Society of Arts, Eighth Federal Exhibition, 10 November - 2 December 1905.

6. Sunlight 8-8-0
30. The Picnic 80-0-0 [illustrated, b&w]
51. Pines (Monotype) 5-5-0
1906

Australian Natives’ Association, Australian Manufacturers and Products Exhibition, Melbourne, 27 January - 17 February 1906.\(^6\)

Sunshine and Shadow\(^7\)
Pines\(^8\)

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 22 June - 14 July 1906.

6. A Hillside (Pastel) 10-10-0
80. The Pool 10-10-0
83. Moonlight 5-5-0
86. The Valley 10-10-0
92. The Railway Station 10-10-0 [illustrated, b&w]
97. Study of a Cottage, Hahndorf 8-8-0

Victorian Artists’ Society, Annual Exhibition, opened 13 July 1906.

152. Landscape 10-10-0
153. Morning Mist in Sunshine 80-0-0 [illustrated]

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 27 August 1906.

Oil Paintings:
35. A Pastoral 50 guineas [illustrated, p.14]
49. Saplings 81 gns
53. A Venetian Court Yard 30 gns

Watercolours:
142. The Pool 10 gns
150. “Moonlight” 6 gns
210. The Valley 10 gns
222. Pines 5 gns
257. Study of a Cottage (Hahndorf, S.A.) 8 gns

---

\(^6\) No catalogue for this exhibition has been traced.
\(^7\) Purchased by the Felton Bequest, National Gallery of Victoria, for 150 guineas.
\(^8\) This was one of seven art works purchased by the Governor-General, Lord Northcote. *Age* (Melbourne), 12 February 1906.
Black and White:

264. “Wind-blown” 5 gns
286. The Mill Stream (Monotype) 4 gns

New Zealand International Exhibition, Christchurch, Colonial Art Section, 1 November 1906 - 15 April 1907.

195. Saplings 85-0-0
207. Interior of St. Mark’s 100-0-0
212. A Summer's Day 100-0-0
214. Pastoral 52-10-0

South Australian Society of Arts, Ninth Federal Exhibition, 9 November – 1 December 1906.

32. Morning Sunshine 84-0-0
46. Corner of Rouen, France (Monotype) 5-5-0
53. A Summer's Day 100-0-0 [illustrated, b&w]

1907

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 13 June - 6 July 1907.

42. “The Sentinel of MacKinnon’s [sic] Pass” 10-10-0
43. In the Routeburn Valley, Sunrise 10-10-0
46. A Mountain Torrent 10-10-0
47. Poppies 15-15-0
48. Gathering Gloom, Mount Earnslaw 10-10-0
49. Evelyn Glacier, Routeburn Valley 10-10-0
62. A Summer’s Day 84-0-0
72. Sunrise and Mist 84-0-0
109. The Sandcart [sic] 8-8-0
181. After the Storm (Monotype) 4-10-0

9 Heysen is listed as a New South Wales artist.
Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 26 August 1907.

Oil Paintings:
21. Poppies 15 guineas
25. A Summer's Day 75 gns
31. Poplars 6 gns
47. The Sandcart [sic] 8 gns

Watercolours:
102. Across the River 5 gns
107. In the Routebura [sic] Valley, N.Z. 10 gns
109. "San Gimignano," Italy 10 gns
137. Gathering Gloom, Mt. Earnslaw, N.Z. 10 gns
160. Under the Pines 8 gns
168. A Mountain Torrent 10 gns

Monotypes:
269. After the Storm 5 gns
274. A Corner of the Rouen [sic] 3 gns

South Australian Society of Arts, Tenth Federal Exhibition, 8-30 November 1907.

25. A Pastoral\textsuperscript{10} 157-10-0 [illustrated, b&w]
45. Evening 157-10-0
85. The Creek 10-0-0
134. A Study 1-1-0
135. A Study 1-1-0
137. A Study 1-1-0
140. A Study 1-1-0
143. A Study 1-1-0

1908

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 13 April - 9 May 1908.

8. Twilight 8-8-0
17. Santa Maria Della Salute, Venice 5-5-0
18. The Fountain 8-8-0

\textsuperscript{10} Purchased by the National Art Gallery of South Australia (Elder Bequest Fund) for the reduced price of 125 guineas.
20. Autumn 6-6-0
23. Evelyn Glacier, Routeburn Valley, N.Z. 10-10-0
26. Cottage, Hahndorf 6-6-0
33. Haystacks 8-8-0
43. Moonlight 31-10-0
102. The Way Home 78-10-0 [illustrated, b&w]
109. Carnations 15-15-0
119a. On the Grande [sic] Canal, Venice (Pen and Ink) 5-5-0
126. The Marsh 5-5-0

Society of Artists, Spring Exhibition, opened 15 October 1908.

45. Timber Hauling11 150 guineas
46. “Looking Over the Blue Waters” 10 gns
47. Sun Bathers 10 gns

South Australian Society of Arts, Eleventh Federal Exhibition, 9 November - 5 December, 1908.

53. Zinnias12 26-10-0
133. Evening Glow, Sydney Harbour 5-5-0
157. A Glimpse of Sydney Harbour 12-12-0
158. Mosman Bay 8-8-0
159. The Morning Rest 21-0-0 [illustrated, b&w]
160. Sydney Harbour from Mosman 12-12-0

1909


14. Twilight 21-0-0
35. Movement of Light 31-10-0
36. Late Afternoon 21-0-0

11 Subsequently partially repainted and exhibited under the new title of Hauling Timber in 1911.
12 Purchased for £21 for the School of Design, Painting and Technical Arts, “for their little collection of pictures – as examples to pupils.” Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, [annotated 8 November 1907, actually 1908], LF Papers. The present whereabouts of this work is unknown.
South Australian Society of Arts, Twelfth Federal Exhibition, 9 November - 4 December 1909.

8. The Station, Morning 21-0-0
11. Twilight 21-0-0
12. In Sunset Haze[13] 200-0-0 [illustrated, b&w] [Fig. 11]
15. The After Glow 21-0-0
16. Late Afternoon 21-0-0

1910

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 15 April - 7 May 1910.

24. The Mill 15-15-0
25. The Hay Waggon [sic] 21-0-0 [illustrated, b&w]
26. The Cottage 15-15-0

Victorian Artists’ Society, Annual Exhibition, opened 19 October 1910.

44. In Sunset Haze [unpriced] Lent by Prof. Baldwin Spencer.
56. Thrashing Peas [sic] [unpriced] Lent by His Excellency Sir Thomas Gibson-Carmichael.

1911

Art Society of Tasmania, Annual Exhibition, 22 March - 8 April 1911.[14]

The Mill
“a portion of the interior of St. Mark’s, Venice” (No. 2)
“the wild mountain scenery of New Zealand” (No. 4)
A Midsummer Afternoon[15] (No. 5)
A Golden Glow
Station

[13] This watercolour was actually loaned by Professor Walter Baldwin Spencer. As all works in the exhibition were required to be for sale, Heysen submitted it with an expensive price to discourage purchasers.
South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, 7-29 April 1911.

1. A Study (Pastel) [unpriced]
2. A Study (Pastel) [unpriced]
3. Evening Glow [unpriced]
4. Watercolour [unpriced]
5. A Study (Pastel) [unpriced]
6. Landscape $^{16}$ [unpriced] [illustrated, b&w] [Fig. 10]

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 28 August 1911.

Oil Paintings:
22. “Hauling Timber” $^{17}$ 200 gns

Watercolours:
124. Morning Mist [unpriced]
125. “The Sentinel” [unpriced]
126. “In Springtime” [unpriced]
127. “A Summer Evening” [unpriced]
128. “Landscape” [unpriced]
129. “Midsummer” [unpriced]
130. “Evening” [unpriced]

South Australian Society of Arts, Federal Exhibition, Fourteenth Federal Exhibition, 17 November - 9 December 1911.

23. Morning Mist [unpriced]
24. Midsummer [unpriced] [illustrated]
27. Evening [unpriced]
28. Watercolor [unpriced]
29. In Springtime [unpriced]
30. The Sentinel [unpriced]

$^{16}$ This work is better known as Hauling Timber.
$^{17}$ Purchased by the National Art Gallery of New South Wales for £200 and awarded the Wynne Prize for 1911. It had previously been exhibited as Timber Hauling in 1908 before being repainted.
1912


1. Mid Morning 40-0-0
2. Springtime 40-0-0
3. A Spring Day in the Bush 40-0-0
4. Blue Gums 40-0-0

1913

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 30 August 1913.

Watercolours:
103. In the Ranges 120 guineas
104. Summer Evening [unpriced]
105. Mist and Morning Sunshine [unpriced]
106. The Threshing Floor 60 gns

South Australian Society of Arts, Sixteenth Federal Exhibition, 15 November - 6 December 1913.

65. Morning Mist [unpriced]
66. Summer [unpriced]
68. In the Ranges 126-0-0
69. The Threshing Floor 63-0-0
96. Red-Gold\textsuperscript{18} 315-0-0 [illustrated] [Fig. 14]
102. Gums in Morning Light 210-0-0

\textsuperscript{18} Purchased for £250 with funds donated by the Right Hon. Charles Booth and gifted to the National Gallery of South Australia.
1914

Australian Art Association, Second Exhibition of Work by Members, opened 5 June 1914.

1. Bronze Wings  Oil  200 guineas
2. In the Ranges  Watercolour  120 gns
3. Threshing Peas  Watercolour  70 gns
4. An Australian Summer Day  Watercolour  Lent by the Hon. G. Swinburne.
5. Morning Light and Mist  Watercolour  Lent by the Hon. G. Swinburne.

South Australian Society of Arts, Seventeenth Federal Exhibition, 14 November - 5 December 1914.

59. In Sunset Haze  315-0-0  [illustrated]  [Fig. 26]

Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition, opened 16 November 1914.

Oil Paintings:
83. Sunshine and Shower  100 guineas
90. White Gums  300 gns
91. Bronze Wings  200 gns

1915

Australian Artists’ War Fund Exhibition, Sydney, opened 9 March 1915.


Australian Artists’ Association, [Subscription art union in support of the Red Cross], Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, opened 25 March 1915.\(^{19}\)

[Two works]\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) No catalogue for this exhibition has been traced.

\(^{20}\) Heysen asked W. H. Gill, who was managing his 1915 Melbourne solo exhibition to please reserve two watercolours, No. 47. *Young Gums in Sunlight* and No. 53. *Turkeys* “for the A.A.A.
1916


55. The Dress Parade Not for Sale.
56. Harvest Not for Sale.
57. Pastoral Not for Sale.
58. Morning in the Hills Not for Sale.
59. Choristers Not for Sale.
60. A Summer Evening Not for Sale.
61. Morning Mist Not for Sale.

The Fine Art Society, Exhibition of Water Colors and Etchings, Fine Art Society’s Room, Melbourne, 7-23 December [1916].

41. Into the Light [watercolour] 35 gns.
42. The Road [watercolour] 40 gns.
43. The Wood Carters [watercolour] 40 gns.
44. A Murray River Pastoral [watercolour] 35 gns.
46. Midday Rest [pastel] 30 gns.
47. The Hay Stacks [pastel] 25 gns.
49. Landscape [drawing] 10 gns.

Patriotic Exhibition … should either of these be sold I leave the choice of a substitute to you.”
Heysen to W. H. Gill, [late March 1915], WHG Papers.
1917


All Heysen’s works were “Original Black and White Drawings.”

37. Moonlight 8-8-0
38. Sheep 21-0-0
39. Australian Landscape 10-10-0
40. The Forest (kindly lent by Madame Melba) [unpriced]
41. The Storm 10-10-0
42. Return from Work – Evening 10-10-0
43. Turkeys 10-10-0
44. Light and Movement (not for sale) [unpriced]
45. The Grove of Saplings 10-10-0

Victorian Artists’ Society, Annual Exhibition, opened 22 May 1917.

222. A Misty Morning Lent by The Fine Art Society, Alfred Place.
272. The Road Not for sale
280. Travellers Not for Sale
288. Morning 78-15-0

The Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition, opened 1 December 1917.

9. Composition Study [unpriced] Lent by Miss E. J. Read
218. Morning [unpriced] Lent by Norman Lindsay, Esq.
219. Sunlit Saplings [unpriced] Lent by Miss E. J. Read
220. The Farmyard 73-10-0
221. Mystic Morn Not for Sale
222. Travellers 157-10-0
223. The Road 73-10-0
224. Ploughing 73-10-0
225. The Pageant Not for Sale
1918

The Australian Arts Club, Exhibition of Pictures at the Fine Art Society’s Galleries, Melbourne, 9-20 April 1918.

123. Out Back Watercolour 78-15-0
124. Autumn Morning Watercolour 63-0-0
125. Passing Showers Watercolour 63-0-0
126. Moonlight Watercolour 47-5-0
127. Autumn Watercolour 47-5-0
128. Cottage on the Hill Watercolour 31-10-0
129. Zinnias Oil 65-0-0
130. The Road Charcoal 21-0-0
131. The Pool Charcoal 21-0-0

Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition, opened 9 October 1918.

215. Moonlight Watercolour Not for Sale
216. An Autumn Afternoon Watercolour Not for Sale
217. Morning Sunshine Watercolour 40 guineas
218. Sunlight and Mist Watercolour Not for Sale
219. A Spell Watercolour 50 guineas
220. The Stack Watercolour 60 guineas

1919

The Australian Arts Club, Exhibition of Pictures held in the Education Department’s Art Gallery, Sydney, 14-28 June 1919.

19. Morning Grey Watercolour 45 guineas.
20. The Little Stack Watercolour 40 gns.
21. At the Sliprails Watercolour 65 gns.
22. Full Moon Watercolour 50 gns.
23. The Conclave Watercolour 60 gns.
24. Uplands Watercolour 45 gns.
25. Landscape Morning Watercolour 50 gns.
26. Summer Moonlight Watercolour Not for Sale
27. Harrowing Watercolour Not for Sale
Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition, 4-20 October 1919.

200. Hay Ricks 70 guineas
201. Morning Glow 60 gns
202. The Clearing 80 gns
203. The Rick Yard 70 gns
204. The Pool 50 gns
206. A Woodside Pastoral 80 gns

1920

Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition, opened 18 September 1920.

24. The Toilers Watercolour Not for Sale [Fig. 31]
25. The Willow Tree Watercolour Not for Sale
26. The River Watercolour Not for Sale

1921

Canterbury Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition, opened 10 March 1921.

389. Into the Light Lent by A. E. Baxter, Esq.

The Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society, First Annual Exhibition, Education Department Gallery, Sydney, 7-25 June 1921.

1. Billy [etching] 2-2-0 [price unframed]
2. Turning the Plough [etching] 5-5-0 [price unframed]

21 Awarded the Wynne Prize for 1920.
The Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition, 10 September - 1 October 1921.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Festival</td>
<td>Water Colour</td>
<td>185 guineas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The Hill Path</td>
<td>Water Colour</td>
<td>85 gns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>In Spring</td>
<td>Water Colour</td>
<td>85 gns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>The Rick-yard</td>
<td>Charcoal Drawing</td>
<td>50 gns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Gums in Moonlight</td>
<td>Charcoal Drawing</td>
<td>65 gns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Flowers and Fruit²²</td>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>200 gns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

²² Purchased by the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.
Appendix IV: Heysen’s Lecture “Observations on Art,” 1906

During the Edwardian period the monthly general meetings of the South Australian Society of Arts typically featured a lecture on an art-related topic. In August 1906 Heysen presented this paper, “Observations on Art.”¹ The handwritten script for his talk is preserved in the National Library of Australia.² This lecture serves as a rare statement of his beliefs regarding the relationship between the artist, their subject matter and their work. At the time of his 1906 lecture Heysen conducted art classes for private pupils.³ This gave him experience in articulating his beliefs about the correct approach to art and explains why much of his advice is directed towards art students, although he also asserts, “we are students to the end of our days.” As also apparent in Heysen’s letters, he thought of art primarily in terms of technique and pictorial effects, rather than more theoretical concepts.

A number of the points that Heysen makes are informed by George Clausen’s Six Lectures on Painting, which were first published in 1904.⁴ Heysen greatly admired the work of this British artist who specialised in scenes of rural labour, which he first encountered when an art student in Europe. Heysen subsequently recommended two paintings by Clausen for the National Gallery of South Australia and acquired an oil and two drawings by the artist for his own

¹ General Meeting: 7 August 1906, SASA Minute Book, SRG 20/2/3, RSASA Records.
³ Thiele, Heysen of Hahndorf, 93-94.
In his lectures to the students of the Royal Academy, Clausen explained various pictorial concepts by referring to paintings on display at the National Gallery in London. Heysen similarly uses particular works in the collection of the NGSA to illustrate his points. Both Clausen and Heysen maintain that artists should be guided by the examples of past masters, but avoid “following blindly a tradition, however noble.” Clausen encourages his students to attain a “realism of expression or character,” rather than merely capturing the “realism of surfaces only.” Such concerns are also evident in Heysen’s advice to “always make the detail subordinate to the mass” in order to “arrive at the essence” and retain the “vitality and life” of the subject.

Observations on Art

The questions dealing with art are of such a contradictory nature – that I beg to be excused if certain statements I may make seem opposed to one another, and I also hope that I may not be too severely criticised as to the style of my paper – it being my first flutter into the, to me, unknown atmosphere of literary art.

No doubt the most difficult lesson for one who is taking up the study of art – is to learn to see nature as she is or as she appeared to our eyes when a child. This sounds ridiculously simple I know – yet I think it is the hardest lesson of all and one which takes years of study to master. By the time that we take up art seriously our mind and eyes have become so blinded through knowledge that we see nature not as she is, but as we have been taught to see her. Nature is a wonderful revelation to eyes that are willing and able to open to her – but, we are not able, we have learnt that the trees are green, the skies, the water blue, the earth brown and so on – and so, when we do our first sketch we paint our trees green, our skies blue, and we do not notice or we do not know that nature is always

---


7 Ibid., 119-23.
moving, always changing, every moment of the day – and this same peculiar error of blindly following our knowledge of facts – applies to forms, we will draw objects that are half a mile away with the same careful attention to detail as though they were immediately before [us] – only allowing for our knowledge of perspective and drawing them in miniature – We know for instance that a horse has four legs, a head, a body – and we put it all down correctly – the right number of everything, never mind what distance the animal may be away from us – no doubt if we were to draw what we actually saw of a horse, half a mile away from us, we would get but the impression of the animal perhaps only an indistinct mass – with not head or legs, yet the impression would be that of a horse – and it is the impression we must paint, not the fact – it is strange that this knowledge should so blind us to seeing truthfully – to seeing the truth – In our childhood it is the impression we see, and in later life we see this same impression but knowledge has taught us that the impression is made up of facts – and we paint what we know is there and so lose the essence – the beauty of it all –

The impression or the ensemble is the most important of all things to observe and to hold in painting, and it is the most difficult – for it means that every note in our picture must be in perfect harmony and accord with the whole – and so until we can see – and see truthfully this difficulty must be insurmountable. And even when overcome there are many difficulties ahead – for the education of an art student – (and we are students to the end of our days –) is one of very slow progress indeed – perhaps it is just a well, for were it possible to be shown the difficulties in the beginning, few indeed would have the courage to continue.

I think at no time or period has the art student been beset with so many conflicting methods to choose between as to-day –

In the time of the ‘old masters’ each country had its method, its one style of painting – or at least the masters of each country seem to have worked in common or on the same principles – a student was apprenticed to his master when quite a boy in most instances and learnt his trade – beginning with the grinding of colours and gradually working his way until he was allowed to paint, perhaps on some unimportant detail of his master’s canvas – he naturally was compelled to work in the exact style of his master – no doubts would enter his mind as to the method or style of his painting – he could go ahead in a straightforward way without that disturbing element ‘doubt’ seldom or never crossing his path – but now the different and conflicting styles and methods cross our view every hour of the day – each style when practiced by a master producing an equally good result – And the effect this has on the art student is to send him restlessly from one to another of the different styles – experimenting a little with this method – then with that – never allowing himself time to fully master any one of them – his mind is in a constant state of doubt and he is unable to concentrate it upon anything in particular.8

8 Ibid., 4-6.
Experimenting is a dangerous tool and one to be avoided as much as possible until at least one style or method has been fully mastered in its various technicalities so that nothing may hinder when the time comes to give expression to an idea –

When studying the early works of all great masters – we find without exception that in the beginning the painter has dealt purely with material – that it was not so much the abstract as the facts that were recorded – and so gradually building up a store of knowledge – concerning the constructional growth and shapes of objects – this can be distinctly felt when studying the drawings of the old masters – everything was drawn in hard and severe outlines – no doubt they recognised that it was only through material that they would arrive at the essence, the abstract – and so they went to work – building first their foundation – and only then adding stone after stone –

There is no doubt a good foundation is everything and it is clear that when studying a master who appeals to us – to get full benefit from his teaching we must not study the results of a mature lifetime – but go back to his beginning to the source as it were – We will find that it is there in his drawings – which tell how he began – how severely he searched for the truth – and so must we begin – at the very beginning – tedious though it may seem at first, until the love for it is developed and with it interest and pleasure – there is no easy way round it or out of it, we must build stone by stone our foundation first – and let it be a solid one – that will stand us in good stead later on.⁹

In picture making there are two elements to be reconciled – a balance must be established between the imitative and the Decorative.¹⁰ This balance is called the convention of painting.¹¹ To object to this convention is to believe in absolute imitation which is the field of the camera – not the artist. A glance at nature will make it evident that it would be foolish as well as impossible to try and paint nature with all the minute detail – and even were it possible the result would not be satisfactory – which is illustrated by the work the camera shows us – so we are compelled to pick and choose work in relation to a boundary so that convention becomes a necessity but there need be no hard and fast rules, because the vitality and life must be expressed and retained at all costs – for these are which interest and fascinate us.¹²

To know how much to conventionalise and yet to retain the truthful appearance of nature can only be realised and learnt gradually by close study and comparisons between nature and the works of the best masters – In this respect we are greatly handicapped here in Australia for there are few works by which to make our

---

⁹ Ibid., 11.
¹⁰ Ibid., 19-20.
¹¹ Cf. Heysen, “Some Notes on Art,” 15, 17. Heysen asserts that “design is of paramount importance.” By this he meant “the spacing of masses in a picture,” rather than decorative “pattern-making.”
¹² Clausen, Six Lectures on Painting, 37-39, 43-44.
comparisons and we have to content ourselves with small and generally poor reproductions.

That the study of the old masters is absolutely necessary to our education is very evident when tracing the influences all great painters have worked under – the greatest genius has not been able to dispense with the assistance given him by the work of masters before him – it seems that nature is too complicated and perplexing for a beginner – we need a helping hand to guide and gradually lead us. And yet one constantly hear the old masters depreciated and termed old-fashioned.

But no doubt the real cause for this depreciation or misunderstanding of the conventions of the old masters is due largely – to the amount of photographic pretty bits which we see displayed everywhere – their constant contact with our vision inclines to influence our mind to such an extent – that we too readily judge a work of art from this same photographic point of view.13

Unfortunately we have comparatively few examples of a really high order of merit, which tend to advance the education of good art – and it is only with the advance of education that the real beauties, the grandness of the convention of the old masters can be properly appreciated and understood – and with it the subtler beauties and charms of nature, and our picture-dealers cannot help the artist, they do not advance art a step beyond the merely pretty-pretty and commonplace – their windows are filled with reproductions of this class of work. Whereas for the same money they could show copies and good copies of the finest works of art and so introduce a more highly cultured taste amongst the people – no doubt their trade would suffer at first – but the supply would create the demand and the people would buy and treasure works of better taste, and eyes would be opened by comparison – This serves to show that the art student at present is working against odds in Australia – and his progress must of necessity be slower than it would be in a country where masterpieces of art surrounded him from his youth upwards and his eyes have become accustomed to look upon beauty and the expression of beauty naturally he would develop a more highly cultured taste in art – and so his education begins early and almost unconsciously – but here an art student’s real education can only begin when perhaps the opportunity offers to study abroad. I remember well my own misunderstanding and consequent depreciation of the works of old masters – and not until I had been twelve months on the continent – did some of their real beauties and value dawn on me – and with this, came as it were, the birth of a new pair of eyes – for I could see beauties which before had been foreign to me –

I think the Trustees of our Art Gallery would be working in a good cause were they to follow the example of the Sydney Gallery – there they have some of the finest reproductions of great works I have yet seen – these are shown on revolving stands – so as not to take up too much room and for the convenience of the observer – the reproductions give a perfect idea of the originals – embracing as

13 This paragraph was inserted later and is written on a separate sheet of paper.
they do the various schools and periods of art – and these must be of immense value and help to the student – as well as furthering the art education and taste of the public. If stands of this description could fill space now usurped by the pottery in our Gallery what a boon they would prove to the student – and perhaps we could once again get a chance of seeing and studying the pictures we already have. Often I go to the Gallery with the object of studying and engaging certain pictures – only to go away again in disgust and disappointment – for when at the proper distance to focus on a picture, one sees nothing but reflections of glass cases and crockery ware – We might well take a lesson from the Japanese in this respect that it is better to show one thing to its every advantage than any number to their disadvantage.

In return to the old masters – No certainly we cannot afford to ignore what has been done before our time it stands to reason that men who have given their whole life to their profession – must have discovered something worth knowing – they have built up certain traditions and conventions which we should study and know – these can be our stepping stones – and these, with a careful observation of nature should help us in time to search for ourselves and perhaps to find fresh truths – it is made evident that in the beginning of our career, it is perhaps better that we should follow in the footsteps or style of a master or masters most akin to our own temperament – yet on no account must we blindly imitate – every great artists has his mannerisms – the result of creative power – an individuality – a certain something which makes a Corot a Corot for instance – but to paint or imitate a tree like his – would mean painting a Corot tree – and not a tree from nature – let him help you to build up a tree – but before taking anything from a master compare it well with nature – to imitate blindly – is to wear another man’s clothes – they would fit badly – or trying to build without first laying a foundation – the result would be disaster and no help be gained by such methods – our picture would lose its chief charm – its vitality of expression. Imitation is the greatest danger to be avoided when following in the steps of another – yet we can be strongly influenced without actual imitation – The chief element of strength and that which gives such dignity to the best works – is without doubt a decorative element, combined with a vitality of expression – turn whichever way we like among great pictures – a strong design or composition is their key-note. This decorative element we find in Masters as various in their other motives as Giotto of the thirteenth century to Titian, Michael Angelo [sic] – down to Millet and Corot of recent years – Their first object whatever their motive was to produce a space of beauty.

‘Art for Art’s Sake,’ everything else – sentiment or the story they wished to tell, took secondary place – simply to help and give greater interest – for it would not raise the value of the work as a pure work of art –

---


15 Clausen, Six Lectures on Painting, 19-20.
To make a fine picture it is not necessary to have Temples, Palaces or Castles – the simplest themes which surround our everyday life are quite sufficient to make dignified works of art. A decorative element will give dignity of expression, charm and greatness to the simplest landscape or object – This decorative element is a quality absolutely essential to all good picture making, taking away the mere topographical commonplace so painfully evident in much modern work – it is this element predominating in the works of old masters which give them that look of distinction and power – it is interesting to compare for instance the treatment of trees by Harpignies with those of Yeend King. Harpignies’ trees are a convention symbolical of vitality and growth – every line of which is in correct relation and in beautiful harmony with the rest of the picture – whereas Yeend King’s trees give but the casual observer’s idea of trees – they certainly look like trees yet speak of nothing above the commonplace – the difference is that one man sacrifices everything to gain the ensemble – the other dwells on its picturesque bits and so misses the essentials – it is of vital importance in painting to always make the detail subordinate to the mass – that is – we must see our subject as an ensemble first – this does not mean to omit detail for we may put in as much as we like as long as it is always subordinate to the ensemble – otherwise it is false and useless and destroys its own purpose – and would be much better left out altogether.

A decorative element should be cultivated in all branches of art, and we should endeavour to do our best to acquire it, so as to get away at all costs from mere empty prettiness – it is the vitality of nature we should try and grasp – and entirely discard the thought of making but a pretty smooth surface to our picture – It would be of greatest help and value to us to restrict ourselves to a limited palette, or better still – for a time to confine ourselves entirely to monochrome – we could then pay full attention to the design and draughtsmanship of our compositions or pictures – which are the essential qualities in all good picture making – for one can get very close to the appearance of nature in black and white only, and express a wonderful amount of light by the juxtaposition of relative values – so it is made evident that a course of monochrome painting is of the utmost value in cultivating the senses to a better appreciation of draughtsmanship, composition, and values –

Monotyping is another medium dealing simply with one colour – yet its results rely too much on the manipulation of material – and to some extent – to chance. And although a fascinating medium to work in, (giving a wide scope of expression) – its temptations to produce a so called ‘artistic effect’ are too dangerous – especially to those who have not already practiced monochrome work to a large extent – it can so easily lead the unwary into a vague haphazard

---

17 Clausen, Six Lectures on Painting, 121-22.
18 Heysen produced a large number of monotypes between late 1904 and 1906. He included 57 monotypes in his 1905 Adelaide solo exhibition.
manner of expression or what a layman would call a ‘poetic’ effect – for to a layman all works vague in intention and appearance are generally termed ‘poetic.’ But really the most poetic works, those which stir the inner feelings – are as strong and firm in outlines as those professing to represent solid material facts – The poetry of art – is a part of the artist and the unconscious outcome of this mind – Softness does not depend so much on smudging together of the edges of different objects or separate touches of paint – but mainly by the subtle placing of different values side by side – in fact one should avoid smudging as much as possible, as it destroys the purity of the colours and easily leads to insipidness – it is much better to err in the opposite direction, and leave the edges hard and firm – the over-softening of edges we find practiced particularly in flower painting – which is too often regarded as a trivial inferior art – yet what infinite beauty one feels when flowers are painted by a sympathetic hand – as for instance Fantin Latour’s ‘Zinnias’ in our Gallery, which is a beautiful example of all that is best in flower painting – it is well worth studying closely.19 The painter seems to have gone from flower to flower with tender care – nothing is vague, hurried or careless – each petal seems to have been felt – yet always in correct relation to the flower itself – the petals do not assert themselves as petals but are part of the flower – and so retain the impression of the whole. There is all the art of a fine piece of music in this simple study.

No doubt the expression of the terms – value, tone, quality, are confusing to some, for often one hears the one mistaken for the other – The term ‘value’ is used for expressing the relative degrees of density of the light and the dark masses – whereas ‘tone’ deals purely with colour or the sensation of colour – Correctness in values is the most important thing to observe in painting when trying to give an illusion of nature’s effects – for relative values are the means by which relief on [sic] the position of the different objects is obtained – without this observation of correct relation of values, disorganised painting would result for nothing would seem to have its proper place or a foundation to rest upon – therefore we cannot lay too much importance on this part of our art – many painters consider it the most important factor of all – colour ranking only second – for they recognise that it is only through correct relative values that the true appearance, the true representation of nature’s effects can be obtained –

Values and tone although distinct are still closely allied but where value deals only with the black and white – tone deals with the sensation of colour – yet the two to a certain degree go hand in hand – for when colour is out of value it is also invariably out of tone and what we call ‘jumps’ – that is, making itself felt to an untrue degree above its neighbours – so we speak of a picture as being in tone, when all its colours are in perfect harmony and accord – that is when seen from the distance the painter has meant the spectator to be – and to make this harmony there must be one given colour or the sensation of one colour running over the whole surface of the work – through all and each one of its colours – and so

19 Henri Fantin-Latour (French, 1836-1904), Zinnias (c.1897-99), Elder Bequest Fund, 1899.
expressing unity and repose – for instance take a black board and a white one – place them side by side – and seen from a reasonable distance on a clear Australian day – the black will appear almost black and the white almost white making an almost crude contrast – now go again to look at those boards with the soft warm glow of a late afternoon sun on them. The first thing we notice is that the board which was black in the morning is now a mellow golden green colour – and the white a warm ivory tint. The yellow rays of the sun have cast their sympathetic glow as ‘tone’ over all – making a beautiful harmony of that which was hard and crude.20

In painting sunlight it is not only necessary to observe accurately the colour and value of the light on objects – but the influence of this coloured light in the shadows thrown on these objects or by them – Often we see what are meant to be shadows, painted simply blue or purple – even when the colour of the sunlight is yellow, quite forgetful that this yellow light is penetrating the atmosphere between the painter and these shadows and so influencing their colour – in other words – giving them ‘tone’ – When painting sunlight out of doors it is advisable to pitch the key or tone of our work – warmer than we actually see it – how often are we disappointed when bringing our sketch into the cool light of a room, to find barely a suggestion of heat or sunlight although when on the spot, we were inclined to believe we had got it very true to the effect – The fact is, we did not allow for the influences the warmth that the surrounding light had on our canvas and colours, and also this same light filling our eyes and making us believe we were painting much warmer than was actually the case21 – As it is generally recognised that warmth is a great factor to harmony – it is better for us to err towards this tendency, keeping the blues of our picture well in reserve – if used discretely, blue, or the sensation of blue, is perhaps the most beautiful of all colours yet when used in excess it destroys weight and solidity and generally tends towards making the tone of our picture cold, harsh, and unpleasant –

The importance of tone in a picture cannot be overrated – nothing will help to open our eyes to truth more readily – I think it would be a valuable object lesson were we to observe, for instance a tree in a field from sunrise to sunset – watching the influence the light had over the local colour at different times of the day – We will now imagine that tree placed between us and the almost setting sun which is flooding the atmosphere with a warm light – What we most naturally would do would be to shield our eyes from the strong light so as to arrive at what we think will be the true value and colour of the tree – unconscious that by so doing we are destroying that which is fascinating us – the light – it is again this knowledge of facts which is trying to falsify our true vision – it is the impression that fascinates us – so it is the impression we must try and give again – the vibration of the sun’s rays, coming between us and the tree, has the effect of destroying its local colour, in giving the mass a tone – the same colour as the

20 Clausen, Six Lectures on Painting, 48-49.
21 Ibid., 52-53.
sun’s rays – only in various degrees of darkness according to the power and brilliancy of the light.

It is this lack of tone which is most evident in the work of Australian artists – and no doubt is due to the fact that the tone or atmosphere dominating our Australian landscape is not so evident at first sight as the heavier atmosphere of the European countries, it being of a more transparent character and requiring a more educated eye to detect it, yet this tone in our landscape is not lacking for in place of atmosphere rising from damp ground we have ‘tone’ given by dust and quivering heat-waves – having equal charm & softening that which otherwise would be crude – As the European artist chooses his effects most characteristic to his country so we must choose ours – a hard cruel light is no more characteristic to Australia than it is to Europe – There also are days most uncompromising to the artist – If we choose our effects & grasp the opportunity when nature is most mysterious – as when a heat haze brings mystery into shadows the Australian light is very beautiful indeed – its greys are warmer & richer, being full of reflected lights – than those of England – in this respect it has something very akin to the atmosphere of Italy & even in other respects there is much in common between the two countries.

One often hears of the term quality – when applied to colour – defined as being a colour made up of many colours – for instance to produce the sensation of green – red, yellow & blue are so intertwined as to give this feeling of green – but this is not so for the quality of a colour relies simply upon its immediate neighbour. You may mix thoroughly a yellow & a blue – as to make a dead green – which in itself says nothing – it has no quality – yet this same colour brought into immediate juxtaposition with a correct sympathizing neighbour will make it happy – full of life & sing its own tune – it will appear quite another colour. This show[s] that the quality of a colour is something that cannot be defined, yet distinctly felt by an educated eye – it is that something, artists strive to attain yet could not tell you what it is made up of – most generally it is found in the deeper toned pictures – dealing with a rich scale of colour – as for instance Nono’s picture of ‘Prayer’ in our gallery22 – but this quality can exist also in the palest of washes – perhaps less often because to paint in a high key & yet retain tone & quality is the more difficult.

There seems no better way of giving some idea of quality than by comparisons. Pictures like Watts’ ‘Nymph,’23 Farquharson’s ‘Romantic Ground,’24 Nono’s ‘Prayer,’ Fantin’s ‘Zinnias,’ & Clayley [sic] Robinson’s ‘Souvenir of a past age,’25 are all full of this quality – & yet they are widely different in the tones of their colour schemes – especially when we put two works like ‘Prayer’ &

---

22 Luigi Nono (Italian, 1850-1918), *Prayer (Preghiera)* (1882), South Australian Government Grant, 1885.
23 George Frederick Watts (British, 1817-1904), *A Nymph* (1860s), Elder Bequest Fund, 1899.
24 David Farquharson (British, 1839-1907), *Romantic Ground* (1899), Elder Bequest Fund, 1899.
25 Frederick Cayley Robinson (British, 1862-1927), *Souvenir of a Past Age* (1895), Elder Bequest Fund, 1899.
‘Souvenir of a past age’ side by side do we see the difference – one deals in a warm rich low tone – & the other omitting all rich & deep colours – & yet both possess quality – It is interesting to feel what charm quality possesses & what it actually means when we compare two landscapes like Farquharson’s ‘Romantic Ground’ & MacBeth’s ‘Calling the Cattle Home.’

The charm of that silvery light of ‘Romantic Ground’ with the dead commonplace of MacBeth’s – & yet no doubt the latter would find most favour with the public – on account of the animal life introduced. Then we have that beautiful example of Watts when at his best ‘The Nymph’ compare the quality of its flesh painting with that of Poynter’s ‘Helene & Hermia’ & you cannot help feeling at once the charm & value quality possesses.

Again – a picture may be absolutely true to a given place – colour for colour – & yet lack all trace of ‘quality’ – it shows that it is not the outcome of exact imitation of nature’s colours – but that it comes through the artist himself it is a part of his art that he feels, but is powerless to analyse into definite laws. For those who can feel ‘quality’ in pictures, nature has charms which would be quite foreign to anyone who does not and it is only through pictures – that its existence can be conveyed to others – it is one of the subtler beauties of nature which we easily overlook through our knowledge of facts.

It seems art on the whole is a peculiar & indefinite something without laws by which any one part seems able to be governed – yet a honest & sincere purpose must govern all without this we can arrive at nothing – to dash away at a so called artistic effect would be useless without coming quite naturally when – full power & knowledge through hard & sincere study has been attained – nothing but this knowledge can govern fluent brush work so that it may be intelligent to others – there is no easy or short cut in Art we must have patience – & allow our progress [to] take its own slow natural course – whatever we do it must come through knowledge – it would be far better to leave a picture in an unfinished state – until with time & experience sufficient knowledge has been acquired to complete it, than try & fake it – to make it presentable. This would be insincere & only a waste of labour. Let us be sincere at all costs in whatsoever we may do – & there is sure to be something come into our work to justify its existence.

26 Robert Walker MacBeth (British, 1848-1910), Calling the Cattle Home (1884), Elder Bequest Fund, 1899.
27 Edward John Poynter (British, 1836-1919), Helena and Hermia (1901), Elder Bequest Fund, 1902.
28 Clausen, Six Lectures on Painting, 57-58, 60.
Appendix V: Hans Heysen and Lionel Lindsay’s Collaborative Review of the 1909 Federal Exhibition

In 1909 Lionel Lindsay, who worked as a black-and-white artist and read submissions for the monthly magazine *The Lone Hand*, asked Heysen to submit a review of the Twelfth Federal Art Exhibition. Heysen responded, “I hardly think I could write a notice out fully on the Federal – but I shall be very willing to go & give you my notes & you could perhaps put it into readable language.” While Heysen’s notes have not been preserved, there are enough similarities between the sentiments expressed in the published review and two of his letters quoted below, to confidently claim it was based on his opinions and observations. The resulting collaborative review appeared anonymously in April 1910 as part of a larger account of Australian art exhibitions from the previous year. Heysen and Lindsay’s criteria of quality appear to be a “feeling for light and atmosphere,” specifically the ability to capture their Australian qualities, sound drawing and a love of nature. These were all characteristics that Heysen’s work was regularly praised as epitomising. The text of Heysen and Lindsay’s review is given below, annotated with the details of the works they describe. This is followed by extracts from two of Heysen’s letters regarding the exhibition.

---

1 Between 1907 and 1911 Heysen produced illustrations for the magazine on a freelance basis. He also contributed the article, “A German-Australian Village,” *Lone Hand*, July 1908: 194-97.
2 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [annotated: ‘about 1910,’ actually November 1909], LF Papers.
3 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [November 1909], LF Papers; Heysen to W. H. Gill, 9 November [1909], WHG Papers.
5 Ibid., 673-78.

The original object of holding this Federal show was to bring together, from year to year, a collection of pictures representative of Australian art, from which the trustees of the Art Gallery might have first choice of purchase. But, looking back over the nine years of successive exhibition, it cannot be said that it was ever entirely representative. This year New South Wales is only partly represented by the Society of Artists’ exhibit; and Victoria has but eight unpretentious pictures in artistic evidence. Neither McCubbin, Withers, Patterson, Blamire Young nor Bernard Hall, to whom we can always look for interesting work, have found it worth while, apparently, to send anything across. The exhibit from Sydney is on the whole disappointing, considering that at one time, with exponents like Arthur Streeton, Julian Ashton and Tom Roberts, Sydney seemed in the way of producing a distinctly Australian school of painting. But somehow the movement was checked by the departure of Streeton; and it is in vain that we look for the continuance of that fine tradition he established. In men like Mr. Sid Long and others we see from time to time faint reflections – imitations rather than followers of the fundamental principles established by Streeton.

Mr. A. E. Hornel [sic] was about right when he observed that Australians generally paint too dark; that they are not affected by the marvellous translucency of the Australian light, and that they have too strong a tendency to treat their own landscape, and particularly its individual forms, with the traditional methods of the Old World. Mr. Streeton, a true discoverer, broke this weight of tradition; and it seems a pity that his example as a painter of light reached so few, and that most, since he went, have been content with pretty or harmonious color.

Mr. Hornel would, however, have to make an exception in the case of Mr. Hans Heysen, who year by year has tackled this most absorbing problem – light through everything – in the deepest shadows as in the most dazzling sky. The most original water-colorist Australia has produced, Heysen has made the big gum country near Hahndorf peculiarly his own; and the large, light-barked gums,
painted against a flood of sunlight, are peculiarly adapted to his exposition of the painting of light. An inexorable draughtsman, Mr. Heysen studies his objective thoroughly with the crayon, and makes numerous essays in color before attempting a big work; and the result is always a noble composition, having weight and dignity, and singleness of treatment only possible to a man thoroughly au fait with his subject. His picture this year has many of the qualities of the water-color acquired by the New South Wales trustees last year, but is a technical advance. If he stays in Australia, young man that he is and master of his craft, he must found a school, for Nature is his continual inspiration and instructor.

Mr. Hansen has given promise to bringing Australian light into his water-colors also; but recently has evaded that promise, and with an unworthy persistency seeks out whatever is English-looking in our landscape. Perhaps his best exhibit this year is his ‘Cornish Sapphire’; his others are “pretty” and unconvincing.

In Mr. Will Ashton’s landscapes we see Australia painted with a half-open heart. His four large canvases show patches of strong painting; but the painter has been quite unable to enter the essential characteristics of his subjects. The gum tree has revealed none of its mysteries – its strength, its delicate refinement of color – so his work remains cold and unconvincing.

The still life studies of Rose McPherson suffer from the same defect. Perhaps as paintings they are the most perfect things in the exhibition. Each tone is put on with precision, exactly in relation to its color value; in other words, she is a splendid painter of surfaces, a beautiful painter of paint.

Among the best water-colors are three by Mr. Gus Barnes, who has but lately returned from England. His ‘Ceres Burni,’ Fife [sic], is perhaps his best; distinct in style, a fine decorative arrangement imbued with a charming realism. The cool light of Scotland has been well suggested; and I think that Mr. Barnes, when he

---

12 Of Heysen’s five contributions, the review is particularly alluding to *In Sunset Haze* (No. 12, priced at £200, but actually loaned by Walter Baldwin Spencer). In both composition and light effects it resembles his watercolour *Summer*, which was awarded the 1909 Wynne Prize and purchased by the NAGNSW.

13 Albert John Hanson (1867-1914) of Sydney, had six works in the exhibition, including *Cornish Sapphire*, *Kynance Cove* (No. 13, £30). The NGSA had purchased Hanson’s oil, *On the New South Wales Coast* (1897) from the 1902 Federal Exhibition, and his watercolour *Land of the Golden Fleece* (1905) from the 1908 exhibition.

14 Will Ashton (1881-1963) had six works in the exhibition: *Evening Glow, Narrabeen, N.S.W.* (No. 43, £26-5-0); *The Village Road* (No. 53, £26-5-0); *The Old Tree, Narrabeen, N.S.W.* (No. 97, £68-5-0); *A Summer’s Morning* (No. 128, £72-10-0); *A Spring Morning* (No. 132, £157-10-0); *After Rain* (No. 136, £72-10-0). Heysen and Ashton had worked alongside one another during a sketching expedition to Narrabeen in early 1908.

15 Rose McPherson (better known as Margaret Preston, 1875-1963) exhibited five works, including the still lifes: *The Tea Urn* (No. 55, £26-5-0); *Radishes* (No. 56, £6-6-0); and the floral subjects: *Wallflowers* (No. 54, £10-10-0); and *Polyanthus* (No. 57, £4-4-0). The NGSA purchased *The Tea Urn* with the Elder Bequest for the reduced price of £21.10.0.
applies his talents to the realisation of Australian subjects, will treat the characteristic light of this continent with marked success.16

In Mr. James Scott we have a new exhibitor, whose painting shows much vitality; but he has not yet found himself. His modern ‘Australian Pastoral’ [sic] contains some rich passages of color handled with enthusiasm, but on the whole is unsatisfactory as a picture.17

For the most harmonious and complete pictures among the oils, we have to turn to the work of the St Ives painter, Mr. Algernon Talmage, R.B.A., representing London street scenes. A snowstorm in the Strand is the most successful – a harmony in beautiful greys. His ‘Glittering Stream’ is less convincing – the lilac-tinted shadows seem out of touch with the strength of sunlight indicated.18 Mr. Burgess sends many works; but they are quite unstable, and more tinted illustrations than examples of the art of painting; even at that they are hard and unconvincing in color.19 Mr. Power, to whom we can always look for movement and animation, shows two large oils. His ‘Beaching of the Life-Boat’ is full of strenuous action; but the foreshortening of the grey horse is unpleasant, and that of a short focus lens. His ‘Cows at Pasture’ is more harmonious, and is evidence of a genuine feeling for light and atmosphere.20 A feeling for light also sums up four sparkling outdoor studies by Mr. Ambrose Patterson; but they are too impressionistically crude in color to be quite satisfying – they are more experimental than conclusive.21 The work of Miss Marie Tuck is mainly conspicuous for its pretentiousness and faulty drawing.22 Mr. Spence is perhaps the biggest disappointment in the exhibition. All the promise of his

---

16 Heysen’s friend and former painting companion, Gustave Barnes (1877-1921) had six works in the exhibition, including Ceres, Fife (No. 19, £26-5-0) and Ceres Burn, Fife (No. 25, £42-0-0). The latter was purchased by the NGSA with the Elder Bequest.

17 Heysen met and befriended the New Zealand artist James Fraser Scott (1877-1932) while study at the Académie Julian in Paris. In 1908 Scott moved to Sydney where he painted alongside Heysen and Will Ashton at Narrabeen. Scott exhibited On the Edge of the Lake (No. 105, £63) and A Modern Australian Idyll (No. 186, £178-15-0).

18 Algernon Talmage (1871-1939) was a British painter. Along with Julius Olsson he taught at the Cornish School of Landscape, Figure and Sea Painting in St Ives. Will Ashton and Richard Hayley Lever were two of his pupils. By 1909 Talmage had moved to London. Talmage’s four paintings were: A Moonlit River (No. 193, £35); A Snowstorm in the Strand, London (No. 194, £80); The Glittering Stream, Hyde Park, London (No. 195, £80); The Pillars of St. Martins (No. 196, £40). Nos 194 and 195 were purchased by the NGSA.

19 Arthur James Wetherall Burgess (1879-1957) was a Sydney maritime artist. He had six works in the exhibition.

20 Harold Septimus Power (1877-1951) was at that time living in England. He exhibited Beaching the Lifeboat (No. 190, £210) and Cows at Pasture (No. 201, £150). Beaching the Lifeboat (1900-1923) was subsequently reworked and purchased by the Art Gallery of Ballarat in 1923.

21 Ambrose Patterson exhibited six works, depicting scenes in Belgium and Brittany.

22 Marie Tuck (1866-1947) was at that time living in Paris. She exhibited The Melon Seller (No. 159, £20); The Fishwife (No. 160, £15-15-0); and Washing Day (No. 206, £100). The NGSA had purchased her large painting The Fish Market from the 1908 Federal Exhibition. Heysen was not impressed, describing the acquisition as “a huge 10ft x 8ft ‘rotter’ by Marie Tuck for £105 (will be a depressing potboiler) & another eyesore for our Gallery.” Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, [annotated: 8 November 1907, actually 1908], LF Papers.
youth has departed, and his pictures seem to lack all genuine feeling. Mr. Lionel Lindsay’s etchings are always a source of pleasure, full of a genuine love of nature, given with a light touch, yet full of strength. Again, in contrast, are the two pictures by Mr. Sid Long entirely lacking in sympathy for nature—they are painty, and leave us cold. In manner and design they remind us of Streeton’s; but the painter’s personality has been insufficient to dominate his work, and the result is unconvincing. In Mr. Hilder’s water-color there is [a] distinct element of friction between convention and realism—it partakes of both and suggests artificiality. His ultra-blue is too evidently a mannerism.

The strongest bit of character portraiture is Mr. Julian Ashton’s head of Mr. Livingston Hopkins; but it lacks vitality of color somewhat. Mr. Ashton’s landscapes are less satisfying than usual. In his ‘Waterhole,’ for instance, the coloring is decidedly unpleasant, although the handling throughout is splendidly direct. In his son, Mr. Howard Ashton, we have a good landscape painter; but his large picture of autumn is marred by a mannerism in the treatment of the trees. Otherwise it is full of a sincere expression.

The water-colors by Mr. B. E. Minns are dainty but artificial in color, and the forms lack character. As painters of pretty miniatures we have to look to the Misses Hambidge, who are well represented this year. Occasionally their miniatures express real charm; but when the same stippled method is applied to a large water-color like ‘Fireside Reflections,’ the result is lamentably weak. Here all form has been sacrificed to a doll-like finish. After all, the study of characteristic form is the basis of all good pictures; fine color is but an embellishment; and the sooner our Australian painters acquire that belief, the sooner will we develop a national school of painting.

---

23 Percy Frederick Seaton Spence (1868-1933) was a Sydney artist and illustrator. He exhibited five works.
24 Lionel Lindsay (1874-1961) showed nine works, of which five appear (based upon price) to have been etchings: Naples (No. 75, £6-6-0); Noon (No. 77, £5-5-0); An Old House, Bay Road (No. 79, £6-6-0); Cordoba (No. 83, £18-18-0); Los Capucinos, Seville (No. 168, £1-1-0); Mosman Point (No. 170, £1-1-0); The Convent of Santa Marguarita, Seville (No. 171, £1-5-0); The Strayed Baccante (No. 175, £1-10-0); The Public Library, Melbourne (No. 176, £1-10-0).
25 Long exhibited Landscape (No. 85, £78-15-0) and A Pumpkin Field (No. 96, £7-7-0).
26 Jesse Jewhurst Hilder (1881-1916), Bridge and Tea Trees (No. 62, £21).
27 Julian Rossi Ashton, Study of a Head (Mr. L. Hopkins, “Bulletin”) (No. 66, £52-10-0).
28 Julian Rossi Ashton, The Waterhole (No. 78, £52-10-0).
29 Julian Howard Ashton (1877-1964), Autumn (No. 61, £150).
30 Benjamin Edwin Minns (1863-1937), the Sydney artist and illustrator, was at that time living in England. He exhibited: Off Rye (Sussex) (No. 4, £8-8-0); The Dune Road, Holland (No. 148, £5-5-0); Midday (No. 149, £10-10-0).
31 The Misses Hambidge were the Adelaide sisters Helen Hambidge (1857-1937), Alice M. Hambidge (1869-1947) and Millicent Russell Hambidge (1872-1938). Helen and Alice each exhibited three works and Millicent showed four.
32 Alice Hambidge, Fireside Reflections (No. 32, £85-0-0).
Extracts from Heysen’s letters to Lionel Lindsay and W. H. Gill

In his initial letter, Heysen advised Lindsay: “I have had a cursory glance through the show, & have formed a general impression but before particularising of course I would like another good look.” Based upon this initial viewing he offered the following observations:

There are practically no Melbourne exhibits. McCubbin, Withers, Patterson [sic] others have not sent. I think there are a few miniatures only by a Mrs Whiting & some stuff of Helen Peters which is poor & slovenly in the extreme – altogether the Federal is not at all representative of Aus Art this year. I believe even less so than on previous occasions, when at least a few of the Melbourne men have sent – this year there are 6 exhibitors from abroad – & it would be hardly fair to review these in a Review of Aus Art (still I may include them in the Crit & you can do with it what you like). The Royal Art Soc is only represented by a few odd canvases – Watkins for instance – but with nothing to recommend. Your own society sends the strongest exhibit – yet there is very little that stands out. Your own little sketches with their sparkling light to me suggest the character of Aus Atmosphere more than anything else there, but one cannot regard them as more than sketches. James Scott sends two with some very sound painting, in the latter respect his Pastoral is the better – his Landscape being unequal & patchy & in places painty. Again in his ‘Pastoral’ the cow condemns the picture, it’s too aerial & ill constructed, his girl is solid enough but the cow lacks ‘guts.’ Among the outsider – A. Talmage hold[s] foremost place with 4 very charming London street scenes, well felt in realism & movement & kept beautiful in tone, in fact this is the main strength of his work. … My own Water Colour 30” x 22” is one I have not long finished for Pro Spencer, in it I believe I have got a truer impression of the Australian Character in Form – light – & colour than in any of my previous work …

P.S. I think your etchings very charming, suggestive of light at the same time colour also.

---

33 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, Friday [November 1909]. LF Papers.
34 Ada Whiting exhibited four miniatures on ivory (Nos. 178, 178a, 178b and 179).
35 Helen A. Peters exhibited Old Companions (No. 45, £31-10-0) and A Portrait (No. 129, £10-10-0).
36 Heysen is referring to the Royal Art Society of New South Wales. J. S. Watkins exhibited Girl with Banjo (No. 47, £63-0-0).
37 The Society of Artists.
38 Professor Walter Baldwin Spencer.
Heysen’s opinions of the exhibition were more strongly worded in a letter to his Melbourne dealer W. H. Gill. However, as he employed a number of phrases that reappeared in the published review, he must have expressed similar sentiments in the notes he compiled and sent to Lindsay.

Our Federal Exh was opened on Monday & the Gallery have made 3 purchases – 2 oils by A. Talmage (of St. Ives) representing London Street Scenes, both pictures are charmingly felt in tone & without being remarkable are certainly very charming. They are small size about 36” x 28”. The other purchase is by a young Sth Aus, a Watercolour of a Scotch Landscape, nicely felt in colour & arrangement, size about 20 x 16.

Will Ashton has some large Landscapes in oil of Gum trees – to me – they are somewhat uninteresting – missing the character of the Gum Foliage & of Aus Light & Atmosphere – but as paintings they are cleverly handled. The Sydney Exhibit was very disappointing – in fact it seemed all ‘so stale’ – & Lionel Lindsay seems the only one who seems to have a spark of love for nature, the others too evidently try to be original – or be someone else. Sid Long for example, whose empty imitation of Streeton seemed poor & heartless, he generally leaves his picture when it takes knowledge to carry it. James Scott has two oils with some sound painting in them – beyond these there is little to interest – as for their being anything Australian – I cannot even see a hint of it. One would have thought that the influence of Streeton would have set the ball rolling in some direction – but all one sees are empty imitations – never attempting to get down to the foundation he worked from – but Streeton loved the colours of nature – & that makes all the difference – a great pity he has not remained in Aus – I cannot help thinking that it is here in Aus that he has left his heart & that he will only find it again when he decides to come & settle in Australia, in other words I think his Aus work was the more sincere & so the more original. I could not help feeling this when looking through the article in the Studio – there was a taint of illustration about them I thought when seeing them in black & white – but I may be mistaken...

My watercolours at the Fed were favourably criticised in our local papers & Pro Spencer’s picture was picked out as Epoch making in Aus.
Art\textsuperscript{41} – but then the critics here – only talk & know nothing about Art. I only wish there were some real critics who would not be afraid to give their honest verdict, but here they talk nice sounding phrases – but absolutely meaningless, & worse than useless to painters or the public.

Heysen’s concluding remarks suggests that he regarded blunt criticism as a necessary means of improving artistic ability and public taste.

\textsuperscript{41} In declaring the exhibition open, Sir Samuel Way (1836-1916), described Heysen’s \textit{In Sunset Haze} as representing “an epoch in the history of art in South Australia.” “Federal Art Exhibition – Opened by the Chief Justice,” \textit{Advertiser}, 9 November 1909.

This provides details of Heysen’s representation in publications edited or produced by Sydney Ure Smith, the majority of which were published by Art in Australia Ltd. or Ure Smith Pty. The figure numbers supplied in square brackets refer to the illustrations in the “Images” section of this dissertation.

Art in Australia, 1916-1942:

Art in Australia did not employ page numbers until October 1930, hence the lack of pagination for many of the entries.

Publications Devoted to Heysen

• The Art of Hans Heysen, Special Number of Art in Australia, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1920 (1700 copies printed and edition of 29 copies with set of engraver’s proofs.)
  Lionel Lindsay, “The Art of Hans Heysen,” pp.3-20.
  31 Colour and 32 Black and White illustrations by Heysen; photograph of Heysen by Judith Fletcher; reproduction of Lionel Lindsay’s etching Heysen’s Old Studio at Ambleside. [Figs: 17, 49, 50]

• “Heysen Number,” Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 15, March 1926.
  Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen the Draughtsman,” unpaginated.
  6 Colour and 24 Black and White illustrations (listed below)

• “Recent Watercolours by Hans Heysen,” Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 24, June 1928 (and edition of 40 copies with hand-pulled proof of drawing signed by the artists).
  Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen’s Recent Watercolours,” unpaginated.
  14 Colour and 24 Black and White illustrations (listed below); and photograph of Heysen (c.1911) by F. A. Joyner.

• “Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen,” Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 44, June 1932.
3 Colour and 16 Black and White illustrations (listed below); and photograph of Heysen (1928) by F. A. Joyner.

**Articles About Heysen**


- Lionel Lindsay, “Hans Heysen’s Later Watercolours,” *Art in Australia*, Series 1, No. 6, 1919, unpaginated.

  
  [Review of Hans Heysen and Dora Wilson’s Adelaide solo exhibitions]

- Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen’s Flower Pieces,” *Art in Australia*, Series 3, No. 12, June 1925, unpaginated.


**Articles Written by Hans Heysen**


**Reproductions of Heysen’s Work**

*Art in Australia*, Series 1, No.1, 1916.

*Turkeys* [B&W], Charcoal Study.

*Landscape* [B&W], Crayon Study.
Art in Australia, Series 1, No. 2, 1917.

*In the Ranges* [C], Watercolour.

*A Grey Morning* [C], Watercolour. (Heysen later advised Bertram Stevens that this work should have been titled *Gum Trees Under the Mist*. ¹)

---

Art in Australia, Series 1, No. 6, 1919

*An Autumn Afternoon* [C], Watercolour.

---

Art in Australia, Series 1, No. 8, 1921

*The Valley* [B&W], Pencil Drawing.

---

Art in Australia, Series 1, No. 9, 1921, *Australian and New Zealand Etchings.*

*The Plough* [B&W], Etching.

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 3, February 1923.

*The Silent Pool* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of G. Rowell, Esq.”

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 5, August 1923.

*Gums in Sunlight* [C], Watercolour.

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 8, June 1924.

*The Valley* [C], Watercolour.

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 9, October 1924.

*A Basket of Fruit* [C], Oil Painting, “Shown at the Artists’ Week Exhibition, Adelaide,” frontispiece.

*A Morning in November* [B&W], Watercolour.

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 12, June 1925.

*Autumn Bunch* [C], Oil Painting [Fig. 51].

---

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 15, March 1926, *Heysen Number.*

Plate 1. *River Flats* [C], Oil Painting, “In the possession of Dr. Oscar Paul, Sydney."

Plate 2. *The Stackyard* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 3. *The Red Gum* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 4. *Spring Flowers – Still Life* [C], Oil Painting.

Plate 5. *Stonecarters* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 6. *An Afternoon in April* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 7. *Study of Gums* [B&W], On grey paper with chalk.

---

¹ Heysen to Bertram Stevens, 28 August 1917. Bertram Stevens Papers, 1906-1920, Correspondence, 1893-1920, A 2447, SLNSW.
Plate 8. *Flood Waters, River Murray* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 9. *Landscape Study* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 10. *The Quarry* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 10. [sic] *The Pea Stack* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 12. *Pastoral* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 13. *A Leaf from a Sketch Book* [B&W], Crayon drawing.
Plate 14. *The Village Smithy* [B&W], Charcoal drawing [Fig. 41].
Plate 15. *A Study for ‘Shady Pastures’* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 16. *Hay Valley Farm* [B&W], Pencil drawing.
Plate 17. *Osier* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 18. *Corner of the Farm* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 19. *Murray Cliffs* [B&W], Charcoal drawing on grey paper.
Plate 20. *Leaf from a Sketch Book* [B&W], Crayon drawing.
Plate 21. *Haystacks* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 22. *Gums and Sheep* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 23. *The Barn* [B&W], Charcoal drawing [Fig. 38].
Plate 24. *Willow Copse* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 25. *Frosty Morning* [B&W], Pencil drawing.
Plate 26. *Landscape* [B&W], Pencil drawing.
Plate 27. *A Study* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 28. *A Belt of Trees* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
Plate 29. *Shaded Pastures* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

*Art in Australia*, Series 3, No. 21, September 1927.

*Souvenir* [C], Oil Painting, “Painted for Madame Pavlova,” frontispiece.

*Art in Australia*, Series 3, No. 22, December 1927, *Margaret Preston Number*.

Advertisement: *Flowers and Fruit* [B&W], Oil Painting: “A LARGE ART IN AUSTRALIA COLOUR PRINT SUITABLE FOR FRAMING / Size 13¾ x 11¼ in. / PRICE £1/1/- per print. / Only a limited number available. / FLOWERS AND FRUIT / By Hans Heysen / Original in the possession of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales. / Published by Art in Australia Limited / 24 Bond Street / Sydney / Engraved by Hartland & Hyde.” [Fig. 52].

*Art in Australia*, Series 3, No. 24, June 1928, *Recent Watercolours by Hans Heysen*.

Plate 2. *Hills of Arkaba, Flinders Range, Far North* [C], Watercolour, “Exhibited at the Imperial Institute 2nd Annual Exhibition, London, 1928.” [Fig. 59].

Plate 3. *Mountain Peaks, Flinders Range* [C], 1927, Watercolour [Fig. 62].

Plate 4. *Wilpena Range, Far North* [C], 1927, Watercolour.
Plate 5. *Mountains of Arkaba, Far North* [C], 1927, Watercolour.

Plate 7. *The Wilpenas from Bunyeroo* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 8. *In the Brachina Gorge* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 9. *In the Flinders Range* [C], Watercolour.


Plate 11. *The Guardian of the Aroona* [C], Watercolour [Fig. 64].

Plate 12. *An Autumn Morning* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 13. *Under the Gums* [C], Watercolour.


Plate 15. *The Farmyard Gum* [C], Watercolour.

Plate 16. *In the Ranges, Far North* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 17. *Brachina Creek, Far North* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 18. *The Red Gum, Autumn Morning* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.


Plate 21. *A Study* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 22. *Rapid Bay, Normanville, South Australia* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 23. *A Study, Stringy Barks* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.


Plate 25. *A Far Northern Landscape* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 26. *Cloud Shadows, Bunjeroo Valley* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 27. *Autumn Landscape* [B&W], Watercolour.


Plate 30. *Over the Hills* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 31. *The By-way, Ambleside* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 32. *A Skyline of the Far North* [B&W], 1927, Watercolour.

Plate 33. *Golden Banks on River Murray* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 34. *The Great Gum* [B&W], Watercolour.

Plate 35. *Under the Pines* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 36. *The Hill Farm* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 37. *Light and Shade* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 38. *A Pastoral* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 39. *The Road, Balhannah* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.


Plate 8. *Onions* [B&W], Oil Painting, “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W. / Exhibited at the Society of Artists’ Annual Exhibition, Sydney, 1928.”
Plate 19. *Nasturtiums in a Black Vase* [C], Oil Painting, “Exhibited at the Society of Artists’ Annual Exhibition. / In the possession of Mrs. H. Clayton, Sydney.”

Advertisement: *Australian White Gums* [B&W], Oil Painting: “ART IN AUSTRALIA COLOUR PRINTS FOR FRAMING / OIL PAINTING BY HANS HEYSEN / Size of print 15½ x 12 3/8 inches / Price £1/1/- unframed / A delightful reproduction of a typically Australian subject, reproduced from the original, in the possession of Norman Burdekin, Esq., Barraba, N.S.W.” [Fig. 55]. Illustrated advertisements were repeated in: No. 27, March 1929 [Fig. 44] and No. 28, June 1929.

*Art in Australia*, Series 3, No. 31, March 1930.

Plate 11. *The Land of the Oratunga, Flinders Range* [C], Oil Painting, “In the possession of Dr. Norman Paul.”


Plate 2. *Mt. Patawerta, Far North* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of the Artist.”

Plate 3. *Gum Trees of the Far North* [C], Watercolour, “Awarded the Wynne Prize, 1931. In the possession of the Trustees of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”

Part 4. *The Red Gum* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of the Artist.”

Plate 5. *Pines* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.


Plate 7. *The Three Sisters of Aroona* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 8. *Gums on River Flat* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 9. *The Quarries* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 10. *Gums* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 11. *Farm Sheds* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 12. *A Group of White Gums* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 13. *A Woodside Pastoral* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.


Plate 17. *The Rock of Aroona* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 18. *Hills of Arkaba* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Plate 19. *Head of the Brachina Gorge, Flinders Range* [B&W], Charcoal drawing.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 45, August 1932.
  The Toilers [C], Watercolour, 25.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 48, February 1933.
  Brachina Gorge [B&W], Watercolour, “Awarded the Wynne Prize for 1932,” 43.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 56, August 1934.
  The Willow [B&W], Watercolour, “In the Hinton collection,” 55.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 57, November 1934.
  The Clearing [C], Watercolour, “From the J. R. McGregor collection,” 29.
  Ploughing [B&W], Watercolour, “From the J. R. McGregor collection,” 32.
  Summer Landscape [B&W], Watercolour, “… McGregor collection,” 32.
  The River [B&W], Watercolour, “… McGregor collection,” 32.
  Flinders Range Landscape [B&W], Watercolour, “… McGregor collection,” 39.
  The River [B&W], Watercolour, “… McGregor collection,” 42.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 58, February 1935.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 59, May 1935.
  The Little White Cottage [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of Gregory Roarty, Esq. / Exhibited at the Heysen Loan Exhibition at the N.S.W. National Art Gallery,” 25.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 67, May 1937.
  Mountains of the Flinders [B&W], Watercolour, “Paintings by Australian Artists for the Paris Exhibition, in the Art Section of the Australian Pavilion,” 35.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 68, August 1937, Drawing and Drawing in Australia.
  A Woodside Pastoral [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 87.
  Gums [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 88.
  The Grampians, Victoria [B&W], Pencil Drawing on Grey Paper, 89.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 69, November 1937.
  Woodside Landscape [C], Watercolour, 31.
  A Pastoral [C], Watercolour, 33.
Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 70, March 1938, *Exhibition of 150 Years of Australia Art.*

*The Rick Yard* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of Dr. G. H. Abbott,” 27.

*Hill at Arkaba* [B&W], Oil Painting, “In the possession of Dr. R. S. Godsall,” 53.

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 71, May 1938, *First Exhibition of Australian Academy of Art.*


**Reproductions of Works Owned by Heysen**


Plate 7. Will Ashton, *Notre Dame, Paris* [C], Oil Painting, “In the possession of Hans Heysen Esq.”

Art in Australia, Series 3, No. 34, October-November 1930.

Plate 22. George W. Lambert, A.R.A., *Composition, Mrs. Lambert, Child and White Horse* [B&W], Oil Painting, “In the possession of Hans Heysen Esq.”

**The Home, 1920-1942:**

**Articles About Heysen**

• Freda Sternberg, “A Visit to Heysen,” *The Home*, vol. 2, no. 4, December 1921, 16-17, 97.

  Illustrated with five photographs of Heysen, his home and his studio by Alfred Wilkinson [Fig. 24].


  Illustrated with six photographs of Heysen, his home, studio and daughter Fifi (Freya) by Harold Cazneaux [Fig. 46].
Reproductions of Heysen’s Works

*The Home*, vol. 2, no. 3, September 1921.


*The Home*, vol. 2, no. 4, December 1921.

*Flowers and Fruit* [C], “Flowers and Fruit / From the Oil Painting by / Han Heysen / In the possession of the Trustees of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W. This picture was recently exhibited at the Society of Artists Exhibition held in Sydney in September,” 11.

*The Home*, vol. 3, no. 4, December 1922.

*The Clearing* [C], Watercolour, 25.

*The Home*, vol. 4, no. 4, December 1923.


*The Home*, vol. 7, no. 6, June 1926.

*The Valley*, [C], Watercolour, 57. “In the possession of Miss Eadith Walker. From the recent exhibition of Hans Heysen’s Pictures at Farmer’s, Sydney.” Also accompanied by a lengthy quote from Lionel Lindsay.

*The Home*, vol. 8, no. 9, September 1927.


*The Home*, vol. 8, no. 12, December 1927.

Advertisement: *Flowers and Fruit* [B&W], Oil Painting, 107. “A Large ‘Art in Australia’ Colour Print Suitable for Xmas Gift.” Caption: “Engraved by Hartland & Hyde. / FLOWERS AND FRUIT – By Hans Heysen. / In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”

*The Home*, vol. 9, no. 2, February 1928.

*Mountains of Arkaba (Flinders Range, Far North)* [B&W], Watercolour, 18. “Sixteen Pictures to Represent Australia at the Imperial Gallery of Art, London, in April.” [Fig. 60].
The Home, vol. 9, no. 5, May 1928.

A Sea of Hills, Arkaba, Flinders Range [B&W], Watercolour, 16. “One of the recent water-colours by Hans Heysen of the interior of Australia to be shown at the Grosvenor Galleries, Sydney, during June [sic]. The June number of ‘Art in Australia’ will be entirely devoted to the later work of this artist.”

The Home, vol. 9, no. 12, December 1928.


Advertisement: A Group of White Gums [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 74. “Art in Australia / Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen / June Number Ready.”


The River [C], Watercolour, 20. “Lent by J. R. McGregor, Esq., for the Hans Heysen Loan Exhibition, on view at the National Art Gallery of New South Wales, until May 26th.”

The Home, vol. 18, no. 10, October 1937.

[Two charcoal drawings by Heysen, B&W], 84. “This year’s range of New Season’s Greeting Cards for Christmas and the New Year shows a number of splendid subjects which include mountain, harbour and beach scenery. These illustrations are reproductions of drawings by Hans Heysen from the Art in Australia Series.”

The Home, vol. 19, no. 4, April 1938.

White Gums [C], Watercolour, cover illustration. “This Plate is Included Inside this Number for Framing.” [Fig. 53].

White Gums [C], Watercolour, 41. Printed on a page with a serrated edge and protected by a tissue paper cover.


Advertisement: White Gums [B&W], Watercolour, 70. “A Celebrated Artist Pays Tribute to the Engraving of his Work in Colour.” Includes a copy of the letter written by Heysen to Messrs. Hartland & Hyde, 25 May 1938 and Hans Hasenpflug’s photograph of Heysen [Fig. 54].
Photographs of Heysen or Members of his Family

*The Home*, vol. 4, no. 2, June 1923.

Judith Fletcher, “Mrs. Hans Heysen,” 58. “Mrs. Heysen accompanied her husband on his recent trip to Melbourne and Sydney. It is some years since they have visited this State, and Sydney was glad of the opportunity of welcoming them. Mrs. Heysen is the mother of eight sturdy and interesting children. She is deeply interested in art, and particularly in the development of her husband’s work. Her quiet charm won her many friends in Sydney.”

Judith Fletcher, “Hans Heysen,” 58. “South Australia’s famous water colourist, whose work will be prominently exhibited at the Exhibition of Australian Art in London this year. Heysen was one of the judges for the exhibition, and he gave up much valuable time for the purpose. No artist is more popular than this man – honest, sincere, unaffected, he is respected and admired by all who meet him.”

*The Home*, vol. 5, no. 2, June 1924.

‘Rembrandt,’ “Portrait of David Heysen,” 35. “David, eldest son of the Australian painter, Hans Heysen, of Ambleside, South Australia. This Saxon-haired and curiously thoughtful little head has a poise and quality which foretells an interesting future for David Heysen. He is now eleven years old.”

*The Home*, vol. 5, no. 3, September 1924.

MacKenzie, Heysen as part of a group of artists at Adelaide’s Artists’ Week, 20. “Some interesting specimens of the Australian artist gathered from various parts of the Commonwealth, and photographed in the Museum grounds, Adelaide. From left to right: Harold Herbert (Vic.), S. Ure Smith (N.S.W.), Hans Heysen (S.A.), Charles Wheeler (Vic.), Lionel Lindsay (N.S.W.), H. Van Raalte (S.A.).”

*The Home*, vol. 10, no. 2, February 1929.

‘Rembrandt,’ “Portrait of Nora Heysen,” 21. “Below: Miss Nora Heysen, daughter of the artist, Hans Heysen, and Mrs. Heysen, Ambleside, South Australia. She exhibited at the Society of Artists’ Exhibition.”

*The Home*, vol. 18, no. 8, August 1937.

Harold Cazneaux, “Hans Heysen,” 39. “Hans Heysen (shown on the opposite page), one of Australia’s principal landscape painters, will hold an exhibition of his work in Adelaide shortly. At his last one-man show, held in Adelaide several years ago, his sales reached a record for Australia, amounting to over £4,000.” This photograph was actually taken by Hans Hasenpflug, but is incorrectly credited to Cazneaux.
Reproductions of Heysen’s Works

Australia Beautiful: The Home Pictorial Annual, October 1927.

The Sheltered Pool [C], Watercolour, cover [Fig. 45].
A Basket of Fruit [C], Oil Painting, unpaginated. “Reproduced from Art in Australia.” Illustrated in an advertisement for Hartland & Hyde: Photo Engravers.

Changing Pastures [B&W], Charcoal study, 4.
The Drinking Pool [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 12.
The Home Paddock [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 16.
Woodside Pastures [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 17.
Corner of the Farm [B&W], Charcoal Drawing, 19.
The River [C], Watercolour, 24. “In the possession of J. R. McGregor, Esq., Sydney.”
The Hillside [C], Watercolour, 26. “In the possession of Elioth Gruner, Esq.”
A Grey Morning [C], Watercolour, 27.
At the Sliprails [C], Watercolour, 30. “In the possession of R. Dangar, Esq.”

Australia Beautiful: The Home Pictorial Annual, October 1928.

Country Road [B&W], Charcoal drawing, 3.
Gum Trees in Mist [B&W], Charcoal drawing, 5.
Resting [B&W], Charcoal study, 8.
Frost and Sunlight [C], Watercolour, 25. “In the possession of Norman Lindsay, Esq.”
A Reach of the Murray [C], Watercolour, 27.
The Rick Yard [C], Watercolour, 28. “In the possession of Dr. G. H. Abbott, Sydney.”
A Sky-line of the Far North, South Australia [B&W], Watercolour, 54.

Australia Beautiful, April 1929.

The Great Gum [B&W], Watercolour, 4.
Milking Time [C], Watercolour, 20.
The Red Gum [C], Watercolour, 21.
The Hill Farm [C], Watercolour, 26.
White Gums in Sunlight [C], Watercolour, 31.
Evening Glow [C], Watercolour, 32. “In the possession of E. W. Knox, Esq., Sydney.”
Farmyard Study [B&W], Charcoal study, 50.
The Road [B&W], Charcoal drawing, 51.

*Haystacks* [B&W], Charcoal drawing, unpaginated.

*Summer* [C], Watercolour, 2. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W. Awarded the Wynne Prize, 1909.”

*The Clearing* [C], Watercolour, 19. “In the possession of J. R. McGregor Esq.”

*Autumn Afternoon* [C], Watercolour, 24.

*A Pastoral* [C], Watercolour, 25. “In the possession of Robert Bryce, Esq.”

*Autumn* [C], Watercolour, 27.

*In the Brachina Gorge* [C], Watercolour, 32.


*The Little White Cottage, Ambleside, South Australia* [C], Watercolour, 2.

“In the possession of George Roarty, Esq.”

*Scarifying* [C], Watercolour, 26. “Painted in South Australia.”

*The Land of the Oratunga, Flinders Range* [C], Oil painting, 27. “In the possession of Dr. Norman Paul.”

The Home Annual, 1932-1941:

Reproductions of Heysen’s Works

The Home Annual, October 1932.

*Bronzewings* [C], Watercolour, 41.

*The Valley* [C], Watercolour, 45.

The Home Annual, October 1933.

*Harrowing, Winter Morning* [C], Watercolour, 3.

*Gum Trees of the Far North* [C], Watercolour, 4. “Awarded the Wynne Prize, 1931. In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”

*Mt. Patawerta, Far North* [C], Watercolour, 14.

*The Red Gum* [C], Watercolour, 18. “In the possession of Alan McGregor, Esq.”

The Home Annual, October 1934.

*The Toilers* [C], Watercolour, 23.

*The Stackyard* [C], Watercolour, 31.

The Home Annual, October 1935.

*Spring Flowers* [C], Oil painting, 28.

*A Cottage Bunch* [C], Oil painting, 29.
The Home Annual, October 1937.
Country Road [B&W], Charcoal drawing, 6.

The Home Annual, October 1938.
Woodside Landscape [C], Watercolour, 25. “In the possession of Lionel Lindsay, Esq.”
A Pastoral [C], Watercolour, 27.

Other Art in Australia Ltd. Publications:

• Society of Artists Pictures, Special Number of Art in Australia, Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1920.2
  Plate I. The Clearing [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of J. R. McGregor, Esq.”

• The Society of Artists Exhibition, 1922, Sydney: Art in Australia, 1922.
  Plate 4. The Hill Farm [C], Watercolour.

• The Exhibition of Australian Art in London, 1923: A Record of the Exhibition Held at the Royal Academy and Organised by the Society of Artists, Sydney, Art in Australia, 1923.
  Sydney Ure Smith, “Foreword.”
  Lionel Lindsay, “Australian Art.”
  Plate 4. The Toilers [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”
  Plate 14. Summer [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”
  Plate 15. Gums in Sunlight [C], Watercolour.
  Plate 30. Flowers and Fruit [C], Oil painting. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”
  Plate 46. Ramparts of the Murray [B&W], Watercolour.
  Plate 53. White Gums [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
  Plate 68. Pastoral [B&W], Charcoal drawing.
  Plate 122. The Quarry [B&W], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”
  Plate 125. Gums Under Mist [B&W], Watercolour.
  Plate 159. A Woodside Pastoral [B&W], Watercolour.

---

2 A Record of the Society of Artists’ Exhibition held at the Education Department’s Art Gallery, Sydney, 1919.
Plate 160. *The Willow Tree* [B&W], Watercolour. “In the possession of Mrs. Barr Smith, Adelaide.”

- *Australian Landscape Painters of To-day*, Sydney: Art in Australia, 1929.
  - James S. MacDonald, “Introduction.”
  - Basil Burdett, “Notes on Australian Landscape Painters.”
- Plate 5. *The Little White Cottage* [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of Gregory Roarty Esq.”
- Plate 22. *Landscape, Far North* [B&W], Watercolour. “In the possession of the Artist.”

- *New South Wales Art Gallery Pictures*, Sydney: Art in Australia, by arrangement with the Trustees of the N.S.W. National Art Gallery, 1931.
  - J. S. MacDonald, “The National Art Gallery of New South Wales.”
- Plate 16. *The Quarry* [C], Watercolour. “This watercolour is to be noted for its technical breadth and freedom of handling. Out of subject matter not particularly eventful the artist has made a drawing of considerable interest. The incidental matter has been combined to form a picture of colour, tone and movement that is gratifying alike to the ordinary viewer and the person interested in the surmounting of technical difficulties.”

- *Australia’s Achievement in Art*, Special Number of Art in Australia issued in Commemoration of Australia’s 150th Anniversary, Sydney: John Fairfax & Sons, 1937.
  - Lionel Lindsay, “Australia’s Achievement in Art.”
- Plate 3. *The Toilers* [C], Watercolour.
- Plate 10. *Mt. Patawerta, Far North* [C], Watercolour.
- Plate 33. *Gum Trees of the Far North* [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W. Awarded the Wynne Prize, 1931.”

- *Heysen’s Gum Trees*, Sydney: Sydney Morning Herald, 1937.3
  - *The River* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of J. R. McGregor, Esq.”
  [cover image]
  - *A Pastoral* [C], Watercolour, unpaginated.
  - *Frost and Sunbeams* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of Norman Lindsay, Esq.”
  - *A Pastoral* [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of Robert Bryce, Esq.”
  - *Murray Cliffs* [C], Watercolour.
  - *The Red Gum* [C], Watercolour.
  - *Under the Gums* [C], Watercolour.

---

3 Although technically not an *Art in Australia* publication, its production was overseen by Sydney Ure Smith and made use of the colour blocks produced for the magazine.
An Autumn Morning [C], Watercolour.
A Grey Morning [C], Watercolour.
The Farmyard Gum [C], Watercolour.
White Gums in Sunlight [C], Watercolour.

Publications produced by Sydney Ure Smith, 1939-1949:

  Plate 7. Morning Light [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of Mrs W. S. Strang.”
  Cf. Plate 45. Norman Carter, Hans Heysen, Esq. [B&W], Oil painting.

- Australia: National Journal, 1939-1947:
  - no. 1, Winter issue, July-August 1939.
  Morning Light [C], Watercolour, 32. “Water colour by Hans Heysen in the possession of Mrs. W. S. Strang, Wahroonga, N.S.W. This painting was exhibited in the last one-man show of Heysen’s work held last year at David Jones’ Gallery, Sydney. It is a particularly fine example of his work and one of the most important water colours painted by him in recent years.”
  - vol. 3, no. 3, February 1942.
  The Quarry [B&W] Oil, 2.
  Basket of Fruit [B&W], Oil, 3.

  Gum Trees of the Far North [C], Watercolour, 14. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of N.S.W.”
  Caption: “HANS HEYSEN (1877 – ). One of Australia’s leading landscape painters in water colour and oils. Famous for his studies of gum trees and the Flinders Range country. Is regarded as Australia’s foremost water colourist.”

  Land of Oratunga [B&W], no. 62. “These bold ridges of the Flinders Range in Central Australia have rock colors of pink, orange and red, but an annual rainfall of only five inches makes the vegetation extremely sparse.” [one of four works by Heysen in the exhibition]

• The Studio, vol. 124, no. 595, October 1942, edited by Sydney Ure Smith.
  Morning Light [C], Watercolour, 127. “Courtesy of Mrs W. S. Strang.”

  Summer [B&W], Watercolour, 15¼ x 12¼ ins, 39. “Purchased by the National Art Gallery of Queensland.”

  Gum Trees of the Far North [C], Watercolour, cover image. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales.”
  White Gums in Sunlight [C], Watercolour.
  Woodside Landscape [C], Watercolour, “In the possession of Sir Lionel Lindsay.”
  The Three Sisters, Aroona Valley, Flinders Range [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of South Australia.”

  The Wilpenas from Bunyeroo [C], Watercolour.
  Land of the Oratunga [C], Watercolour. “In the possession of the National Art Gallery of South Australia. Included with the Exhibition of Australian Art on tour in U.S.A. and Canada.”
  The Stack Yard [C], Watercolour.
  A Pastoral [C], Watercolour.
  The Toilers [C], Watercolour.

  Plate 57. Land of the Oratunga [B&W], Watercolour, 145. “From the original in the National Art Gallery of S. Australia, by permission of the Trustees.”

  Flinders Range Landscape [B&W], 73. “Drawing, in the possession of the National Art Gallery of Victoria.”
  
  *The Land of the Oratunga. Flinders Range [C], Oil painting, cover image.*
  *A Grey Morning [C], Watercolour.*
  *Hillside with Sheep [C], Watercolour.*
  *Bronzewings [C], Watercolour.*

  
  “Hans Heysen O.B.E.,” 34.
  *Morning Light [C], Watercolour, 36. “Collection Mrs W. S. Strang.”*
Appendix VII: Hans Heysen and the Collection of the National Gallery of South Australia before 1940

In 1940, following the establishment of a separate Board of Governors for the NGSA, Hans Heysen was appointed a member of the Art Gallery Board for a period of four years.¹ Heysen’s position was renewed for several successive terms and he continued to serve on the board for 28 years until his death in 1968. However, prior to being appointed in this official capacity, Heysen had taken an active interest in the collection development of both the NGSA and other Australian state galleries. This appendix details several instances where Heysen either influenced or sought to influence the selection of works for the NGSA’s permanent collection. These provide further insights into both his tastes in art and his connections and status within the Adelaide art world.

1907 – British Art from the New Zealand International Exhibition

Heysen’s first recorded involvement with the selection of works for NGSA relates to the British art works purchased from the New Zealand International Exhibition in Christchurch.² The Fine Arts Committee of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery granted funds for Harry Pelling Gill, the honorary curator, to travel to Christchurch to view the exhibition and recommend works for the NGSA’s collection.³ Gill’s visit corresponded with Heysen’s three month trip to New Zealand in early 1907. Heysen first visited the British art display prior to Gill’s arrival and identified several paintings he felt would make valuable additions to the Adelaide collection.⁴ A few days later he

¹ Charles Fenner to Heysen, 13 January 1940, HH Papers.
² The exhibition was on display from 1 November 1906 until 15 April 1907.
³ Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 1 February 1907, AGSA Research Library.
⁴ Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
inspected the exhibition again in Gill’s company. Heysen advised his wife that “Gill fell in with my views and opinions to the very letter,” and later wrote “I suppose we couldn’t very well have worked together better – as our minds seemed quite mutual on the pictures to be purchased.” This was not strictly true, as in his first letter Heysen had identified James Paterson’s landscape *A Dream of the Nor Loch – Edinburgh Castle in the Middle Ages* (c.1904, Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture) as the work he rated of second highest merit. However, he later conceded that:

My first desire was to include a landscape by James Paterson – but I soon felt Gill was going to leave this out and somehow I did not feel sorry – for the same feeling – “of not quite satisfactory” had also entered my thought – after my 3[rd] and 4[th] sight of the picture – there seemed a hastyness [sic] and unequalness – and yet had I worked on my first impression I should have selected this one – so you see dear Sallie how careful one must be in buying pictures.

Ultimately Gill was responsible for decided which works to recommend and this in turn was subject to the Fine Arts Committee endorsing his advice and the artists accepting the prices that the Board offered. However, it seems plausible that Heysen’s enthusiasm about certain works would have given Gill greater confidence in his judgement.

After conferring with Gill, Heysen advised Sallie that: “Adelaide will get the best pictures in the whole show at remarkable cheap figures – that is if we get those I have mentioned – and each one happens to illustrate a phase and school that we have not represented.” Fortunately the Committee decided to approve

---

5 Heysen to Sallie Heysen: 8 February [1907]; 11 March [1907], HH Papers.
6 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
7 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 11 March [1907], HH Papers.
8 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, [undated fragment, February 1907], HH Papers.
Gill’s recommendations in full and authorised him to spend up to £2000. The NGSA acquired 34 works from the Christchurch exhibition, including paintings, drawings and works of decorative arts. Listed below are the eleven works which Heysen specifically praised in his letters and possibly helped influence their selection for the gallery. Following his return to Adelaide Heysen wrote a letter to the Fine Arts Committee “expressing his pleasure at learning of the purchases made by the Board.”

The works acquired which Hans Heysen discussed in his letters to Sallie Heysen were:

• **D. Y. Cameron (1865-1945), The Bride, oil on canvas, 125.7 x 97cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.**

• **John Reinhard Weguelin (1849-1927) A Dance of Wood Nymphs, 1906, watercolour, 62.2 x 43.5cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.**

• **George Clausen (1852-1944), The Rickyards, Winter, 1902, oil on canvas, 53.3 x 58.4cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.**

Heysen advised Sallie that one of the works he had set his heart on was “Clausen’s – with some hay picks – fowls and men working with simply delicious colouring.” He later wrote: “After all [is] said and done my choice lies with Clausen’s – it’s a real beaut – but no public will ever like it.”

---

9 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 13 February 1907, AGSA Research Library.
10 *Unveiling of Works of Art Purchased at the New Zealand International Exhibition, 1907*, (Adelaide: Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia, 1907).
11 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 5 April 1907, AGSA Research Library.
12 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
13 Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 8 February [1907], HH Papers.
• Herbert J. Draper (1864-1920), *The Foam Sprite*, c.1897, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 47cm.
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

Heysen described Draper’s *Sea Sprite* as:

a sexless figure – full of go and beauty – not a coarse feeling of flesh – for you do not feel its nakedness – (that is I mean the nakedness of a conscious model) the whole thing is spontaneous – in harmony the sea grows a glorious colour – the whole tone of the picture is life – breezy joyous life – you unconsciously hold your breath – as you feel figure and dolphin skipping over the wet wave.\(^{14}\)

• Mark Fisher (1841-1923), *Water Meadows in Spring*, oil on canvas, 69.8 x 91.4cm.
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

Heysen praised this painting as “fresh and vibrating.”\(^{15}\)

• Edward Atkinson Hornel (1864-1933), *A Summer Idyll*, 1905, oil on canvas, 100.5 x 115.7cm.
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

Heysen described “a beautiful – decorative figure subject of Hornel” as amongst the three works he most hoped the NGSA would acquire.\(^{16}\) However, he was concerned that most of the works he had admired “would receive a fair share of adverse criticism if bought – especially the Hornel – as this is a work of art.”\(^{17}\)

• William Lee Hankey (1869-1952), *Young am I*, watercolour, 35.7 x 52.7cm.
Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

Heysen described this as “a peaceful charming figure study of W. Le Hankey.”\(^{18}\)

\(^{14}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 11 March [1907], HH Papers.
\(^{15}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 8 February [1907], HH Papers.
\(^{16}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
\(^{17}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, 8 February [1907], HH Papers.
\(^{18}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
• Henry Edgar Crocket (1870-1926), *St. George*, c.1900, watercolour on paper, 30.5 x 45.7cm (image).
  Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

• Giffard Hocart Lenfestey (1872-1943), *A Gleam of Light*, 1905, watercolour, 38.1 x 54.6cm.
  Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

• James Paterson (1854-1932), *An Idyll of Edinburgh*, watercolour, 52.1 x 69.8cm.
  Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

  This is a different work from the large landscape in oils by Paterson that Heysen had initially admired as “a strong glowing, soft, luminous landscape,” but subsequently dismissed as “not quite satisfactory.”\(^{19}\)

• John MacAllan Swan (1847-1910), *Tigress Watching a Python*, watercolour and body colour, 34.6 x 52.6cm.
  Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1907.

  Heysen praised this “fine strong animal study of Swan.”\(^{20}\)

**1914 – Defending William Orpen’s *Sowing New Seed***

In 1914 Hans Heysen publically expressed support for the NGSA controversial new acquisition, William Orpen’s *Sowing New Seed for the Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland* (1913). This painting was selected by Rose MacPherson (later Margaret Preston) from the 1914 exhibition of the New English Art Club, London, and purchased for the substantial price of £700 sterling with the Elder Bequest Fund. After being placed on public display in late June

---

\(^{19}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen: Monday [4 February 1907]; 11 March [1907], HH Papers.

\(^{20}\) Heysen to Sallie Heysen, Monday [4 February 1907], HH Papers.
1914 the painting provoked a storm of controversy, attracting thousands of visitors to the gallery and extensive condemnation in letters to the editor. Detractors objected to the work’s enigmatic subject matter, the nudity of the female figure and the suggestion that it was mocking the clergy. The painting was taken off display and relegated to storage in February 1915. In 1920 the gallery board negotiated with Orpen to return the problematic canvas, with the artist painting a duplicate version of his portrait Marshal Foch (1918, AGSA) in exchange. However, Sowing New Seed ultimately found a home in Australia after being acquired by the Victorian senator Robert Elliott in about 1927 or 1928. He later donated it to the people of Mildura as part of a larger bequest. The controversy surrounding Orpen’s painting and the NGSA has been discussed in detail by Patricia Sumerling and Angus Trumble.21

- William Orpen (Irish, 1878-1931), Sowing New Seed for the Board of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, 1913, oil on canvas, 137 x 137cm, Mildura Arts Centre, Mildura. Bequest of Senator R. D. Elliott, 1956.

After Orpen’s painting arrived in Adelaide in May 1914, Heysen was permitted to see the work in the boardroom of the Art Gallery before it went on public display. He advised W. H. Gill that:

I understand there exists some indecision whether they are going to hang it – it is a fine thing – but the picture contains a nude girl – (also two cupids) & the artist has put her there as God finished her – so they call it indecent – I feel only an immoral being can see indecency in this figure – the whole picture is very fine & beautiful – & all I can say is that Miss MacPherson who selected it in England showed most exordinary [sic] pluck in buying it for our Gallery – Our Julius Olsson has also arrived – a fine vigorous moonlight. These are two valuable acquisitions.22

---

22 Heysen to W. H. Gill, 11 May 1914, WHG Papers.
Anticipating the controversy that the work might provoke, Heysen’s friend William Jethro Brown, a member of the Board of Governors, asked him to provide a statement endorsing the artistic merits of the painting. Heysen’s commendation was subsequently published as part of a flyer issued by the Board of Governors. This contained four explanatory texts, together with extracts praising the painting from several British publications.

Heysen contributed the following statement:

I would like to express right away my whole-hearted enthusiasm and admiration for Orpen’s picture. It is an artist’s picture – first wonderfully decorative in line, colour and general treatment; the simplicity with which the artist has modelled his figures, and yet gained all the relief that seems necessary is astonishing, and in this respect alone it will serve as a fine lesson to us painters in Australia. Perhaps what struck me most of all was the perfect harmony in the mass design, the colour, the rhythm of line and the mode of technique; there is not a coarse note, but refinement everywhere. I should call it an exceptionally fine work by a very fine artist, and I feel glad to think that we are to keep it with us in Adelaide always. In its perfect decorative sense I feel sure there is not a finer picture in the Commonwealth. Putting myself in the place of an ordinary layman, of course these qualities above mentioned, in a sense, would be unknown to me, never having seen anything in our Gallery to lead up to this – a very new picture, and the subject as a subject would not be understood either (I must confess ignorance here also) but I fully believe that even the layman, when he has seen this work again and again, will grow to realise its intense beauties.

By concentrating on the formal qualities of the painting rather than its subject matter, Heysen’s employs a similar approach to the British ‘New Criticism’ of the Edwardian period.

---

Heysen declined an invitation to present a lecture on the merits of Orpen’s work, writing:

I am indeed very sorry that I must decline, as I honestly feel my inexperience as a public speaker would not fit me for that purpose. May I express the hope that you will find someone who has more confidence that myself to explain the beauties of the Orpen. Personally I feel this to be a very difficult problem so as to make it understandable to the public. It may be that the artist had a tangible purpose for expressing his subject, but to me it is very evident that the primary motive was to make a beautiful decoration, and in this he has succeeded as I have seen in the work of no other artist excepting in that of Puvis de Chavannes, the greatest decorator of modern times.

I went to see the Orpen again in our Gallery & I must confess its beauties gave me even greater pleasure than I experienced on my first acquaintance – if only the public can be induced to go often to see it I feel confident that it will draw to itself many converts as time goes on.25

Heysen also wrote to MacPherson expressing his admiration for the work. His letter remains untraced, but its content may be inferred from MacPherson’s reply where she thanks Heysen, “for so courageously expressing your opinions about the Orpen. I do not thank you for liking the work but for having the pluck to say so. … I felt when I saw the Orpen that the same luminous quality was in your work & felt you would appreciate it.”26 In a second letter written several months later, MacPherson expressed her frustration with the controversy, writing:

Really I’m sick of S.A. The Board said by letter ‘Masterpiece’ & why not a sample or example of all the latest schools? I give up. … I feel so ashamed & miserable over Adelaide’s behaviour – however it will do one thing, prevent my ever coming back as I feel as if I had done a criminal action.27

In March 1918 Heysen had the opportunity to view the Orpen again in gallery storage. He wrote to Walter Baldwin Spencer:

25 Heysen to J Adams, 5 [or 7?] July 1914, Letters Received, 1906-1926, GRG 19/5, AGSA Research Library.
26 Margaret MacPherson to Heysen, 26 August [1914, filed with Undated Letters, Folder 109], HH Papers.
27 Margaret MacPherson to Heysen, [postmark: 7 January 1915], HH Papers.
As Mr Gill will have told you, we went together to see the Orpen … After an absence of over two years I like the Orpen better than ever, it is a really very beautiful thing to the visual senses, both in rhythm of line and beauty of colour – It seems a great shame that it should be subjected to this “solitary confinement” awaiting I am told “deportation” as soon as the Trustees can come to some definite arrangement of an exchange with Orpen who it appears is quite agreeable, what the Trustees want is a typical Orpen interior with which his name leaped into such prominence. Although I confess his interiors are ‘perfect beauties’ it seems a crying shame that this Orpen ‘Sowing New Seed’ should ever be allowed to leave Australia – is it quite impossible for Melbourne to acquire it? … I quite recognise that whoever bought it would lay themselves open to ‘howling criticism’ but why should we always follow the path of least resistance – and after all the money with which it would be bought was not given by the Government … so that after all the Trustees would not be accused of ‘squandering the people’s money’. It is a pity that when buying for public galleries too often the “typical example” is bought, as being the safest thing. Here is a picture certainly not a ‘typical Orpen’ in other words not what we are accustomed to see from him – but it is a wonderfully fine thing and should remain in Australia.28

Heysen’s comments suggest that at this time his taste in art was considerably more advanced than that of the broader South Australian public. However, the memory of the backlash provoked by Orpen’s painting probably discouraged him from purchasing anything too progressive or confrontational when acting as a buyer for the NGSA in 1934.

1934 – Heysen Acts as an Overseas Buyer

During Heysen’s visit to Europe between May and October 1934, he acted as a buyer for the NGSA. In December 1933 the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery accepted his offer to act on their behalf and arranged for £1000 sterling “to be made available in London for the purchase of British and/or Continental works of art.” The Board did not wish to “hamper”

28 Heysen to Walter Baldwin Spencer, 29 March [1918], WBS Letters.
Heysen “with any restrictions in the purchasing,” stating: “The artists whose works you buy, and the subjects, are left entirely to your own discretion, the Board feeling that with your knowledge of our Gallery and its requirements it can safely leave the selection to you.” The Board also signalled the possibility of granting additional funding, if there were works that Heysen would “strongly recommend” acquiring, but which exceeded the funds available.\(^{29}\) In late August 1934 the Board agreed to Heysen spending up to a further £500 sterling on works.\(^{30}\) However, Heysen did not utilise this full amount, advising Sydney Ure Smith that he spent about £1200 on the works he acquired.\(^{31}\) Heysen purchased 21 works by 18 artists; 14 painting in oil or tempera and seven drawings or watercolours. All of the works were by male artists, eight of whom had died prior to 1934 and the subject matter was evenly divided between landscapes and images of figures.

After being entrusted with this task, Heysen advised Lionel Lindsay that he hoped to “have some luck in getting my money’s worth, but quite realise ‘good pictures’ are hard to come by. Our Gallery is badly in need of … some convincing modern work (in the best sense).”\(^ {32} \) These objectives are significant in view of Heysen’s selection. Conscious of his limited funds and wishing to assemble a varied collection, he privileged quantity over quality, largely purchasing minor works by artist of established reputations. He also used the term “modern” in a temporal sense to refer to living or recently deceased artists,

---

\(^{29}\) Stanley W. Marshall, General Secretary, to Heysen, 22 December 1933, HH Papers; Fine Arts Committee, Minutes: 12 December 1933; 13 March 1934, AGSA Research Library.

\(^{30}\) Stanley W. Marshall, General Secretary, to Heysen, 4 September 1934, HH Papers.

\(^{31}\) Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.

\(^{32}\) Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 8 February 1934, LF Papers.
rather than as a designation of a modernist aesthetic. Heysen’s understanding of current trends in art was guided by his reading of traditionalist English art magazines such as *The Studio*, *The Connoisseur* and *The Royal Academy Illustrated*. Consequently, his selection was in keeping with the artists, non-confrontational subject matter and naturalistic or tentatively modern styles favoured by these publications.  

When Heysen’s purchases were exhibited in Adelaide they were positively received by local art critics Henry E. Fuller and M. James MacNally, suggesting that their tastes had been conditioned through similar sources. Heysen also described the merits of five of the works purchased in an article he wrote for *Art in Australia*.  

Heysen sought the advice of Charles Holmes, the former director of the National Gallery, London, and William Rothenstein regarding which artists he should purchase for the NGSA. His discussions with Lindsay, who was also in London at the time, undoubtedly further influenced his selection. Heysen had also taken a keen interest in the 36 works which James McGregor and Ure Smith had purchased in London for the NAGNSW the previous year. Six of the same artists featured in the selections made for both the Sydney and Adelaide galleries, suggesting that Heysen was following his friends’ lead. However, McGregor and Ure Smith had also acquired tentatively modern works by Eric Gill, Spencer Gore, Duncan Grant, Augustus John, Samuel Peploe, Jacob Epstein and John

---

36 Sallie Heysen to Michael and Stefan Heysen, 27 May [1934], HH Papers.
37 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith: 7 January 1934; 10 February [1934], SUS Papers; Heysen to Will Ashton, 7 January [1934], WA Papers.
38 They were Bateman, Cameron, Clausen, Holmes, Simon and Rushbury.
Skeaping. Heysen enquired after “the reception your choice of pictures received from the public & press,” suggesting that the likely public response was a consideration which guided his selection. Ure Smith wrote of the 1933 purchases:

We did not buy any ‘extreme’ work – we bought what we considered interesting work, which would benefit our artists, students and the art-loving public. We knew we would not satisfy everyone. Those who wanted the latest examples of modernism would naturally vote this collection dull – and the die-hards who dislike progress or change would think we were wasting public money.

That Heysen was motivated by similar considerations is suggested by James MacNally description of his selection, which he felt offered: “‘the man in the street’ and the stay-at-home student examples of the work of the most famous painters which have been practising at the great European centres of art.”

An annotated timeline of the purchases made by Heysen is provide below.

On 28 May 1934 the Board received a Cablegram from Heysen, advising that he had purchased four pictures. The prices paid for these first four works are not recorded.

---


40 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 10 February [1934], SUS Papers.

41 Ure Smith, “Recent Purchases,” 12.


43 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 12 June 1934, AGSA Research Library.
• James Bateman (1893-1959), *The Harvest*, 1934, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 136cm. [Fig. 79]

Purchased 1934, Special Picture Fund.

Heysen purchased this work from the Royal Academy’s annual exhibition. He wrote in his *Art in Australia* article that Bateman’s painting reflected,

considered and organised craftsmanship … expressed through the medium of a truly English mind; impressionism or the effect of movement has been thrown aside and emotional qualities are kept well controlled. His work has definite organisation, it does not grow overnight – rather it is the result of long contemplation and selection and an accumulation of studies direct from Nature as well as a store of mental impressions. It is no easy matter to organize all this material into a complete and satisfying whole without losing those precious qualities of movement and life so essential in every work of art. Yet he does this with definite originality and in his consciously woven patterns he retains perfect draftsmanship with true character of form, expressing that tranquil and serene sense of the English country-side with its quiet contemplation and rural charm.

In all Bateman’s productions is seen the reflection of a fine mind, a quality which is always manifest in the perfection of his craftsmanship. His picture of ‘The Harvest’ is based on a deeper search for realism, in the visual sense, than is generally found in his work, where the quality of pattern is more insistent, as for instance in his picture in the Sydney Art Gallery, which is an extremely interesting example of his orchestration of colour pattern and conventionalising of form.44

Prior to his departure for Europe, Heysen had advised Ure Smith, “I am very interested in Bateman’s work – for its design & decorative qualities.”45 His interest was probably stimulated by Ure Smith and McGregor’s purchase of Bateman’s *Woodland with Cattle* (1932) for the NAGNSW in 1933.46 When in London Heysen met and befriended Bateman. The two maintained a correspondence from 1934 until 1939.

---

45 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 7 January 1934, SUS Papers.
H. E. Fuller described *The Harvest* as the “most important” of the first group of works to arrive back in Adelaide, noting that it had, been much illustrated and discussed. It is really a study in composition, but a masterpiece in colour. To the Australian, used to large spaces, it may seem remarkable to see so many objects and subjects introduced into a comparatively small area. The whole picture is full of life and vigour. Nothing better could be done than the groups of pines and other foliage, while the quiet background of mansion, church and hills makes a fine contrast.47

MacNally also praised the work, writing:

As an example of the modern outlook James Bateman’s ‘The Harvest’ fills the eye and mind comfortably. It is an excellent work, very decorative and very typical of an English home farm. The figures are moving, the soft wind touches the clump of alders in the middle distance, and the warm ripe glow of the wheat ears is admirably suggested.48

• Sir Charles John Holmes (1868-1936), *Rotherham Campagna*, 1933, oil on canvas, 68.9 x 76.5cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Heysen wrote in his *Art in Australia* article:

In ‘Rotherham Campagna,’ by Sir Charles Holmes, we have another instance of the welding of decorative pattern with realism and a highly interesting picture made out of commonplace surroundings. Combining brilliant painting with a fine sense of movement, its design is distinctive and, besides being decorative, retains the sensation of cloud. Throughout the picture is held together by the rhythm of the brushwork, the brilliant deep red of the main chimney is the dominant central note – the big drum – with all the supporting forms and lines leading to and enhancing the value of this note.

Sir Charles Holmes is now considered one of the main forces of landscape painting in England to-day, and in ‘Rotherham Campagna’ we have an excellent work in which, he had told me, he had reached the culminating point of those qualities in paint for which he had been striving: a welding of the older tradition with the more modern thought.49

---

H. E. Fuller felt this work would “excite curiosity and criticism. The sky is rather wonderfully portrayed.” MacNally, however, criticised this work, writing: “I do not like [it] at all. That tower in the middle distance is a crude colour note and jumps right out of the picture.” It was the only painting he condemned amongst Heysen’s “memorable purchase.” Writing in 1950, Ivor Francis praised the sophistication of the work’s composition and Holmes’s dramatic use of colour. However, he concluded that it was “perhaps, the artist’s sheer correctness and strict adherence to … sound academic principles which prevented this painting from becoming a great artistic masterpiece.”

Prior to his departure, Heysen advised Ure Smith that he was very interested in Holmes’s landscapes. Soon after arriving in London Heysen showed examples of Nora’s painting to Holmes who gave a favourable criticism of the works. However, when Nora approached him for a critique of her progress two years later his assessment was less complimentary. In addition to purchasing an example of his work, Heysen sought Holmes’s advice regarding which artists he should purchase for the NGSA. The two men maintained an intermittent correspondence between 1934 and Holmes’s death in 1936. Ure Smith and McGregor had selected Holmes’s Stony Field, Teesdale (1914-1917) for the NAGNSW in 1933.

53 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 7 January 1934, SUS Papers.
54 Sallie Heysen to David, Michael and Stefan Heysen, 3 June 1934, HH Papers.
55 Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 22 November 1936, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 69.
56 Sallie Heysen to Michael and Stefan Heysen, 27 May [1934], HH Papers.
• Robert Anning Bell, R.A. (1863-1933), *Christ and the Children*, 1929, oil on wood, 104.1 x 44.4cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

• Robert Anning Bell, R.A. (1863-1933), *The Sleeping Woman*, oil on canvas, 27.1 x 37.6cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

In May 1934 the Fine Art Society held a *Memorial Exhibition of the Works of the late Mr. Robert Anning-Bell*.57 It is likely that Heysen purchased both works from this exhibition. The pose and costume of *The Sleeping Woman* is similar to some of the figures that appear in Bell’s *The Sleeping Beauty* and *The Garden of the Sleeping Beauty*, for which it may have been a preliminary study. Both were reproduced in *The Studio* (June, 1910).58

The August 1934 Report of the Fine Arts Committee stated they had received letters from Heysen advising that he had purchased a further nine works with a total value of £330-15-0. The Committee also suggested that a further £500 be placed at Heysen’s disposal.59 At least four of the works were purchased from a sale at Christies auction house on 22 June 1934. Heysen informed Ure Smith that in the same sale: “There was quite a good Monet a sea piece – rather fine in colour but poor in shapes & design – was sold at Christies for 230gs & another of his London Thames series brought 110gs. This I did not like at all – both pictures had been bought by the Duke of Marlborough 2 years ago for 250gs ea!”60 It is

---

59 Report of the Fine Arts Committee, 14 August 1934, AGSA Research Library.
60 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers. The two paintings by Claude Monet were *Pyramides de Port-Coton* (Pyramids at Port-Coton), 1886, oil on canvas, 65 x 81cm, (Private Collection, South America) and *Charing Cross Bridge*, 1904, oil on canvas, 65 x 95cm, (Margulies Family Collection, Great Britain). Daniel Wildenstein, *Monet*, 4 vols., vol. 3 (Köln and Paris: Taschen and Wildenstein Institute, 1997), 410, 668.
regrettable that Heysen did not purchase either of these works. Upon his return he confided to Ure Smith: “I wanted to take back a good example of Monet[’s] work for our Gallery – but there was nothing I really liked.”  

- **Matthijis Maris (Dutch, 1839-1917), A Negro Boy, 1857, oil on paper, 50.8 x 40.6cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.**

  Heysen purchased this from Christie’s 22 June sale for £42.  

  MacNally praised this work as “a typical and fine example of this famous Dutchman. … Mathew’s work is so subtle and so elusive that it is almost impossible to find a parallel to it.”

- **Jean Francois Millet (French, 1814-1875), L’Eglise de Gréville (Church at Gréville), c.1871-1874, pen and wash on canvas, 59 x 71.5cm.**

  Heysen purchased this work through Christie’s 22 June sale for £7-7-0.  

  At the same sale he paid 25 guineas for a charcoal drawing by Millet for his own collection.  

  The work is probably the underdrawing for a duplicate version of Millet’s oil painting *L’Eglise de Gréville* (c.1871-74, Paris: Musée d’Orsay).

---

61 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
62 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
64 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
• Lucien Simon (French, 1861-1945), *La Veuve (The Widow)*, watercolour, 73.6 x 92.7cm.
Purchased 14 August 1934.

Heysen purchased this work through Christie’s 22 June sale for £42.66 The building in the background is the lighthouse of Sainte-Marine, which is located at the mouth of the river Odet, on the south coast of Brittany.

• Lucien Simon (French, 1861-1945), *La Chapelle (The Side Chapel)*, oil on canvas, 64.7 x 81.5cm.
Purchased 14 August 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

Heysen purchased this work through Christie’s 22 June sale for £7-7-0.67 MacNally described the two works by Simon as, “quite distinct and lovable. Of the two I much prefer the treatment and atmosphere of the ‘Side Chapel.’ There is a suggestion of space, of peace and tranquillity that only a master could give, while the colour is exquisite.”68 Ure Smith and McGregor had selected Simon’s gouache * Races in Brittany* (1933) for the NAGNSW in 1933.

• Sir George Clausen (1852-1944), *October, Moonrise, c.1904*, oil on canvas, 61.5 x 51.4cm.
Purchased 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

Heysen purchased this painting for £63. When in London Heysen also paid 40 guineas for Clausen’s oil, *A Winter Morning, London* for his own collection. He

---

66 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
67 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, 15 July 1934, SUS Papers.
had previously acquired a wash drawing by Clausen at auction in 1925.69

MacNally wrote of *October, Moonrise*:

the picture which intrigues me most of all is Sir George Clausen’s ‘Moonrise.’

I have reasons. First and foremost, I was astounded to see such courage in a painter attacking such a ‘pretty’ subject and by sheer honesty of purpose and deep feeling making of it something great and significant.

Of course, after all, honesty and purpose is the primary foundation of an artist’s character, and this quality has never, to my mind, been so strongly suggested as in Clausen’s treatment of this fine work. View it from where you will, at the rail or standing back, and you will see a vibration of light and a luminosity that strikes the senses with a resounding thump.

There has been little ‘medium’ used. The oil seems to have been squeezed out of the colour and the paint laid on dry. Pure tones have been put on either side in the impressionist manner without mixing, and the whole effect is most restful and convincing.70

• Sir David Young Cameron, R.A. (1865-1945), *Goatfell, Autumn*, oil on canvas, 38.1 x 44.4cm.
Purchased 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

Heysen purchased this work for £84 from the Beaux Arts Gallery.71 In 1933 Ure Smith and McGregor purchased 3 prints by Cameron as part of their selection for the NAGNSW.72 Heysen also had at least five etching by Cameron in his private collection.73 In 1928 Lionel Lindsay had compared Heysen’s depictions of the Flinders Ranges to Cameron’s Scottish mountain subjects.74 This comparison would have increased Heysen’s desire to view examples of these

---

71 F. Lessore to Heysen, 29 June 1934, HH Papers.
73 *Hans Heysen Collection*. Lots: 40; 79; 143; 198; 241.
74 Lionel Lindsay, “Heysen’s Recent Watercolours,” *AinA*, 3rd series, no. 24 (1928): unpaginated.
works when in London. Heysen’s correspondence show that he and his circle greatly admired Cameron’s work.\textsuperscript{75}

- **Stanley Anderson, A.R.A. (1884-1966), *Gleaners*, tempera on canvas, 48.6 x 67.5cm.** [Fig. 80] Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Heysen purchased this work for £63 in June 1934. Stanley Anderson was a painter, printmaker and from 1925 until 1940, visiting instructor in the etching department of Goldsmiths’ College School of Art.\textsuperscript{76} Anderson was one of the artists who Heysen met and befriended. They were possibly introduced by Lionel Lindsay, who was a mutual friend.\textsuperscript{77} Heysen and Anderson maintained a correspondence between 1934 and 1939. Following the purchase of these two works, Anderson advised him that he was “very happy that the works are going to such a good home. It was for this reason that I put such a very reasonable price on the tempera.” He also gifted Heysen a proof of his engraving *Hot Chestnuts* (1933) “as a token of friendship.”\textsuperscript{78} H. E. Fuller praised *Gleaners* as, “one of the most interesting in the group [of purchases], the dozen figures being thoroughly human, and the varying expressions of the book buyers worth study. The whole picture is very natural.”\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} See, W. H. Gill to Heysen: 23 April 1915; 7 May 1915; 10 May 1915; 21 July 1915; 22 May 1922; Walter Baldwin Spencer to Heysen, 8 September 1922; Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, [postmarked: 18 July 1924]; Sydney Ure Smith to Heysen, 21 December 1924; 13 May 1932, HH Papers.


\textsuperscript{77} See, Lionel Lindsay to Heysen, January 1944, HH Papers.

\textsuperscript{78} Stanley Anderson to Heysen, 27 June 1934, HH Papers.


Heysen purchased this drawing for £8-8-0.

  Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

  Heysen purchased this painting for £13-13-0. MacNally described this work as “hard, but convincing.”

• Léon Bakst (Russian, 1866-1924), *Indo-Persian Dance (Marchesa Casati)*, 1912, gouache on paper, 56.8 x 47.4cm.
  Purchased 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

  In a letter dated 14 August 1934, Heysen advised the Fine Arts Committee that he had purchased this watercolour for £30. This painting depicts Luisa, Marchesa Casati Stampa di Soncino (1881-1957) an eccentric Italian heiress, society hostess and patron of the arts. When staying in St Moritz in the summer of 1912 she performed an Indo-Persian dance to music by Modest Mussorgsky. It is possible that this design was intended to be made as a costume by the Venice-based Spanish fashion designer Mariano Fortuny. H. E. Fuller described Bakst work as “something new, a figure grotesque, quaint, and rich in the detail of the costume.”

---

81 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 9 October 1934, AGSA Research Library.
82 Rosalind McKeever, "More Than a Muse (Luisa Casati)," *Apollo* 180, no. 626 (2014): 80.
83 Thomas and Trumble, *Viva La France!*, 43.
The Committee’s August report also noted that the NGSA had been contacted about a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds being offered for sale in London by Thomas Harris, Ltd., for £350. It was resolved that this information would be forward to Heysen.  

In a letter of 29 September 1934, Heysen advised the Fine Arts Committee that he had purchased five more pictures. These works were:

- **Ernest Procter, A.R.A. (1886-1935), Eggardun, Dorset, 1929, oil on cardboard, 59.8 x 77.6cm.**
  Purchased 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

Heysen purchased this painting for £75. He informed Ure Smith:

> I feel sure you would like a ripping landscape I got by ‘Ernest Proctor’, a green scheme – it’s a beauty. I first saw it at Southport, near Liverpool – when searching for an Orpen at the Atkinson Art Gallery – It attracted my attention immediately – but the light was miserable & I felt unable to make up my mind & left it at that. Still the memory of that Landscape persisted – and grew until I wrote to Proctor 3 months later & asked him whether it was still to be had – offering him a definite sum – which he accepted. When I saw the picture again just prior to our leaving for home – I felt I had got a beauty for the Gallery, and I felt happy. I showed it to Lionel in our last day together & he liked it immensely.

Heysen wrote of this work in his *Art in Australia* article:

> With Ernest Proctor [sic] in his ‘Eggerdun, Dorset,’ we enter into a more realistic world, there is light and there is atmosphere with subtle sense of volume and form, and the decorative aspect of his design is never lost sight of. The whole picture is in a scheme of greens almost imperceptibly receding in atmosphere to the middle distance.

The Adelaide *News* described this as “an unusual type for the gallery. It was the work of a master draftsman painter, who was one of the best in England. Proctor

---

85 Report of the Fine Arts Committee, 14 August 1934, AGSA Research Library.
86 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
[sic] had a modern outlook, combined with great draftsmanship and a high sense of values.”

MacNally considered it “a rather unusual landscape … Modern in method, it nevertheless carries amazingly well … An excellent lesson in handling paint for students.”

The painting depicts an Iron Age hill fort located in the chalk uplands of Dorset.

- **Francois Louis Thomas Francia (1772-1839), A Sea piece, Brighton Beach, c.1830, watercolour on paper, 40.6 x 64.4cm.**
  
Purchased 1934, South Australian Government Grant.

Heysen purchased this watercolour for £65.

- **Henry Rushbury, A.R.A. (1889-1968), The Granaries, Wisbech, watercolour on cream paper, 31.6 x 48.5cm.**

Heysen purchased this watercolour for £25. MacNally praised this work as “being quite the best example of this fine artist I have seen.”

Ure Smith and McGregor selected five works by Rushbury for the NAGNSW in 1933: three watercolour drawings depicting scenes in Antwerp, together with an etching and a drypoint. This scene depicts the River Nene running through the town of Wisbech in Cambridgeshire.

---

• Muirhead Bone (1876-1953), *Nieuwkerk, Amsterdam*, 1933, watercolour and charcoal, 36.7 x 25.1cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Heysen purchased this watercolour for £45. He also purchased a charcoal drawing by Bone for his own collection, which he described to Lionel Lindsay as “a fine thing – with a marvelously fluid rendering & fine quality textures & atmosphere in light.”

• Harry Epworth Allen (1894-1958), *A Derbyshire Well Blessing*, 1934, tempera on panel, 47.3 x 60cm. [Fig. 81] Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Heysen purchased this painting for £36-15-0. It depicts the English rural tradition of well dressing, in which wells, springs and other water sources are decorated with designs made from natural materials such as flower petals and mosses. It is likely that the work was mistitled when it entered the collection of the NGSA. It is the most modernist of all the works Heysen acquired, with the stylisation of the figures recalling the works of Stanley Spencer and William Roberts. The relatively flat areas of bright colour recall similar characteristics in the designs produced to decorate the wells. Allen thus borrows aesthetic qualities from the folk custom he depicts.

Heysen wrote of this work in his *Art in Australia* article:

> The tempera painting of ‘A Derbyshire Well-blessing,’ by Henry Allen – an incident which, the artist tells me, is still carried out each succeeding year – is an extremely interesting example of conventionalised pattern weaving. Here the pattern is more intricate and broken, and the final

---

91 Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 10 January 1935, LF Papers; Hans Heysen Collection. Lot 111. Muirhead Bone, *Biscay Coast Near Santillana*, charcoal drawing.

quality of the picture is almost entirely dependent on its colour juxtaposition for its success, the story remains but a mere thread to weave with. Its colour scheme runs through variations of greens, from pale to deep moss, complemented by mauve, purple, red and deep blue. The design is most original but undoubtedly influenced by the early primitives. The forms have been purposely conventionalised to help unify the design; this practice, of course, if carried to excess, has its dangers as it may easily lead to a standardisation and, in the end, destroy the search after real form.  

The work was described by Leslie Wilkie, the Director of the NGSA, as showing “a fine arrangement of colour … Although thoroughly decorative, the values of the landscape were well shown. The picture had a definite modern touch, and the scenery was well composed.” Both men defend the work as demonstrating skill and careful planning, suggesting their uncertainty about how gallery visitors might react to the painting.

The December minutes record a letter from Heysen reporting that he had purchased two paintings.

- **Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A. (1723-1792), Dr John Armstrong, 1767, oil on canvas, 76 x 63.5cm.** Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1934.

Heysen was advised by the Board in Adelaide about the opportunity to purchase the Reynolds portrait from the artist and art dealer Tomás Harris. The Adelaide News reported that an expert had examined the work in the company of

---

95 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 11 December 1934, AGSA Research Library.
Heysen. He subsequently purchased it for £350. The Director of the NGSA described this as “one of the most important additions to the gallery in recent years.”

An article about the works subject, Dr John Armstrong (1709-1779), a poet, physician and essayist, was published in the Adelaide News. This reported that Armstrong originally paid £36-15-0 for the portrait, which was subsequently sold at Christies in 1922 for 650 guineas and then sold again the following year for 780 guineas.

In his Art in Australia article, Heysen asserted that:

The Art Gallery was fortunate, I think, in acquiring Sir Joshua Reynolds’s ‘Portrait of Dr. Armstrong’; it is in a splendid state of preservation and but slightly retouched; depicting a very interesting personality with subtlety and distinction, the colour scheme too helps this by its very simplicity: made up of an umber-brown coat and a rather colourless face against a neutral grey background, red being absent, which is unusual in a Reynolds painting. The picture is undoubtedly genuine as its history can be traced back to when it was commissioned by Dr. Armstrong, who was a personal friend of the painter. Its chief merit lies in the fine characterisation of the sitter, and the subtle painting of the face is an object lesson to those of our younger painters who like to depend upon the bravura of their brushwork for effect, rather than to knowledge of form and conscientious searching for character.

The work was also effusively praised by MacNally, who described it as giving him “a ‘thrill’ and inducing a pleasurable state of mind … It is a wonderful addition to our national treasures and a fine example of the master.”

• Bertram Nicholls, P.R.B.A. (1883-1974), *The Palace of Seven Oaks, Cintra, Portugal*, oil on canvas, 47.6 x 73.6cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest, 1934.

Heysen purchased this work for £350. He advised Ure Smith:

Derwent Lees attracted me by his small decorative landscapes but could not get just the one I wanted, so had to let it go – strangely enough I got a Bertram Nicholls – rather the other end of the Pole – you will say … I think he is President of the R.B.A. [Royal Society of British Artists] & there is a good deal of his work about in London – attractive – in a decorative & romantic way. This particular painting – (recent) is far & away the best I saw of his. I thought it a good example for our Gallery.  

This painting depicts the Seteais Palace (Palácio de Seteais) in Sintra, Portugal, showing the neoclassical arch constructed in 1802 and one wing of the building.

The December Report of the Fine Arts Committee recorded that they had:

Received three photographs of paintings which Mr. Heysen reported as under offer: ‘Carting Bracken’ by Anton Mauve (£450), ‘James Hogg’ by Andrew Geddes (£90), ‘Drover from the Canterbury Road’ by Peter de Wint (£550), together with the offer of a Shotter Boys for £90, and decided that the Committee does not feel in a position to purchase these works at present.

Evidently Heysen was very taken with the Mauve, as in February 1935 a report was received from “the Director that Mr. Hans Heysen would like the Committee to reconsider its decision not to purchase this work, submitted by D. Croal Thomson, London, for £450.” Consideration of the matter was deferred until March, when the Committee resolved “that Mr. Heysen be thanked for bringing this work to the notice of the Committee, and informed that while [the] Committee realises and appreciates his very strong recommendation, it regrets that it is unable in the present circumstances to purchase the work.” Not long

---

102 Heysen to Sydney Ure Smith, undated [November 1934], SUS Papers.
103 Report from the Fine Arts Committee, 11 December 1934, AGSA Research Library.
104 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 12 February 1935, AGSA Research Library.
105 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 12 March 1935, AGSA Research Library.
afterwards Heysen received news from London that the Mauve painting had already been sold.  

1937 – Nora and Hans Heysen Facilitate the Purchase of a Lucien Pissarro  

Nora and Hans Heysen were instrumental in the NGSA purchasing Lucien Pissarro’s painting *Campagne Orovida, the Laurustinus* (1930) in 1937. In 1935, Nora Heysen had met Orovida Pissarro in London, after Hans purchased one of her paintings upon his daughter’s recommendation. Nora subsequently also met Lucien Pissarro, Orovida’s father and the son of the celebrated French Impressionist Camille Pissarro. Following a visit from Orovida in early 1937, Nora enquired whether either Hans or the NGSA were interested in acquiring one of Lucien Pissarro’s work. After visiting Lucien’s studio to inspect his work, Nora wrote expressing her admiration of both a landscape by Lucien and a “lovely little tempera painting” by Camille Pissarro “delightful in colour and a splendid example of his figure painting,” the latter priced at £400. The Pissarros allowed Nora to have these two paintings on loan while they travelled to France. Nora arranged to have photographs of the works sent to her father and in early April 1937, Hans met with Louis McCubbin, the director of the NGSA, to discuss the possibility of acquiring one of these works for the Adelaide gallery.

106 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 9 April 1935. AGSA Research Library. A letter was received from Heysen dated 16 March 1935 conveying this news.
109 Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 9 February 1937, ibid., 72-73.
The April minutes of the Fine Art Committee record: “OFFERED FOR SALE – Three Paintings, ‘Le Havre’ 1200 guineas, ‘Marche au Ble’ 4000 guineas by Camile [sic] Pissarro, and ‘Lauretimus’ [sic] 150 guineas by Lucien Pissarro, offered by Lucien Pissarro through Mr. Hans Heysen, with report from the Director thereon.” While the Committee was grateful to Heysen for bringing the matter to their attention, they regretted “that on the information available it is unable to make any purchase.”

Interesting, the minutes record the price of the Camille Pissarro market scene as being 4000 guineas, whereas in other correspondence this is given as £400. The following month the matter was raised again and this time the Committee recommended that the painting by Lucien Pissarro be purchased for 150 guineas. Hans advised Nora that Ronald Finlayson had been responsible for bringing the “question up again at their last meeting and its purchase was passed with promptitude. … I am glad they decided to buy, for I feel it helps to fill a gap which was wanting.”

• Lucien Pissarro (French/British, 1863-1944), Campagne Orovida, the Laurustinus, 1930, oil on canvas, 73.2 x 54.5cm. Morgan Thomas Bequest Fund, 1937.

After viewing the works in Lucien Pissarro’s studio, Nora reported that: “The one I liked best … has a nice feeling and good colours, but lacks design somewhat, but it seemed to have more depth and to be a mature work compared with the others.” She subsequently advised her father:

The Lucien Pissarro has a lovely atmosphere and feeling, and there is a beauty and vibrancy in the way the paint is handled, being clear and crisp.

---

110 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 13 April 1937, AGSA Research Library.
111 See, Heysen to Lionel Lindsay, 3 June 1937, LF Papers.
112 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 11 May 1937, AGSA Research Library.
113 Hans Heysen to Nora Heysen, 17 May 1937, Speck, Heysen to Heysen, 78.
114 Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 9 February 1937, ibid., 72-73.
and yet having quality. I’m sure it would be a very popular picture if our Adelaide gallery could afford the £157 or guineas, I don’t remember which. I’d like to see it there and the Gallery really should have a few examples of the Post Impressionists.\textsuperscript{115}

### 1938 – Heysen Recommends the Purchase of a Lambert Portrait

- **George Washington Lambert** (Australian, 1873-1930), *The Lady with a Fan* (also known as *Mrs. George Vivers*), c.1924, oil on canvas, dimensions and whereabouts unknown.

In September 1938 George Lambert’s painting *The Lady with a Fan* was offered for sale through the annual exhibition of the Society of Artists in Sydney for £244. John Brackenreg, who was managing the exhibition, approached the NGSA about the possibility of purchasing the work.\textsuperscript{116} In the report he submitted to the September meeting of the Board of Governors, Louis McCubbin suggested that “Mr. Heysen might inspect and report on the picture when he visits Sydney next month.” The board endorsed this recommendation and Heysen examined the painting when visiting Sydney in association with his solo exhibition.\textsuperscript{117} Heysen responded with a telegram stating: “Unhesitatingly recommend purchase Lambert’s Lady With Fan brilliant painting would be welcome addition to National Collection.”\textsuperscript{118} However, the Fine Arts Committee decided to decline the offer to buy the work.\textsuperscript{119} Heysen subsequently sent a letter on 12 October “confirming his telegram, and strongly recommending the purchase of this

\textsuperscript{115} Nora Heysen to Hans and Sallie Heysen, 1 March 1937, ibid., 74.  
\textsuperscript{116} John Brackenreg to Heysen, 21 September [1938], HH Papers.  
\textsuperscript{117} Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 11 October 1938, AGSA Research Library.  
\textsuperscript{118} Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 11 October 1938, AGSA Research Library.  
\textsuperscript{119} Report of the Fine Arts Committee, 11 October 1938, AGSA Research Library.
work.” Upon learning of the Committee’s decision, Heysen sent a further letter dated 28 October “suggesting that the Board reconsider its decision not to buy.” His advice was also supported by McCubbin. In response to the two men’s endorsement, the Committee supported the motion by Ronald Finlayson that the board “rescinds its decision not to purchase” the Lambert and that contrary to their original stance, “That this committee recommends the purchase” of *The Lady with a Fan.* However, the overarching Board of Governors decided against acquiring the work.

Heysen voiced his frustration in a letter to Sydney Ure Smith:

I have bad news from our Gallery. On reconsideration – at a full meeting – they turned the Lambert down – 8 to 3 votes. Their main reasons – the price was too high & they already had 3 Lambert women! had it been a man’s portrait &c &c. It made me fume – especially after asking me to report when they knew it was a female portrait.

---

120 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes of a Special Meeting, 18 October 1938, AGSA Research Library.
121 Fine Arts Committee, Minutes, 8 November 1938, AGSA Research Library.
122 Report of the Fine Arts Committee, 8 November 1938, AGSA Research Library.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

Manuscripts and Archives:

• National Library of Australia:
  Papers of Harold Cazneaux, 1903-1984 (bulk 1903-1954), MS 8361.
  Letters from Hans Heysen to Victor Wilson, 1948-1951, MS 8836.
  Letters received by Oscar Paul, 1922-1943, MS 1825.

• National Archives of Australia.
  World War I Intelligence Section Case File, NAA: MP16/1, 1915/3/349, National Archives of Australia, Victorian Archives Centre.
  Special Intelligence Bureau, NSW, Case File, NAA: ST1233/1, N59/22/107, National Archives of Australia, Sydney Office.

• State Library of South Australia:
  Papers of Kay Brownbill relating to research regarding Hans Heysen, PRG 1296.
  South Australian Society of Arts Minute Books, SRG 20/2/3 – SRG 20/2/4, Records of the Royal S.A. Society of Arts [mixed material], SRG 20.

• State Records of South Australia:

• Art Gallery of South Australia Research Library:
  AGSA Board Papers.
  AGSA Correspondence.
  Fine Arts Committee Minutes, GRG 19/361.
  Sir Hans Heysen, ephemera file.
  Letters Received, 1906-1926, GRG 19/5.
  Letters Received by the Hon. Curator, GRG 19/2.
• The Cedars, Hahndorf:
Hans Heysen, Cashbook, 1902-1923.
Hans Heysen, Cashbook, 1923-1936.
Hans Heysen, Cashbook, 1937-1956.
Hans Heysen, Record of sales through George Holman, 1954-1966.
Hans Heysen, Exercise book on draft letters, undated.
Miscellaneous sales documents.

• State Library of Victoria:
Robert Henderson Croll, Papers, ca. 1860-1947, MS 8910, Letters from various correspondents, mainly to Robert Henderson Croll.
Records of the Felton Bequest, 1885-1996, MS 14852, Minutes of the Felton Bequest Committee.
Lindsay Family Papers, 1902-1976, MS 9104, Sir Lionel Lindsay, Inward Correspondence, letters from Sir Hans Heysen, MS 9242/1918-2342.
Sedon Galleries, Records, 1870-1962, MS 10435, Inward correspondence re. exhibitions and sale of pictures – Heysen, Hans, Box 2484e and 2484f
Sedon Galleries, Records, 1870-1962, MS 10435, Inward correspondence re. exhibitions and sale of pictures – Heysen, Stephen [sic], Box 2484g
W. R. (Bill) Sedon, Correspondence, ca. 1930 – ca. 1960, MS 13790.
Walter Withers Papers, ca. 1888-1966, MS 7976.

• University of Melbourne Archives:
Joseph Terence Burke, Personal Papers, 1978.0039, Series 1/49 – Daryl Lindsay, Joan Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay, 1949-1974.

- Shaw Research Library, National Gallery of Victoria:
  Letters from Hans Heysen to T. M. Hartigan, 1941, Hans Heysen Artist File, VF (People).

- State Library of New South Wales:
  Norman Carter Papers, 1899-1961, MLMSS 471.
  Gayfield Shaw Papers, 1917-1925, DLMS 211.
  Walter Baldwin Spencer, Letters, 1899-1928, received from Australian artists and art promoters, MLMSS 875.
  Bertram Stevens Papers, 1906-1920, A 2437-2459, Correspondence, 1893-1920.

- Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archives, Art Gallery of New South Wales:
  Art Gallery of New South Wales – General Correspondence file.
  Hans Heysen Curatorial File.
  Minutes of the Board of the NAGNSW.
  Papers of Hans Heysen, [1899-1900], MS1999.9.
  Papers of the Macquarie Galleries, Part A, MS1995.9a, Correspondence from artists.
• Yarra Ranges Regional Museum, Lilydale.
  Hans Heysen to Nellie Melba, 21 March [1915], Reg. No. 10123.

• State Library of Queensland
  John Cooper Correspondence, 1937-1950, OM64-22.

• QAGOMA Research Library
  Moreton Galleries Artists’ Files, Special Collections.
  Queensland Art Gallery, Minute Books.

**Oral History Interviews:**

Daws, Lawrence, interviewed by Barbara Blackman, Owl Creek, Queensland, between 15 November and 17 December 1984, ORAL TRC 1795, National Library of Australia.

Dridan, David, interviewed by Ralph Body, Strathalbyn, 20 October 2014.


Heysen, Nora, interviewed by Denise Hickey, 1971, Dr Denise Hickey Oral History Project, ORAL TLC 191/19, National Library of Australia.


**Newspapers:**

*Advertiser* (Adelaide)
*Age* (Melbourne)
*Argus* (Melbourne)
*Australasian* (Melbourne)
*Brisbane Courier*
*Brisbane Telegraph*
Chronicle (Adelaide)
Courier-Mail (Brisbane)
Critic (Adelaide)
Daily Herald (Adelaide)
Daily Telegraph (Sydney)
Evening Journal (Adelaide)
Evening Post (Wellington)
Express (Adelaide)
Express and Telegraph (Adelaide)
Gadfly (Adelaide)
Herald (Melbourne)
Labor Daily (Sydney)
Leader (Melbourne)
Mail (Adelaide)
Mount Barker Courier and Onkaparinga and Gumeracha Advertiser (South Australia)
News (Adelaide)
Observer (Adelaide)
Quiz (Adelaide)
Quiz and Lantern (Adelaide)
Punch (Melbourne)
Register (Adelaide)
Register News-Pictorial (Adelaide)
Sun (Adelaide)
Sun (Sydney)
Sunday Times (Perth)
Sunday Times (Sydney)
Sydney Morning Herald
Table Talk (Melbourne)
West Australian (Perth)
Western Mail (Perth)

Exhibition Catalogues:


Catalogue of An Exhibition of Oil Paintings, Watercolours and Drawings by Hans Heysen. Perth: s.n., 1933.

A Catalogue of an Exhibition of Pictures by Arthur Streeton Prior to His Return to Europe. Melbourne: s.n., 1907.


Catalogue of Pictures by Mr. Hans Heysen. Adelaide: s.n., 1904.


Exhibition of Painting by Hans Heysen. Melbourne: s.n., 1908.


Exhibition of Paintings by Hans Heysen, O.B.E. Melbourne: Sedon Galleries, 1951.

Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings by Alexandre Iacovleff. Sydney: Macquarie Galleries, 1928.


First Annual Exhibition of the Australian Painter-Etchers’ Society. Sydney: s.n., 1921.


Group Exhibition by South Australian Artists. Adelaide: s.n., 1937.


*Loan Exhibition of Australian Art.* Sydney: National Art Gallery of N.S.W., 1918.

*Loan Exhibition of Australian Paintings.* Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1925.


*Oil Paintings, Etchings and Watercolours by Australian Artists.* Melbourne: Decoration Galleries, 1921.


Australian Academy of Art, Annual Exhibition catalogues, 1938-1946.


Royal Art Society of New South Wales, Annual Exhibition catalogues, 1904-1914.

Society of Artists, Annual Exhibition catalogues, 1908-1945.

South Australian Society of Arts, Annual Exhibition catalogues, 1897-1911.

South Australian Society of Arts, Federal Exhibition catalogues, 1898-1914.

Victorian Artists’ Society, exhibition catalogues, 1904-1917.

Books and Articles:


The Art of Blamire Young. Special Number of Art in Australia. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1921.


The Art of J. J. Hilder. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918.


"Australian Art and English Critics." Art in Australia series 3, no. 7 (1924): unpaginated.

"Australian Artists Xmas & New Year Cards." Home 11, no. 10 (October 1930): 93.


———. "Notes on Australian Landscape Painters." In Australian Landscape Painters of To-day. Sydney: Art in Australia, 1929.

"A Celebrated Artist Pays His Tribute to the Engraving of His Work in Colour."
*Home* 19, no. 7 (July 1938): 70.


“A Difference Between Artists: Mr Heysen Insulted.” *Herald* (Melbourne), 3 December 1921.


"Hartland & Hyde: To the Editors of 'Art in Australia'." *Art in Australia* series 1, no. 5 (1918): unpaginated.

Haughton James, R. "Boiling the Pot." *The Australian Artist* 1, no. 3 (1948): 8-16.


———. “Our Art is Bright and so is its Future.” News (Adelaide), 28 September 1932.


"In Sydney's Shops". "Home 18, no. 10 (October 1937): 84.


Lindsay, Lionel. Addled Art. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942.


———. “Contemporary Art." Sydney Morning Herald, 16 October 1940.


———. "Hans Heysen's Later Watercolours." *Art in Australia* series 1, no. 6 (1919): unpaginated.


———. "Twenty-Five Years of Australian Art." *Art in Australia* series 1, no. 4 (1918): unpaginated.


"Look Here, Upon This Picture – and, on This." *Home* 13, no. 8 (August 1932): 38-39.


"Margaret Preston Number." *Art in Australia* series 3, no. 22 (1927).


“No Short Cuts in Art – Hans Heysen’s Advice to Young Painters – Lindsay Exhibition Opened.” *Advertiser (Adelaide)*, 9 November 1938.

"Norman Lindsay at Home." *Home* 1, no. 3 (September 1920): 18-19.


*The Pen Drawings of Norman Lindsay*. Special Number of Art in Australia. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918.


"Personal and Social (South Australia)." *Home* 8, no. 12 (December 1927): 8.


"Reactions to Addled Art!". *Angry Penguins*, no. 5 (1943): unpaginated.


———. "A Visit to Heysen." *Home* 2, no. 4 (December 1921): 16-17, 97.


“The Art of the Year.” *The Lone Hand*, 1 April 1910: 663-78.


*Unveiling of Works of Art Purchased at the New Zealand International Exhibition, 1907*. Adelaide: Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia, 1907.


———. "Pavlova." *Home* 12, no. 3 (March 1931): 54-56.

———. "Recent Purchases for the National Art Gallery of N.S.W." *Art in Australia* series 3, no. 55 (1934): 8-12.


**Secondary Sources**

**Published:**


Kienle, Miriam. "Between Nodes and Edges: Possibilities and Limits of Network Analysis in Art History." Artl@s Bulletin 6, no. 3 (2017): 4-22.


Webster, Frank. "Network." In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, edited by Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan


**Unpublished:**


Audio visual or Online sources:


