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Kiichiro Ishida & the Sydney Camera Circle

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Kiichiro Ishida and the Sydney Camera Circle 1920s–1940s | 20 December 2003 – 26 April 2004

The delicate and serene photographic work of Kiichiro Ishida, the Japanese photographer invited to join the highly prestigious Sydney Camera Circle in 1921 was the focus of an exhibition at the Museum of Sydney.

Ishida, whose works had not been seen in Australia since that time, worked along side such luminaries as Harold Cazneaux, Henri Mallard and Monte Luke, all members of the Sydney Camera Circle. The Sydney Camera Circle formed in 1916 as a small group of photographers working to promote pictorial photography using Australian sunlight. Contributing to the work of this revolutionary photographic movement, Ishida produced exceptional works of the Australian landscape and Sydney's urban environment between 1919 and 1923.

'Ishida's photographs from the Sydney period express a clean beauty of the vast, dry, bright landscapes of Australia, or views of the city streets and people who inhabit them, and in all of them we can feel the enjoyment he obviously derived from creating them', said Yuri Mitsuda, curator, The Shoto Museum of Art, Tokyo.

Kiichiro Ishida was born in 1886 and died in 1957 in Akita Prefecture, Japan. In 1919 he was transferred to the Sydney branch of a large Japanese wool trading company in Macquarie Place. Ishida bought his first camera at this time, becoming



engrossed in photography after meeting Ichiro Kagiya, a Japanese migrant and well-established professional photographer living in Sydney.

'Ishida stayed in Australia until the end of 1923 and during this antipodean period his photography matured quickly. He produced idyllic and poetic landscapes, beach scenes, portraits, studies of trees and the harbour. When Ishida left Sydney to return to Japan he asked the Circle members for some of their best prints to take with him. He exhibited these along with his own photographs at the Shiseido Gallery in Ginza where they were well received', said Judy Annear, Senior Curator Photography, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Ishida and his wife Ei joined a thriving and prosperous Japanese community in Sydney. Wealth from trade allowed Japanese families in Sydney an affluent lifestyle in places like Mosman, Vacluse, Woollahra and Woy Woy.

Ichiro Kagiya arrived in Sydney around 1906, and was an influential member of the NSW Photographic Society. He became a significant commercial photographer commissioned to photograph special events and social occasions for the Japanese consul and Japanese trading companies in Sydney. He lived in Sydney for over 30 years, until the outbreak of World War II, and some of his work was also featured in the exhibition.

'The exhibition provided a glimpse, through the personal stories of Ishida and Kagiya, of a thriving and prosperous Japanese community living in Sydney from the early 1900s to 1941 based around Japanese trading companies, and committed to life and work in Australia', said Beth Hise, Exhibition Coordinator, Historic Houses Trust.

The exhibition showcased 65 of Ishida's works from Sydney as well as Japan and northern China and 40 photographs by Sydney Camera Circle members, including 21 works by

Harold Cazneaux.

SUMMARY

What: ***Kiichiro Ishida
and the Sydney Camera
Circle 1920s–1940s***

Where: Museum of Sydney
*on the site of first
Government House /
Corner Phillip and Bridge
Streets, Sydney*

When: 20 December 2003
– 26 April 2004 | Open
Daily 9.30am – 5pm

Cost: General \$7,
Concession/Child/HHT
Member \$3 Family \$17
Information: t. 02 9251
5988 | www.hht.net.au

Based on an exhibition
organised by The Shoto
Museum of Art, Tokyo,
Japan and curated by Yuri
Mitsuda

Supported by the Art
Gallery of New South
Wales

Supported by The Japan
Foundation
Media Sponsor SBS

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