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yab yum

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Soft Shadows and Sharp Lines

SOFT SHADOWS
AND SHARP LINES:

AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY FROM CAZNEAUX TO DUPAIN

Saturday 5th October - Sunday 1st December 2002



Soft Shadows and Sharp Lines showcases aspects of the Art Gallery of New South Wales' fine collection of early twentieth century Australian photography. The exhibition comprises work by some of Australia's most distinguished photographers including Harold Cazneaux, Max Dupain and Olive Cotton.

Soft Shadows and Sharp Lines explores the aesthetic shift from a pictorial style of image-making, demonstrated in the work of Harold Cazneaux, to the modernist compositions of artists such as Max Dupain. The shift from Pictorialism to Modernism was a significant aesthetic change to occur in International and Australian photography. Affectionately called at the time the 'fuzzy wuzzy' style, Pictorialism was characterised by painterly attributes, soft hues and a pervasive sense of romanticism. Cazneaux's work, in particular, and that of some his peers in the Sydney Camera Circle, came to represent a transitional moment in Australian

photographic history. The Circle attempted to capture the unique attributes of Australian light, doing away with the misty and atmospheric characteristics of their English Pictorial counterparts.

In Europe in the 1920s a fresh style of photography developed, referred to as 'New Photography', which focused on unusual angles, perspectives and sharp contrasting tones. The influence of this movement slowly filtered into Australia through magazines and exhibitions. Modernist photography relished in the specific and unique qualities a photographic image can afford, embracing the shape, form and spatial qualities of its chosen subject matter to great result. Max Dupain's *Sunbaker*, for instance, is a modernist icon that expressively demonstrates the characteristics of the style: sharp, defined shapes, an unusual vantage point (worms' eye view), contrasting tonal scheme and a formal compositional arrangement.

Soft Shadows and Sharp Lines includes work by Harold Cazneaux, John Kauffmann, Cecil Bostock, Norman Deck, Henri Mallard, Max Dupain, F.A. Joyner, George Morris, Wolfgang Sievers, Laurence Collings, Hans Hasenpflug, Olive Cotton, Ruth Hollick and others.

On view: Art Gallery of New South Wales
Art Gallery Road, The Domain
Sydney NSW 2000 AUSTRALIA

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Hours: 10am to 5pm 7 days a week

Admission: Free of Charge

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Hans Hasenpflug *Untitled (head of a man)* circa 1940s