



HAROLD CAZNEAUX

ARTIST IN PHOTOGRAPHY

EDUCATION KIT

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ART
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‘To my mind, it does not matter whether a picture is made by photography, or by brush or pencil, so long as there is an idea expressed that makes us feel some emotion that is art ... as artistic photography is really only young amongst the fine arts, it may be expected that in time the best works of the year in photography will find a permanent resting-place in national art galleries.’”

HAROLD CAZNEAUX

Self portrait – Harold Cazneaux 1904
platinotype, 14 x 9.3 cm
Gift of Mrs Rainbow Johnson 1985

HAROLD CAZNEAUX

ARTIST IN PHOTOGRAPHY

Harold Cazneaux was a luminary in Australian photographic circles; a pioneering photographer, whose impressive output and aesthetic style had an indelible impact on the development of photographic history in this country. As a teacher, prolific writer, judge and regular participator in national and international exhibitions Cazneaux was unfaltering in his desire to contribute to the discussion about the photography of his times. He and his generation created some of the most dazzling and memorable images of the early 20th century.

Pictorialism was dominant in Australian photographic circles from around 1900 to the 1930s and was initially characterised by soft-focus effects and low-tone printing. Using mist, smoke, fog, colour or light reflected off water and surfaces, pictorialists such as Cazneaux sought to imbue their images of landscapes, streetscapes and portraits with mood and atmosphere. To achieve this, some photographers would work on the surface of the print by bleaching out or overpainting extraneous details and tones. Highly skilled in the craft of photography, they often used complicated chemical processes and optical effects to achieve a harmonious synthesis between pictorial elements. Cazneaux was skilled in various techniques, employing toning, cropping and other elements to carefully structure composition and control the tonal tenor of his work.

In 1916 Cazneaux and others formed the Sydney Camera Circle, establishing the so-called ‘sunshine school’ of photography. The Circle was created for a number of reasons: it embraced the particularities of Australian light and landscape, and was a move away from the English-inspired darker imagery dominating photographic practice at that time.

The visual similarity between aspects of this style of pictorialism and the impressionist painting of the Heidelberg School is striking, for it too was concerned with sunlight and ambiance. The play of light, sunshine and shadow, and the attention to nature and the landscape, were major concerns.

For many years Cazneaux’s prints were exhibited in shows organised by the London Salon of Photography (1911 to 1952) and later included in the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain’s annual salons. In 1921 he was elected a member of the London Salon, and in 1937 he was the first Australian to be conferred an Honorary Fellowship by the Royal Photographic Society. Beyond his photographic oeuvre, Cazneaux was also a prolific writer. As a correspondent for *Photograms of the Year* (UK) for more than 20 years, he was the international voice of Australian photography. He was official photographer for Sydney Ure Smith’s lifestyle magazine *The Home* from 1920 to 1941. And he was commissioned to produce images for a number of Ure Smith’s publications.

The Art Gallery of NSW has one of the finest collections of Cazneaux’s work in Australia, and was also the first Australian museum to hold a major exhibition of his work, in 1975.

Harold Cazneaux: artist in photography has been carefully devised around key themes to explore the breadth and depth of Cazneaux’s extensive oeuvre. Photographs of subjects that interested the artist, such as landscape, portraits, artists’ portraits, the harbour and the city, have been arranged chronologically, charting the visual and conceptual development of Cazneaux’s methodology.

The title of the exhibition is drawn from the artist’s letterhead, which is a fitting tribute to the artist’s intentions, for it was Cazneaux – passionately believing in photography as art – who placed Australia photographically on the map of the world.

Natasha Bullock, curator



THE RAZZLE DAZZLE 1910

gelatin silver photograph, 22,5 x 28.5 cm
Gift of the Cazneaux family 1975 111.1975

I doubt there are six men known in the photographic world who are capable of 'seeing' and appreciating such arrangement.

H Snowden Ward¹

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: Imagine being one of the people on the ride. How do you feel? **How** fast is the ride going? **How** does it move? **What** do you think the men below the ride are doing? **Draw** a picture of what you can see from the top of the ride.

Have you ever been on a ride? **How** was your experience different from this photograph? **Create** an image of yourself at a fair digitally. **Compare** your picture to this photograph.

Paint a picture of a fair in the year 2110. **How** would your fair of the future be different to the fair of 1910?

HSIE: Look at what the people are wearing. **How** comfortable might they feel? **Would** you wear these outfits on rides today? **Why** or why not? **Research** fashion from the 1910s to today and **create** a visual timeline.

PDHPE: Write a class list of outdoor activities that involve a group of people. **Collect** images of these activities to display. **Choose** one activity to do together as a class and, using a camera, **record** your time together.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

What do you think Cazneaux's main objective was in taking this photograph? The image was taken at Bondi beach in 1910. Research this period in Sydney and suggest how Cazneaux captures the essence of the nation at that time. In what way does the image reflect the excitement of modern life?

According to Isobel Crombie, senior curator, National Gallery of Victoria: 'Cazneaux was a thoughtful observer of life. His work may appear "casual" but it is invariably sophisticated'. What does Crombie mean by this comment? How can Cazneaux's work be casual yet sophisticated at the same time? Discuss the role of the photographer as the 'thoughtful observer of life'. How does Cazneaux's approach differ from traditional photographers of the late 19th century?

Research technological innovations in photography in the early 20th century. Consider how this affected both the way this image was taken and the role of post-production in the photographic process. Discuss how Cazneaux's approach embraced these innovations and offered the viewer a new way of seeing the world. Why was this image considered avant-garde by Cazneaux's contemporaries?



ALBION STREET, SURRY HILLS 1911

gelatin silver photograph, 30.2 x 19 cm
Gift of the Cazneaux family 1990 80.1990

In all my adventures about the streets and byways I found the children a happy and lively lot.

Harold Cazneaux²

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: Look carefully at this photograph. What is your eye drawn to first? **How** does Cazneaux use perspective and light? **Draw** a picture of people in the city. **Consider** the light source and time of day, and use tone to add drama.

Look at your shadow in different light conditions. **How** is your figure distorted? **Trace** your classmate's shadow on large pieces of paper. **Display** the tracings in class.

Make a pinhole camera. **Take** photographs around the school grounds, using sunlight-sensitive photography paper. **Exhibit** your images for the school to see.

DRAMA: Create a play called 'Albion Street, Surry Hills'. Begin your play in the same pose as the figures in this image. **Write** a dialogue between the children in this scene.

HSIE: **How** has life changed in Sydney over the last 100 years? **Identify** changes in the environment and community. **Evaluate** how these have affected the way people live today, including how children play.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Describe your first impression of this image. As a class or in groups, brainstorm what it reminds you of and the emotions it conveys. What elements in the photograph evoke these emotions? What is the role of the figures? Are they posed or candid? Discuss the effect of this approach. Investigate where and when this image was taken. Collect images of this area today. How has it changed?

Discuss the meaning of truth and reality in art practice. How 'true' is the photographic image? Compare this medium to other artforms. Debate whether the photographer is the only true observer of life.

Is there evidence to suggest that pictorial photographers of the early 20th century have influenced contemporary art practice? Develop a case study reflecting your point of view.

Using myVirtualGallery on the Gallery's website (www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/mvg), create an exhibition of ten Australian artists using the theme 'the legacy of Cazneaux', including text panels. Write an accompanying catalogue essay outlining the reasons for your selection.



THE BAMBOO BLIND 1915

gelatin silver photograph, 26.3 x 21 cm
National Library of Australia, gift of the Cazneaux family

Harold Cazneaux was captivated by the living, radiant streaks of sunlight falling athwart the face of the little girl.

WR Bland³

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: Consider the effect of light and shade in this portrait. **Imagine** if the blind was not included. **How** different would this image look?

Paint a portrait on canvas using only tones of black and white. **Begin** with drawing from real life. **Choose** the type and direction of light carefully, so that your picture incorporates dramatic light and shade. **Experiment** with both natural and artificial light.

Photograph a younger sibling or friend. **Consider** their personality. Are they shy, energetic or fun-loving? **How** can you show their qualities in your image?

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY: Identify various forms and sources of light. **Discuss** the difference between natural and artificial light. **How** can light be manipulated and changed? **Record** your experimentation and research. **Present** your findings to the class.

HSIE: **Imagine** being a child in Sydney in 1915. **Think** about the games you would play, the chores you must do, the type of food you would eat and the world events occurring.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

The representation of light is a predominant feature in this photograph. What is the overall effect of light in this image? For the viewer, does it enhance the portrait or is it a distraction? Cazneaux was a founding member of the Sydney Camera Circle or the 'sunshine school' of photography. Research the photographers in this group. Discuss how this image represents their ideals and reflects 'national' character.

Create a photographic body of work based on portraiture with an emphasis on the use of natural light. Experiment with a variety of light sources and compositions. Can light be unique to time and place? Discuss your point of view, using your work and *The bamboo blind* as examples.

What are the similarities and differences between digital and film photography? Research how light is captured technically. Consider the variations of effect when using both types of equipment. Could an image like *The bamboo blind* be produced with a digital camera?



DEPARTURE 1928

gelatin silver photograph, 22.9 x 27.6 cm
National Gallery of Australia, purchased 1976

... I counted myself very lucky as regards the movement of the streamers and of the smoke, and above all the balance and sense of scale emphasised by the tiny figures in the bottom left-hand corner. Even the notice board seems to play its part.

Harold Cazneaux⁴

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: **Where** do you think this boat is going? **Why** do you think Cazneaux chose to crop the image? **Extend** the composition to complete the scene.

Photograph an exciting public or school event. **Capture** the spirit of the occasion. **Consider** taking this image from a high vantage point. **What** effect does this create? **Compare** your images to *Departure*.

Create an abstract painting based on the forms, shapes and lines of this image. **Incorporate** colour symbolically to represent the emotion of the scene.

ENGLISH: **Imagine** you are a newspaper journalist writing an article about this event. **Describe** the scene and excitement of the crowd. **Present** your article, along with this image, in newspaper format.

MATHS: **Choose** a particular ocean liner and research its speed and route. **Calculate** how long it would take to complete its journey. **Compare** this to an aeroplane's flight time for the same journey.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Analyse this photograph and discuss its overall effect. Consider its structural qualities and purpose. How does this image represent the time in which it was made? What is the role of the figures in this scene? How does the image push the boundaries of conventional photographic practice?

How does Cazneaux immerse the viewer in this image? What do you think he wants the audience to see? Suggest how the audience might have reacted to this image in the late 1920s and how an audience might react to it today.

Action and movement always fascinated Cazneaux as he strove to capture the essence of life in his work. Create a photographic body of work based on action. How does your approach differ from taking landscape or portrait photography? What technical and compositional considerations need to be taken into account?



STEAM AND SUNSHINE, NEWCASTLE BHP 1934

gelatin silver photograph, 37.1 x 27.7 cm
Gift of the Cazneaux family 1975 125.1975

This subject recalls to my mind the first impression that the majestic mass of steel structure towering up to the sky made upon me.

Harold Cazneaux⁵

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: Find the organic and man-made shapes and forms in this image. **Why** do they contrast each other? **Create** a print about the built environment, using scratch foam board or lino, with an emphasis on contrasting shapes.

What mood is created in this image? **What** elements make us feel this way? **What** time of day do you think it is?

Photograph images that convey particular feelings. **Create** a class exhibition about moods.

Create a class collage about the man-made environment using manufactured materials, and another about the natural environment using only natural materials. **Display** these collages opposite or next to each other. **Discuss** the similarities and differences.

MUSIC/DANCE: **Compose** a piece of music by beating together man-made objects. **Choreograph** a dance routine to match the rhythm by stamping, tapping and jumping. **Create** an industrial feel through costume and composition.

PDHPE: **What** health and safety issues were connected with industry in the early 20th century? **Research** types of work and working conditions. **Compare** these to today.

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

Research Australian and international artists who have explored 'industry' as a theme. Compare their work to Cazneaux's. Discuss whether these artists celebrated or criticised the development of industry. Develop your own body of work on the theme of 'industry' which conveys your viewpoint on industrial development in today's world. Show an influence of Cazneaux in your approach.

This photograph was unlike Cazneaux's previous, more intimate work. It represented a transition in his style and subject matter. Compare Cazneaux's earlier works to the images of industry he created in the 1930s. How did this subject matter push the boundaries of his art practice?

This work was commissioned by BHP. What must an artist consider in creating a work for a particular client? How much of Cazneaux can be seen in this work?



THE SPIRIT OF ENDURANCE 1937

gelatin silver photograph, 28.1 x 33.1 cm
Gift of the Cazneaux family 1975 134.1975

I think of all photographs I have taken this is the one which best expresses all that I have always wanted to do.

Harold Cazneaux⁶

K-6 LOOKING AND MAKING ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ARTS: Cazneaux photographed this image because he loved the 'great outdoors'. **Create** an artwork based on what you love, which shows your passion for the subject.

Make sketches and drawings of the natural environment. **Record** a variety of texture and forms. **Create** a collage of drawings for a classroom display.

Create a forest of trees in your classroom to bring the outside in. **Use** cardboard, found objects, wire, paper and papier maché. **Paint** your trees white then colour them in natural colours. **Record** sounds from the natural environment and incorporate them into your group sculpture.

DRAMA: **Write** a play called 'The spirit of endurance'. **Use** the Cazneaux image as the setting for the last scene. **Perform** your play for the school.

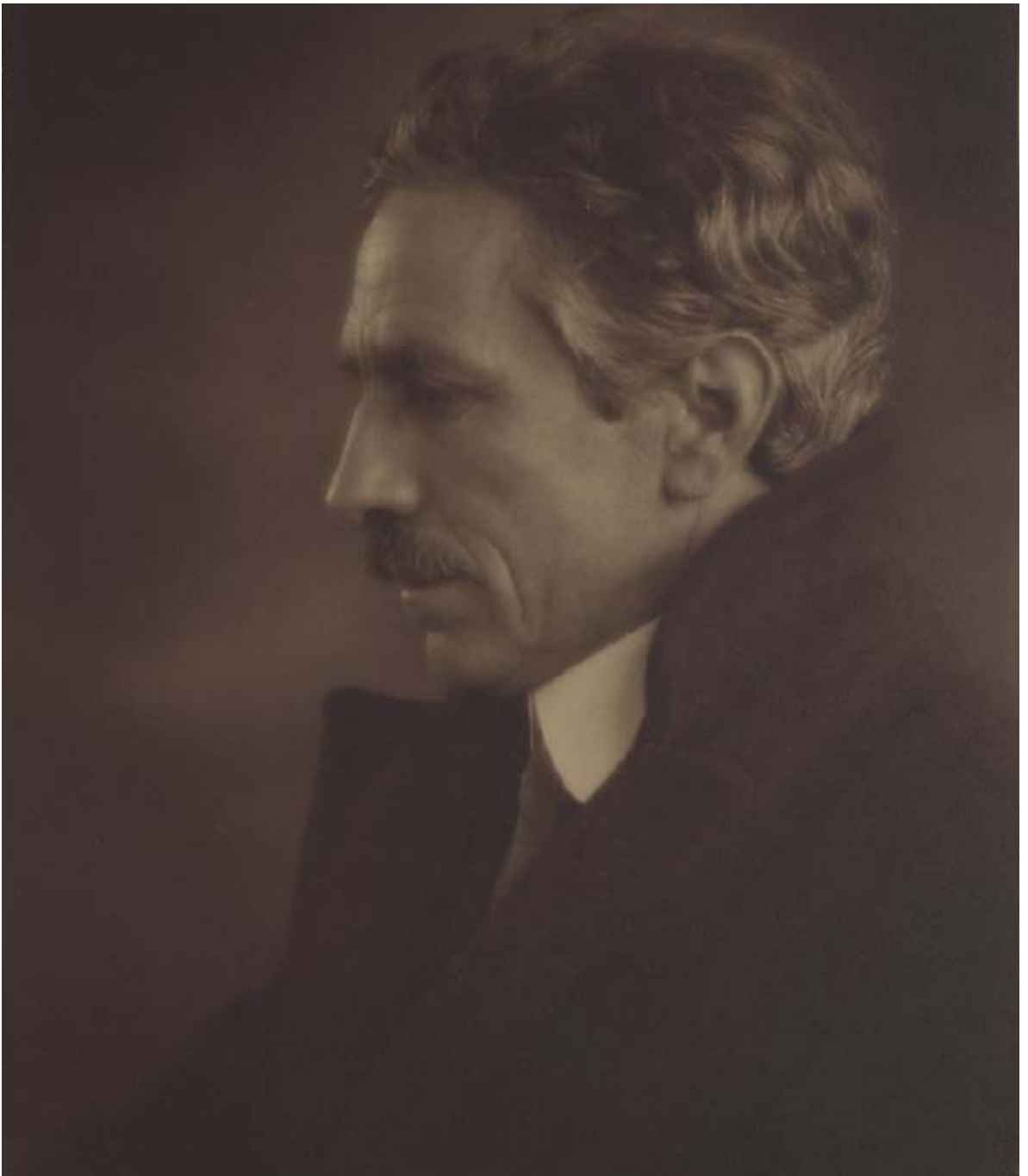
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: **Identify** the type of tree represented in this image. **Research** its growth cycle and unique qualities. **How** does it survive the harsh Australian climate?

7-12 FRAMING QUESTIONS

The spirit of endurance shows the influence of artist Hans Heysen. Cazneaux and Heysen wrote letters to each other discussing artistic and photographic practice. Compare this image to *Summer* 1909, a landscape painting by Heysen in the Gallery's collection. Discuss the similarities and differences and how each artist had a profound effect on the other.

The tree is the main focal point that dominates this composition. How does this differ from artworks created in the picturesque style of the mid to late 19th century? Discuss how the artist creates a sense of grandeur and monumentality in this image. How is this image an example of the 'Cazneaux way'?

How do viewers in the 21st century respond to this image? Does it still represent Australian identity? Does the point of view of the contemporary audience differ from the audience of the late 1930s?



‘We are blessed with a veritable land of sunshine ...’⁸

HAROLD CAZNEAUX

above: **Monte Luke** (Australia 1885–1962)
Caz (portrait of *Harold Cazneaux*) 1928
gelatin silver photograph, 35.3 x 28.4 cm
Gift of the Sydney Camera Circle 1977

cover: *Pergola pattern* 1931
gelatin silver photograph, 34.8 x 25.4 cm
Gift of the Cazneaux family 1975

NOTES

1. ‘The London Salon of 1911’, *The Photographic Monthly*, vol 18, no 214, Oct 1911, p 288
2. ‘The Sydney of yesterday’, *Contemporary Photography*, vol 1, no 10, May–June 1948, pp 12, 13, 23
3. ‘Observations on some pictures of the year’ in FJ Mortimer (ed), *Photograms of the year 1916*, London, p 15
4. ‘Milestones’ transcript, 27 Oct 1952, National Library of Australia MS 5955
5. ‘My best picture and why: blast furnaces’, *Australia: National Journal*, Christmas issue, Dec 1940, p 16
6. ‘Milestones’ transcript, 27 Oct 1952, National Library of Australia MS 5955
7. Reflex aka Harold Cazneaux, ‘Photography: art and the camera’, *The Sydney Mail*, 4 Sept 1912, p 46
8. Harold Cazneaux, ‘Pictorial photography in Australia’ in FJ Mortimer (ed), *Photograms of the year 1919*, London, p 20

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www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/ed/kits/cazneaux

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