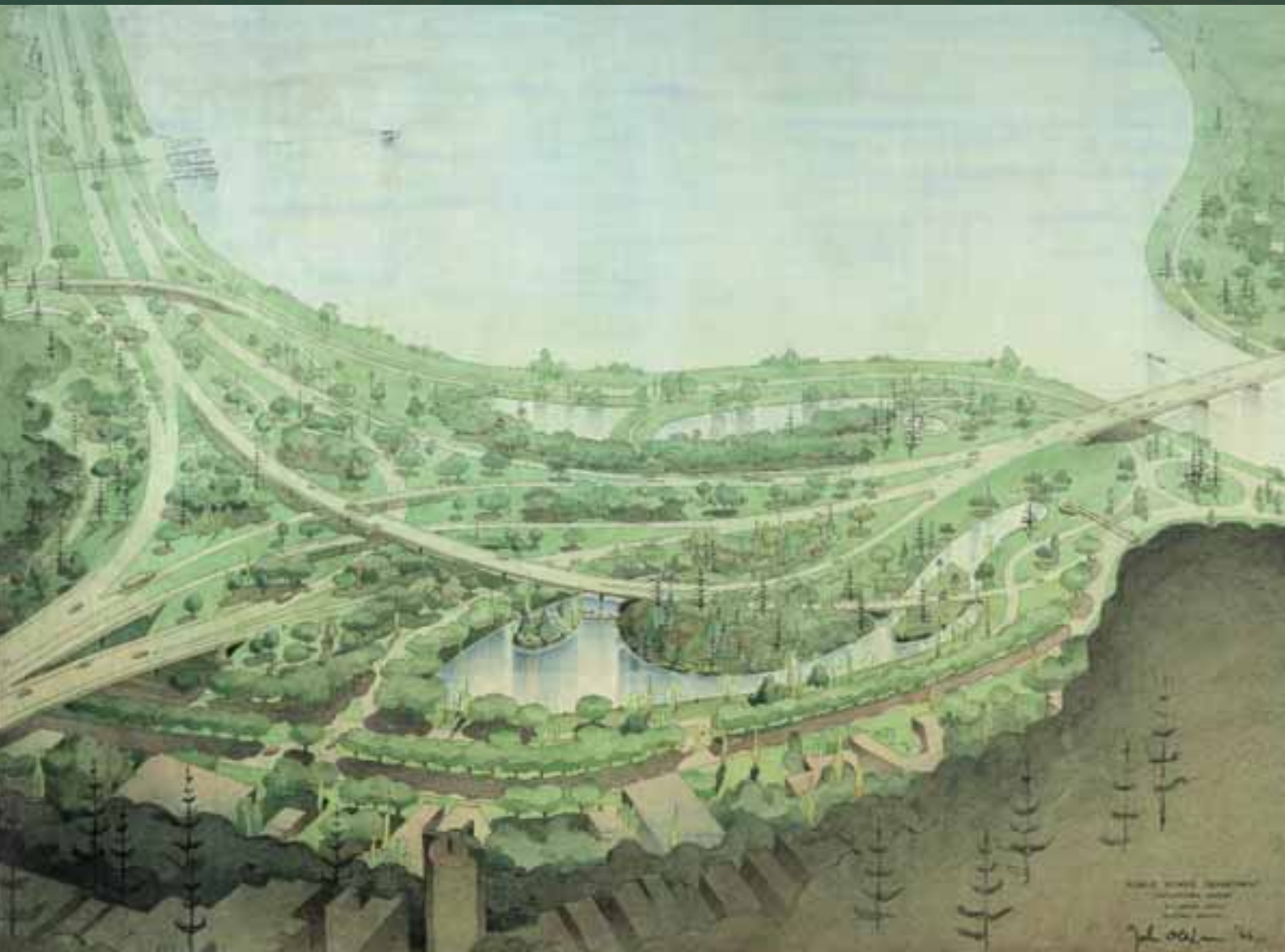


MODERN VISIONS

OF THE CITY OF PERTH



The artist's relationship with the city in modern times was not limited to recording aesthetic experiences. Discussions about the role and purpose of art as the foremost expression of humanism, helped to influence the visual, social, political, commercial, architectural and spatial structure of the urban environment.

**THIS EXHIBITION IS
PROUDLY PRESENTED BY THE CITY OF PERTH**



CITY of PERTH

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COVER IMAGE: John Oldham Overall Plan, 1966 – watercolour, pen and ink on paper, City of Perth Collection

MODERN VISIONS OF THE CITY OF PERTH

AN EXHIBITION OF ARTWORKS, PHOTOGRAPHS, ARCHITECTURAL
PLANS AND PUBLICATIONS TO DEMONSTRATE ASPECTS OF THE
MODERNIZATION OF PERTH FROM 1930 TO 1970

PERTH TOWN HALL

22 APRIL – 10 MAY 2009

MESSAGE FROM THE LORD MAYOR

It is almost 180 years since the establishment of the colony of Perth, Western Australia. Our capital city has come so far in that time and we have so much to be proud of. The pioneering Western Australian spirit has served us well and now with a more multicultural dimension we are becoming even more interesting as we evolve and mature in the 21st century. We have come a long way since August 1829 when Mrs Dance founded Perth with the felling of a tree near where the Town Hall now is. As citizens of this amazing west coast Australian capital city we have much to be proud of.

The City of Perth has a commitment to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to fully experience, understand, delve, learn and share in the rich fabric of what is now our history. Perth is a city in which cultural inheritance is respected and valued. It is a vital part of city life that is worth preserving and protecting at all cost. Our heritage provides us with links to our past and we need to ensure that these links are honoured over time so that future generations can appreciate where they have come from as we continue to evolve into the future.

The City is custodian to a significant art collection and it aims to preserve, protect and promote this aspect of the unique heritage of our city.

Art is one special way we can also record our past. Through artists' impressions history has been recorded for future generations to reflect upon. Paintings, photographs, illustrations and sketches assist in documenting aspects of our social, cultural and built form historically speaking by helping to construct a detailed and informative picture of the past.

This exhibition invites you to take a '*walk down memory lane*' to the buildings that existed in Perth's past. Some have withstood the test of time while others have made way for progress. These artworks can be appreciated as a reminder of what once existed and what also still remains as landmarks that we can identify with; to help give a sense of belonging, history and our place in it.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR

MS LISA SCAFFIDI

MODERN VISIONS OF THE CITY OF PERTH

This exhibition of artworks, photographs, architectural plans and publications helps to demonstrate aspects of the modernization of Perth and charts the development of the City of Perth from the 1930s up until the 1960s.

By examining aspects of art, architecture and planning we can get a sense of how the city has positioned itself within the landscape and note its changing relationship with the river.

The works illustrate the growth and development of the city in the modern era. By focusing on the streetscape, city skyline and river, these artworks selectively show transition and growth of the City and identify symbols of change.

The exhibition showcases a range of works from the City of Perth's art collection, as well as selected artworks generously loaned from other public and private collections.

FOREWARD

Perth is situated between two outstanding natural assets; the Swan River and Mt Eliza which has been preserved as a part of King's Park. The city vista can best be appreciated from the top of Mount Eliza which has been a favoured vantage point for many artists. Several works in this exhibition offer similar perspectives that have been documented over numerous years, and allow us to observe the growth of the city and its changing skyline.

Perth was founded in 1829 as part of the Swan River Colony and by the 1860s the physical and social form of Perth had largely been determined. The administrative, political, business and military centre was located in the immediate vicinity of St George's Terrace and Barrack Street. A commercial and shopping precinct was developing along Hay Street, while further north the Wellington Street area contained work-shops, cottages, stockyards and the like. Perth's 'port' was at the foot of William Street and provided the people of Perth with trading links between the port settlement of Fremantle and inland to Guildford.

A Town Planning Development Act was passed in 1928 and a Town Planning Board was established the next year.

The first 100 years of British settlement of Perth was celebrated in 1929 and the City of Perth was declared a Lord Mayoralty in the same year. The next four decades 1930–1970 were historically complex and encompassed many significant changes for Australians – from the depths of the Great Depression through two World Wars, to the heady days of the mineral boom that helped to finance major growth and development in Western Australia.

In the 1930s the construction of several multi-storey buildings along St. George's Terrace foreshadowed the dramatic changes that were to occur over the following decades. The emergence of modern architecture and high rise buildings were a significant change to the City's landscape and several fine examples from that early period still remain.

Town planning was instrumental in the rise of Modernism in Perth from the sixties. Gordon Stephenson and Alistair Hepburn were commissioned by the State Government in 1953 to create a regional plan that would allow for the proper and orderly development of the metropolitan region, providing for all the amenities associated with modern civil society. In terms of the city centre, the problem of congestion was overcome by planning arterial road systems as well as radial public transport infrastructure. The preservation of river frontage for the public is a principle that had been established by the Town Planning Board formed in 1929 and was further enshrined in the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan.

The plan was completed in 1955 and brought into operation with the Metropolitan Scheme Act (1963). It guided the exponential growth of the city's skyline from the mid 60s; this growth made possible by discoveries of iron ore and natural gas throughout the State. The construction of skyscrapers signalled the remodelling of the character of Perth into a truly modern city.

Guy Grey-Smith
King's Park, 1948



RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RIVER

From the earliest years of settlement, the topography of Perth has undergone modification, particularly in relation to the river shoreline. The first changes were in the early 1850s using convict labour to infill the west end of Mounts Bay Road at the foot of Mt Eliza. Then again in the late 1870s, more river was reclaimed between the Barrack St and William St jetties to create a recreation ground.

Between 1873 and 1885 the Esplanade Reserve was created for recreational purposes. Further reclamation at Barrack Square was begun in 1883.

Between 1921 and 1935 reclamation was carried out at Barrack Square, the Causeway was realigned to become parallel with St George's Terrace and Point Fraser lost its identity as a distinctive promontory at the eastern end of the city foreshore making way for the Langley Park playing fields. By 1937 Riverside Drive was constructed to the Causeway. In this same period Heirisson Islands were consolidated into a single island.

During this period a modest reclamation of Mounts Bay occurred. This part of the river underwent further massive reclamation from 1955 to make room for the freeway interchange and the Narrows Bridge which opened in 1959.

Our early reliance on the Swan River for transport saw jetties along the foreshore as an essential part of the colony's trade

development. These working jetties have now made way for areas that focus on recreation, rather than transportation and commerce. The extensive reclamation of the river shoreline which was done to create recreational public open space created a 'front lawn' for the city. In recent years this 'separation' between the city and the river has been the subject of frequent debate.

CULTURAL LIFE

Perth's geographic isolation was no excuse for cultural seclusion and artists took on the responsibility of providing a forum for social exchange. Interested artists and groups often provided material from overseas and interstate publications to stimulate discussion and ensured that cultural life in the West was as rich as in other parts of Australia at that time.

The artists' relationship with the city in modern times was not limited to recording aesthetic experiences. Discussions about the role and purpose of art as the foremost expression of humanism, helped to influence the visual, social, political, commercial, architectural and spatial structure of the urban environment.

Perth has a long history of artist groups, associations, societies, galleries and studio collectives, which gravitated towards affordable studio spaces within walking distance of the heart of Perth. A central location appealed to artists looking to work together in cooperatives and studios for financial reasons and also intellectual and inspirational support.

Many of the artists represented in this exhibition were involved in the creation of Perth's cultural identity around the 1930s to 1960s. These included:

- Western Australian Society of Artists (reformed in 1920)
- Western Institute of Artists (est.1921)
- University Art Club (est. 1929)
- Perth Society of Artists (est. 1932)
- Western Australian Women Painters and Applied Arts Society (est. 1935)
- Workers' Art Guild (est.1935)
- The Banana Club (1940s)
- The Perth Group (est. 1957)
- Contemporary Art Society WA Branch (est.1966)

The importance of education through formal and informal outlets should also be acknowledged, with art classes being held at the following institutions:

- Perth Technical School (opened in 1900)

- The Linton Studio of Art in Murray Street (opened in 1923)
- The University of Western Australia commenced the Fine Arts course in 1927.

Artists' studios are known to have existed in Perth in many locations that offered affordable tenancy and accessibility, including studios in Howard St, London Court and Royal Arcade Perth.

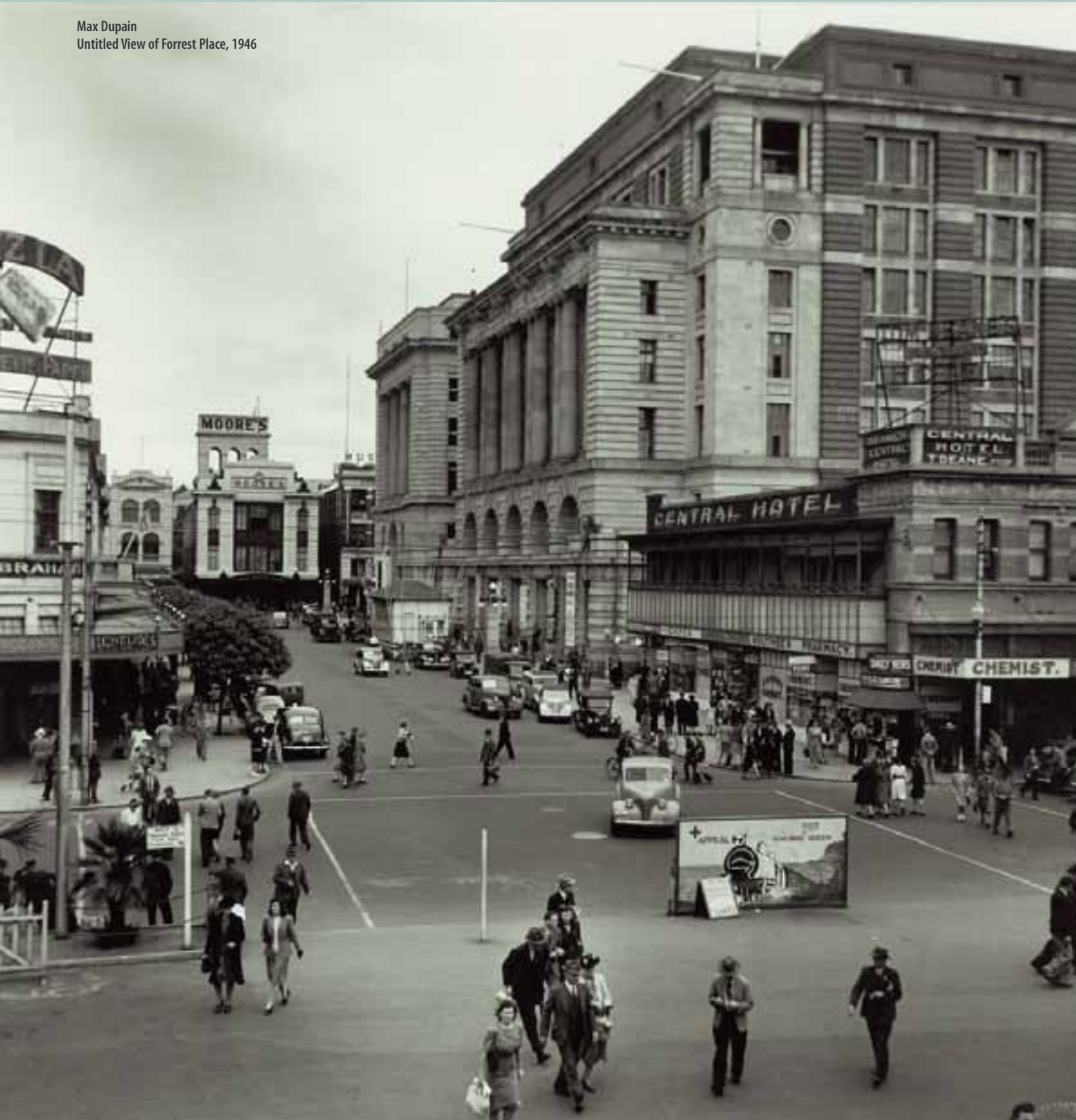
Throughout the twentieth century there have been numerous small, but influential galleries in Perth that have been important as a catalyst for creative talent. They also provided the opportunity for local artists to meet visiting artists and designers. Several such venues were:

- The Newspaper House Gallery, St George's Terrace was established by John Brackenreg and operative from 1933–1950.
- The Claude Hotchin Art Gallery, Hay Street Perth was opened by philanthropic arts patron Sir Claude Hotchin in 1947 and this gallery ran until 1952. Another was opened in 1958 on the second floor of Boans city store.
- Cremorne Art Centre on Barrack Street was established by Elizabeth Bunning (nee Blair Barber) and was headquarters for the Perth Society of Artists from 1966–1978.
- The Triangle Gallery in Crawley was established by David Foulkes Taylor in 1960.
- Skinner Galleries, Malcolm St West Perth was established by Joe and Rose Skinner and operative from 1958–1976.
- The Firestation Gallery was established by Rie Heymans just on the outskirts of the city in McCourt St West Leederville and ran from 1968–1976.

The post-war years saw the development of a number of major cultural organisations. The WA Opera Society (1947), the WA Orchestra (1950), the WA Ballet (1953) and the Perth Festival (1953) all added to the sense that Perth was a modern and cultured city.

Perth has a long history of artist groups, associations, societies, galleries and studio collectives, which gravitated towards affordable studio spaces within walking distance of the heart of Perth.

Max Dupain
Untitled View of Forrest Place, 1946





At left: John Oldham
The Gledden Building, 1936–37
watercolour
The University of Western Australia Art Collection
Gift of Oldham, Boas, Ednie-Brown Architects 1937

MODERN VISIONS OF THE CITY OF PERTH (1930–1970)

ESSAY BY DR ROBYN TAYLOR

To create a modern vision of a city is to develop a concept of modernity that seeks to promote particular notions about a place. However there can be an enormous distance between the concept and the reality. But we need our visions, otherwise how can we look imaginatively to the future, plan our cities, and satisfy our obsession with the idea of progress.

Seen in the wider context of the industrialized western world, Perth is a fascinating place to consider in the light of what makes a modern city. Historically, its foundation in 1829 made it one of the newest 'cities' in the world. It was established by a people who came from a highly civilized country that was at the forefront of the modern industrial age. In reality Perth's first years of existence was as the headquarters of a colony struggling to survive in what the settlers regarded as a remarkably uncivilized land that was totally foreign and unfamiliar in every way. To counter the hardships and primitive living conditions, visions of the city's future potential were essential. Much depended on this. Perth was the first colony of free settlers in Australia to be established without what was regarded as the stain of convictism. Its development depended on the settlers who in the main were of gentle birth who had paid their own way. They had invested heavily, and sought a new life away from England that was still suffering from the consequences of the Napoleonic wars. In particular, these free settlers wanted to seize the opportunity to acquire property that they saw as theirs for the taking and live the life of landed gentry. These were their sustaining dreams and visions.



Perth in 1929, A Bicentennial Dream
Produced for the *Western Mail State Centenary Number*, July 1929

As the seat of government, Perth was laid out in a geographically beautiful place on the banks of the Swan River nine miles upstream from the port of Fremantle.¹ It wasn't to be the most advantageous of sites as the city's future development would be hampered by the river on its southern and eastern edges, and marshy swamps to the north. To the west was Mount Eliza, however this provided a highly suitable seat from which to view and record the topography of the growing city.

In June 1929 the city celebrated its centenary. It had by all accounts, both written and pictorial, grown into a beautiful city. Fine commercial buildings, many constructed during the extraordinary gold boom years of the 1890s to c.1910 adorned St George's Terrace, the main thoroughfare. Fine residences had been erected along Adelaide Terrace, the eastward extension of St George's Terrace. There were civic buildings and gardens and a general air of optimism following the prosperity, particularly in the primary sector, that occurred after the First World War. As part of the 1929 celebrations, the city's progress was captured in an image of what Perth would look like in 2029². Produced for the *Western Mail State Centenary Number*, July 1929, the aerial view shows Perth as a modern metropolis with skyscrapers surrounding an impressive civic centre. A super highway runs along the river's edge and is linked with South Perth via a suspension bridge across the Narrows. Most spectacular of all is

the swarm of planes inhabiting the sky. The image is about technological progress with the city sitting like a jewel reflecting on its prosperity and modernity.

Such optimism was to change with the Wall Street crash in October 1929. The Great Depression that started in New York brought home the fact that Western Australia may be geographically isolated, but its economy was intrinsically linked to the wider world. However by 1933, gold would pull the state out of the Depression, well before other Australian states, and the name of the colourful gold mining entrepreneur Claude de Bernales would resound along the Terrace as its saviour. De Bernales, an Englishman who made his fortune in Western Australia, gave Perth a gift of two distinctive buildings, London Court (1936–37) an English Tudoresque confection that also served as an open pedestrian thoroughfare between St George's Terrace and Hay Street, and the Art Deco styled Piccadilly Cinema and Arcade (1937–38).

While Perth's size and ambience still had the charm of a provincial town, by the mid-late 1930s the city's skyline started to change. Several new buildings were rising well above their shorter neighbours and their styles reflected the influences coming from America. At seven storeys, with a corner tower, the Gledden Building (1937), the multi-storey CML Building (1936) and Lawson Flats (c.1937) were hailed as Perth's first skyscrapers. The increase in large automobile showrooms and garages were another sign of modernity. Winterbottoms (1925) on the corner of St George's Terrace and Mill Street was locally claimed, in 1927, to be not only Australia's largest garage, but also 'the largest garage in the Commonwealth'³. A 1969 pencil and pastel sketch by Frank Norton depicts the garage from a high vantage point on the opposite corner. While the design of the façade is traditional in its restrained classicism, the interior was notable for its use of modern structural technology with wide mushroom shaped columns supporting reinforced concrete floor slabs. The architects

John Oldham
Adelphi Hotel, c1936



John Oldham
Emu Brewery, c1936

The building (demolished 1992) was a landmark on the foreshore and distinctive for its block like form relieved by low relief murals along the upper cornice line.



were Oldham Boas & Ednie Brown, the local firm who were also responsible for the Gledden Building and the Adelphi Hotel (1936) on the opposite corner.

A painting by artist Portia Bennett, dated 1948, uses a high vantage point above Winterbottoms to capture the warmly tinted façade of the Adelphi. It is a sunny day looking east down and along St George's Terrace, and in the distance can be seen the CML, and the tower of the Gledden which still stands on the corner of William and Hay Streets. The scale of the buildings along St George's Terrace makes the street appear wide, certainly wide enough to support the angle parking she depicts, something that just couldn't be contemplated or accommodated today. Paintings of the city streets by Bennett and other artists, including photographs by Fred Flood and Sydney photographer Max Dupain, taken during 1946, capture the essence of a small provincial city in the early throes of its transition into a modern city.

An essential ingredient for a city to have vibrancy is a resident population. Inner city living was an integral part of Perth with boarding houses, apartments and flats above or behind commercial offices. These would increase in number during the 1930s with the introduction of entire blocks of flats being erected along both Terraces. The prestigious Lawson Flats (1937) was the first multi-storey building for residential living to be erected in Perth while the earlier Sutton House (c.1933–34), a few doors east of the Adelphi,⁴ incorporated a few commercial offices and fourteen flats. Sutton's white painted façade was unusual for its time. Designed by owner Joe Skinner in what he referred to as 'my idea of modern', it was a forerunner of a new modern style for the city that would later be called Art Deco.⁵ Skinner was a patron of the arts and, following his marriage to Rose Harrison in 1946, he would build the Skinner Galleries on his Malcolm Street property. In 1958 the Galleries were opened by Rose and for the next two decades became what is considered to have been 'the most important private art gallery in the state'.⁶ It became a hub for the promotion of modern art and ideas.

Unlike Lawson, the majority of new flats such as Sutton, Arbordale and the Mill Street flats were designed to be affordable for the average city worker or a couple without children. Generally condemned in the press as potential slums and conducive to 'loose morals' amongst the young, flat living became an integral part of city living.⁷ Perhaps more than any other building type, they reflected the changes in modern social life patterns in Perth. After a day's work, there were many attractions close at hand for the flat dweller. Many older hotels were being modernised with streamlined facades and new American style cocktail bars. There was the Criterion in Hay Street, the Bohemian in Murray, and the new Adelphi, which also had a swimming pool for its patrons. In his watercolour of the Adelphi, John Oldham chose to depict the hotel illuminated at night after a shower of rain. The building's reflection glistens on a wet St George's Terrace while car beams appear like watery searchlights. After seeing the latest Hollywood movie at the Piccadilly or the Plaza, patrons could return to the Adelphi for a cocktail or nightcap, or dance the rest of the night away.

On the edge of the CBD on Mounts Bay Road was the Emu Brewery (1936). The brewery was designed in the International Functionalist style by Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown. The building (demolished 1992) was a landmark on the foreshore and distinctive for its block like form relieved by low relief murals along the upper cornice line.⁸ Although this was a massive industrial building its cream-white painted walls and red roof tiles conformed to what was increasingly becoming the city's colour palette following the discovery of Donnybrook stone during the first decade of the 20th century. This beautifully grained sandstone contributed to the light relaxed air of the city, which also enjoyed a Mediterranean climate. This same colour scheme, and a Mediterranean style, had been chosen for the new university buildings that were erected during 1929–1932 on the foreshore of Matilda Bay just west of the city. Perth was acquiring a distinctive character.



Fritz Kos
 Council Chambers, 1963
 Courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia,
 The Battye Library
 Ref: 340583PD

After the Second World War it was becoming increasingly evident the city and larger metropolitan region needed a plan for its future development. The 1955 Stephenson-Hepburn plan provided a blueprint with major developments for the city including a freeway system with a bridge (1959) across the Narrows linking the city with South Perth. This involved massive reclamation works for the Narrows Interchange. Landscape architect John Oldham was commissioned to design parks and water features that would eventually soften the spaghetti-like junction that scarred the foreshore.

During the 1960s Perth was to undergo another boom, this time generated not by gold but the vast mineral wealth in the north of the state. The geography of the city with its natural boundaries that prevented extended growth, was partly responsible for many of Perth's finest old buildings being demolished for new international style glass and steel office blocks. But largely, it was the seductive energy and appeal of the modern, and the need to capitalise on ground and air space that saw the further transformation of a continually evolving city.

To a large extent our understanding of the modern visions that once energized the city has to rely on the painted and photographic image. Apart from the Narrows Interchange where the landscape has matured to fulfil the vision, too many of Perth's earlier buildings have been demolished leaving little sense of its historic growth. Fortunately Council House, one of the city's most iconic buildings from the 1960s that was officially opened by the Queen in 1963, has survived our even more progress-minded times, but only by the skin of its teeth. After being saved from demolition in the 1990s and restored, Council House stands proudly in an expansive garden setting. It is a fantastic reminder of that swinging optimistic decade when the future was bright and progress was definitely in the air.⁹

¹ Stirling went against the usual custom of establishing the administrative centre on the coast. Apparently his reasoning was based on naval experiences where coastal towns were often at risk of bombardment. Also his choice for the site of Perth went against the advice of Sir George Murray, Secretary for War and the Colonies, who preferred the vicinity of Point Heathcote, at the confluence of the Swan and Canning Rivers. See Pamela Statham-Drew, *James Stirling*, UWA Press, 2003, pp.139–140.

² The artist is believed to have been Percy Stanway Tapp who worked for the newspaper.

³ Advertisement in *Western Mail Centenary Number 1929*.

⁴ In 1933 Foy & Gibson auctioned off its city property holdings on the south side of St George's Terrace. This freed up a large area along the Terrace and Mill Street for new developments such as Sutton House, the Adelphi Hotel, and the Mill Street flats. The latter buildings would be demolished for the Parmelia Hotel.

⁵ Skinner Files, File No.3, MMS 286, Battye Archives, State Library of Western Australia. The statement is written on the back of a photograph of Sutton.

⁶ Snell, Ted, *Cinderella on the Beach*, UWA Press, 1991, p.48.

⁷ Subsequent decentralisation would result in a dramatic decline in the city's population and as a consequence its vitality. It was estimated, in 1966, that 14,000 people lived in the centre of Perth, but by 1986 the number had dropped to about 2,500. See O. Yiftachel, 'Boundary Change and Institutional Conflict in the Planning of Central Perth', in *New Zealand Geographer*, Abstracts, Vol.45, No.2, October 1989, p.62. Discussion between Bill Warnock of City Vision and Robyn Taylor, 1990.

⁸ The watercolour rendering of the brewery by John Oldham has a more elaborate mural depicting the history of brewing. The decoration is believed to have been unique for an industrial building in Australia.

⁹ For a lively story about this decade, see Jenny Gregory, *City of Light. A History of Perth since the 1950s* (2003) published by the City of Perth.

CATALOGUE OF ARTWORKS

Portia Bennett
Hotel Adelphi, Perth, 1948
Watercolour and Pencil
The University of Western Australia Art Collection
Acquired with assistance of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council 1986





Portia Bennett
Construction of the Narrows Bridge, Perth c1959

PORTIA BENNETT (1898–1989)

Portia Bennett studied at the Royal Art Society School, at Sydney Teachers' College and Julian Ashton's Art School. Bennett arrived in Perth in 1932, became a foundation member of the Perth Society of Artists and exhibited at Newspaper House in 1933. She painted many pictures of Perth using viewpoints which accentuated the interaction of architectural shapes of well known buildings with scenes of urban life.

During the 1930s and 1940s Bennett completed some of her most powerful work; strong architectural studies of the streets and landmarks around Perth. She was fascinated by the city and drawn to modern, recently constructed buildings, with her watercolours depicting a fashionable and contemporary Perth.

Portia Bennett

From Jacob's Ladder, c1934
Watercolour and Pastel
56 x 59
The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

Portia Bennett

Hotel Adelphi, Perth, 1948
Watercolour and Pencil
54 x 52
The University of Western Australia Art Collection
Acquired with the assistance of the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council 1986

Situated on the corner of St George's Terrace and Mill Street, the Adelphi Hotel was built in the 1930s and carried the essence of Hollywood style, featuring a cocktail bar and art deco touches. The Adelphi Hotel was replaced by the Parmelia Hotel in the 1960s.

Portia Bennett

For the Queen's Visit, 1954
watercolour on paper
60 x 44.5
City of Perth Collection

On the 25 March 1954 Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived in Perth as the last stop of their 8 week tour of Australia. Perth was in a 'royal frenzy' and loyal Australians greeted the Queen in huge numbers, with crowds lining the streets adorned in red, white and blue decorations.

Portia Bennett

Sherwood Court, 1954
watercolour on paper
38 x 28
City of Perth Collection

At the bottom of Sherwood Court on The Esplanade are the Lawson Flats. These apartments were designed in 1937 by Hennessy and Hennessy, and Reginald Summerhayes and are still one of the most urbane of the city's residential buildings, featuring subdued ornamentation in the Art Deco style.

Portia Bennett

Swan River, Dredging for the Narrows
watercolour, c1956
Private Collection

Portia Bennett

Construction of the Narrows Bridge, Perth c1959
Watercolour on paper
24.5 x 33
City of Perth Collection

An increase in traffic put pressure on the Causeway (built in 1952) and additional routes to the city were needed. One of Perth's icons of modernity, the Narrows Bridge, was a key feature of the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan and was completed in 1959.

There was considerable dissent about the project because of the loss of Mounts Bay foreshore. Main Roads engineers' siting of the road meant that forty-three acres of Mounts Bay had to be reclaimed for the city approach to the bridge. This meant filling in most of the bay, so that for nearly a decade the area looked like a desert while natural compression and stabilization took place.

IRENE CARTER (1900–1954)

Irene Carter was a musician, teacher and artist. She worked as a commercial artist and later studied and exhibited in Italy, then returned to Australia and exhibited in N.S.W and Victoria. She returned to Europe after World War II to study watercolour painting. On her return to Perth, she painted many studies of Perth buildings, exhibited at Newspaper House Gallery and, was awarded the Perth Prize for Watercolour in 1951.

Irene Carter

St George's Terrace, 1938
watercolour
33.5 x 21.5
Private Collection

Irene Carter

View From Stirling Gardens, St George's Terrace, Perth, c1950
watercolour
34 x 29.5
Private Collection

Irene Carter

Howard Street, c1935
watercolour on paper
32.5 x 49
City of Perth Collection

Irene Carter

Noonday Sun and Reflections, Perth WA, c1945
watercolour on paper
18.5 x 32.5
City of Perth Collection

Irene Carter

The Narrows, Perth, 1945
watercolour on paper
23.5 x 32
City of Perth Collection

Irene Carter

Cloisters, c1950
watercolour on paper
17 x 33
City of Perth Collection

The Cloisters is located at 200 St George's Terrace, opposite the intersection with Mill Street. It is one of a small number of convict-built colonial buildings of the mid-nineteenth century remaining in the central area of Perth. It was designed by Richard Roach Jewell for Bishop Hale and constructed in 1858 as a secondary school for boys

Irene Carter

The Barracks, St George's Terrace Perth
watercolour on paper
Private Collection

The Barracks were constructed in 1866 as accommodation for the Pensioner Guards, who had accompanied the convicts to Western Australia and were the colony's main defence force. Converted into offices at the turn of the century, the Barracks became the Headquarters for the Public Works Department and the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department.

The Barracks first came under threat in the 1950s when the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan proposed the demolition of the building to make way for the freeway development and allow Parliament House to have a more prominent presence at the end of St George's Terrace.

There was tremendous support from the community to save the Barracks and its archway became a symbol for protest at the planned destruction of buildings in Perth. Rallies, petitions, articles, public opinion polls and public meetings built a momentum to help save this historic structure.

All, but the archway that remains today, was demolished in 1966.



Max Dupain
Corner of St George's Tce & Barrack St Perth, 1946

MAX DUPAIN (1911–1992)

Sydney-based photographer Max Dupain trained at the Julian Ashton School of Art and opened his own studio in 1934. He held numerous solo exhibitions in Australia and internationally, including a retrospective exhibition at the National Gallery in 1975 and 1991 and another at the Art Gallery of N.S.W. in 1980.

Max Dupain

Town Hall Perth, 1946
Photograph
35 x 35
City of Perth Collection

The need for an efficient public transport system grew as Perth was developing into a cosmopolitan city.

The tramway system that developed in Perth from 1900 ran on a network of tracks and overhead cables. Its major purpose was to transport people from their homes in the suburbs to their work or shopping in the city.

After years of dominating the streets, tramways began to face competition from other forms of transport and the last City tram rattled through central Hay Street in April 1958. Within a year, all the old tram lines had been dug up from the city streets.

Max Dupain

Untitled View of Forrest Place, 1946
Photograph
35 x 35
City of Perth Collection

Central to Forrest Place is the GPO building. The General Post Office, completed in 1923 was designed by J. Smith Murdoch in association with Hillson, Beasley and W.B. Harwick. The eastern façade of the seven storey building is faced with Donnybrook sandstone and granite from Mahogany Creek.

Max Dupain

Corner of St George's Tce & Barrack St Perth, 1946
photograph
35 x 35
City of Perth Collection

The Colonial Mutual Life (CML) building in St George's Terrace, at ten-storeys high, was built in 1936 as one of the first high rise buildings in Perth and remained the city's highest for a quarter of a century.

The six storey building in the foreground is the original T&G Mutual Life Assurance Company building, also known as Moir Chambers, built in the 1920s and replaced by the new international style T&G building erected in the 1960s.



Max Dupain

London Court, Perth, 1946

Photograph

35 x 35

City of Perth Collection

London Court was commissioned by Claude de Bernales and was a pastiche of a 16th century London street. Ironically, this monument to capitalist enterprise and English tradition was to house for several years the headquarters of Western Australia's miniscule Communist Party.

Max Dupain

Trolley Bus to Claremont, 1946

Photograph

35 x 35

City of Perth Collection

Electric powered trolley buses had greater flexibility than trams. This made it inevitable that the trams would all be replaced by the trolley buses. The advent of the private motor car and associated major roadworks around the city meant that the trolley bus service itself closed in 1969. It was the last service of its kind in Australia.

Max Dupain

The Hotel Esplanade, Perth, 1946

Photograph

35 x 35

City of Perth Collection

The Hotel Esplanade, built in 1898, was soon 'the rendezvous of the best in society' and in the 1920s became the place to stay for important visitors to Perth.

In the 1960s people fought passionately against the City of Perth's forced removal of verandas and by the end of 1962 verandas remained on only three buildings in the city – the Hotel Esplanade being one of them. In 1963 the matter was taken to court and the battle was won in favour of the Esplanade Hotel retaining its verandas.

ELIZABETH DURACK (1915–2000)

Born in Claremont in 1915, acclaimed Australian painter and illustrator, Elizabeth Durack achieved both fame and controversy during her lifetime. For most of her life, Durack's success rested on her extensive body of paintings, drawings, and book illustrations, depicting outback life and Aboriginal settlements in Australia's remote north-west which reflected her childhood experience.

The three watercolours by Durack in this exhibition are outside her usual subject matter and unique in their depiction of the City of Perth and Swan River.

Elizabeth Durack

Perth from King's Park, 1959

Mixed media on paper

30 x 45

City of Perth Collection

Elizabeth Durack

The New Narrows Bridge, 1959

Mixed media on paper

27 x 34

City of Perth Collection

Elizabeth Durack

Swan River Scene, 1955

Mixed media on paper

24 x 41

City of Perth Collection

IRIS FRANCIS (1913–2004)

Iris Francis was one of Western Australia's leading modernist artists in the 1930s and 1940s. She studied at Perth Technical School, worked at Gibbney and Sons design office and taught at Perth and Fremantle Technical Schools from 1935–1947. Francis' work was included in the 1951 W.A. Jubilee Exhibition of Paintings and the 1956 Perth Prize for Contemporary Art; she won the Claude Hotchin prize in 1953 and 1955.

Iris Francis

Midday Stroll, The Esplanade, Perth, 1940

Watercolour

49 x 33

City of Perth Collection

The Esplanade Reserve was reclaimed from the river between 1873 and 1885 to provide a recreational ground for the people of Perth for sporting events and large scale gatherings ranging from military parades to public demonstrations.

Iris Francis

Perth Jetties, c1945

Watercolour

22 x 29

City of Perth Collection

JOHN GOODCHILD (1898–1980)

Goodchild was commissioned by the Elder corporation to paint a series of paintings documenting the company's Perth premises.

John Goodchild

Elder Buildings 1946

36.5 x 51.3

Watercolour

The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

John Goodchild

Elder House William Street Perth, 1952

Watercolour

36.5 x 51.3

The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

At the base of William Street next to the Capitol theatre was Elder House which occupied Temple Court. This building also housed the Embassy Ballroom, a popular dance hall.

GUY GREY-SMITH (1916–1981)

Guy Grey-Smith was born in Wagin, Western Australia and spent most of his childhood in the south-west. During the Second World War he served in the RAAF during 1936 and the RAF 1937–47. He was held as a prisoner of war in Germany 1940–44. Upon his release, he studied under Henry Moore at the Chelsea School of Art, London in 1945–47.

He returned to Western Australia in 1948 and settled in Darlington with his wife Helen. Guy was an influential teacher and renowned by his peers for pioneering Modernism in Western Australia. The Perth Group was set up in 1957 to promote modernism in Perth with Guy Grey-Smith and other important artists of the time, Tom Gibbons, Robert Juniper and Brian McKay.

In 1966 he was elected inaugural president of the Contemporary Art Society (WA branch).

Guy Grey-Smith

King's Park, 1948

Oil

43 x 54

Private Collection

HELEN GREY-SMITH (1916–)

Helen Grey-Smith

Silk Curtains for Council House, 1963

Screen printed fabric

City of Perth Collection

Helen Grey-Smith was born in India in 1916. She studied at the London School of Interior Decoration and it was here that Helen met and married Guy Grey-Smith. They lived in Western Australia, Guy's homeland and in 1952 they returned to London where Helen undertook further studies at the Hammersmith School of Art. On returning to Western Australia Helen produced a range of screen-printed fabrics. These were exhibited in various Perth galleries, including Skinner Galleries, David Foulkes-Taylor's Triangle Gallery and at Newspaper House. During the 1960s Helen was commissioned to design lengths of fabric for the University of Western Australia Staff House, the newly erected Council House and the Reserve Bank in Canberra.

Helen was the first artist in Western Australia to establish small scale textile production lines from her studio in Darlington. For the ten years that she actively worked in this medium she was a key figure in reshaping Western Australian applied arts.

Fritz Kos
Council House, 1963
Courtesy of the State Library of Western Australia,
The Batty Library
Ref: 340585PD



JEFFREY HOWLETT & DON BAILEY

Plans and Model for Council House 1962

Council House was the second major icon (after the Narrows Bridge) of modernity in the city of Perth. Before its opening in 1963, Perth City Council had been located in a variety of premises, including the Perth Town Hall. In 1959 the site for a dedicated administrative centre for the Council on Stirling Gardens was chosen. This was followed by a national competition for the design of the building which attracted 61 designs from all over Australia.

The Howlett and Bailey design was in the international-style consisting of two buildings; one containing administrative offices and the other comprising the 'town hall' or 'auditorium'. Council House was built as the administration building and in the early 1970s the Perth Concert Hall was constructed on land purchased a short distance from Council House.

The winning design was the result of a highly contested national competition and became a source of considerable civic pride marking the public acceptance of the 'Modern Movement'. It was opened by Queen Elizabeth II on 25 March 1963 during her second visit to Perth.

The first official Council meeting in the new premises was held on 20 May 1963.

AMY HEAP (1874–1956)

Amy Heap, artist and illustrator, was born in Lancashire, England. She attended art schools in Manchester and London. She received a teacher's certificate in 1895 and a certificate for art instruction in 1897 before migrating to Western Australia in 1909 with her sister and brother.

She became a member of the Western Australian Society of Arts and exhibited regularly from 1912 to 1925. During World War I Heap joined the staff of Western Australian Newspapers Ltd as an artist/photographer.

From 1918, as a 'specialist in embellishment', she contributed drawings and photographs to the Western Mail, a weekly journal aimed at rural readers but which also enjoyed a wide circulation in Perth. For a time, she and the photographer Fred Flood dominated the visual imagery in the Mail's Christmas editions.

Heap retired from the newspaper about 1934 but continued to paint and exhibit with the Perth Society of Artists.

Amy Heap

St George's Terrace Perth, 1932

watercolour

26 x 37

Private Collection

This image appeared in the Western Mail Centenary number 5, January 1933. The caption as published reads 'One of the widest and finest thoroughfares in Australia, St George's Terrace, Perth, contains many dignified buildings. The latest addition to its architecture is Newspaper House, the new home of the West Australian and the Western Mail. St George's Terrace is the centre of the professional and commercial life of Western Australia.'

LIONEL JAGO (1882–1953)

Born in South Australia in 1882, Jago attended the Julian Ashton Art School in Sydney. He moved to Perth c1900 and exhibited in the inaugural Perth Society of Artists exhibition in 1933. Jago was also an accomplished violinist.

Lionel Jago

East Perth, 1936

Oil on Canvas

25 x 36.5

The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

JOHN JEFFREY

St George's Terrace, 1938

Silver Gelatin Photograph

City of Perth Collection

ROBERT JUNIPER (1929–)

Born in Merredin, Western Australia in 1929, Juniper studied commercial art and industrial design at Beckenham School of Art, England. He returned to WA in 1949 and taught art. He was a founding member of the Perth Group that was established in 1957. Since 1974, Robert Juniper has devoted himself full-time to painting, sculpting and printmaking and has established himself as one of Australia's leading painters.

He has been the recipient of many awards and honours, including the Wynne Prize in 1976 and 1980. In 1998 he was presented with a State Living Treasures Award by the Ministry for Culture and the Arts in Western Australia. The Art Gallery of WA held a major survey exhibition of his work in 1999.

Robert Juniper

Skinner Gallery, 1958

Oil and ink on board

Private Collection

This painting was commissioned by Rose Skinner to commemorate the opening of the Skinner Galleries in 1958 and it appeared on the cover of the catalogue for the inaugural exhibition held at the gallery.

CYRIL LANDER (1892–1983)

Cyril Lander was born in Melbourne in 1892 into a family of carpenters and cabinet makers. He too became a carpenter but was able to study art at night school in Geelong. In between service in both World Wars he worked in cabinet-making and the furniture business. In 1943 during WWII, Landers was transferred to Western Australia where he took up painting and specialised in watercolours. He won the Claude Hotchin art prize in 1957 and 1959.

Cyril Lander

St George's Terrace, 1953

Oil on Canvas

46 x 57

Private Collection

Cyril Lander

Awakening City, c1960

Watercolour

77 x 63

The Sir Claude Hotchin Art Bequest, 1977

Royal Perth Hospital Art Collection

Cyril Lander

Perth and South Perth from Causeway, 1965

Watercolour on Paper

26 x 36.5

City of Perth Collection

FRANK MILLS

Untitled, Perth from King's Park
Watercolour, c1946
Private Collection

FRANK NORTON (1963–1983)

Frank Norton was born in New Zealand and came to Australia in 1919. He studied at the East Sydney Technical College in the 1930s and was awarded a scholarship in his final year which included a tour of NZ, Singapore, Java and Western Australia as a guest of the Navy. He was an official war artist for the RAN and RAAF (1941–45) and served as Naval War artist in Korea (1952). He taught art at the East Sydney Technical College (1945–1958) before being appointed Director of the Art Gallery of Western Australia (1958–1976).

Frank Norton

Winterbottoms, Corner of St George's Tce & Mill St, 1969
pencil and pastel on paper
31 x 42
City of Perth Collection

This drawing by Frank Norton illustrates the premises of Winterbottoms Motor Company

Horse-drawn vehicles were gradually replaced by motor vehicles in the early part of the 20th Century. Horse troughs, however, were still present in Perth up until as late as 1948. Like most places in the world, the car became a symbol of modernity and progress in Perth in the 1950s. It created its own set of problems including the provision of road systems, parking and pollution.

The creation of footpaths helped to keep pedestrians safe from the ever increasing hazards that the vehicle presented, with pedestrian crossings being introduced in the 1950s.

The Stephenson-Hepburn Plan provided the peripheral road system that would decongest the city centre as well as ensuring that the public transport system be modernized and expanded to cover the planned metropolitan area.

Frank Norton

St George's Terrace
mixed media c1973
Private Collection

This stretch of St George's Terrace, between Sherwood Court and Howard Street, illustrates buildings (including Warwick House and the Bank of NSW) that once occupied the site of the Allendale Square building (opened in 1976).

JOHN OLDHAM

Born in Perth in 1907, Oldham had an architect father, artist mother and grandparents who were painters. In the mid-1920s Oldham served an architectural apprenticeship to the firm Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown which had bought his father's business after the death of Oldham senior in 1919. He studied Architecture in Melbourne in 1928.

Oldham then returned to Perth in late 1930 where he capitalised on his graphic skills to set up the 'Poster Studio' with Harlod Krantz, where, even during the depression, he was able to make a living out of producing lino cut poster prints. He later moved to Sydney and opened the Oldham Publishing Company.

During 1934–37, Oldham established himself as an architectural designer, specialising in the rendering and presentation of architectural drawings. He drew heavily on his knowledge of the ideas of the Bauhaus and the International School.

In the late 1930s he and his wife Ray joined the Communist Party and embraced its programmes – especially the Workers' Art Guild. He contributed substantially to the design and production of posters and programmes.

Oldham was chosen to design and oversee the construction of the Australian Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

In the latter part of his career Oldham worked as a designer and landscape architect for Federal and State Government projects.

John Oldham

The Gledden Building, 1936–37
watercolour
59.5 x 39
The University of Western Australia Art Collection
Gift of Oldham, Boas, Ednie-Brown Architects 1937

Built in 1938 by the firm Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown for the University of Western Australia the Gledden Building was one of the first tall buildings in Perth.

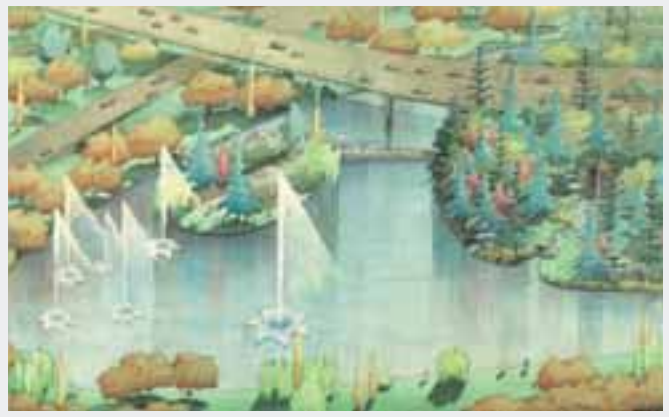
At seven storeys high, with an additional two storeys for the corner supporting a bronze aerial beacon, the Gledden Building shows the influence of the New York Art Deco skyscraper epoch.

Modern features include a ground floor arcade which was decorated with scenes of local flora and fauna.

John Oldham
Southern Cross Fountain, 1966



John Oldham
Southern Cross Fountain, 1966



John Oldham

Emu Brewery, c1936

The Buchan Group Architects – formerly Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown.

The Emu Brewery located on the corner of Mounts Bay Road and Spring Street in Perth was built by Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown.

The design of this industrial building lends itself more readily to the modernist idea that a building's form should follow its function. The exterior relief panels of decoration in this watercolour rendering by Oldham depict the process of brewing. They were rejected in the final plans.

The Emu Brewery was demolished in 1992.

John Oldham

Adelphi Hotel, c1936

The Buchan Group Architects – formerly Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown.

The Adelphi Hotel was situated on the corner of St George's Terrace and Mill St Perth, opposite the Winterbottoms Motor Company premises.

The Adelphi Hotel was replaced by the Parmelia Hilton in the 1960s.

John Oldham

Overall Plan, 1966

watercolour, pen and ink on paper

68 x 91

City of Perth Collection

Stamped near the signature of this work with "Public Works Department Architectural Division WL Green FRAIA Principal Architect".

The State Government in 1952 invited an internationally renowned town planner, Professor Gordon Stephenson, to draw up plans for the future development of the metropolitan area. Together with local planner J.A. Hepburn, Stephenson put together a blueprint that was to shape city planning for the rest of the century. As part of the Stephenson-Hepburn Plan, he called for a system of freeways and major highways enabling commuters to cross the city easily from far-flung suburbs.

As a first step in the freeway system, it was essential to grapple with the problem of bridging the Swan River at the Narrows. The Narrows Bridge was opened in 1958 and for several more years, the construction of the bridge and the associated freeways called for the reclamation of land along the river banks on a scale that dismayed many.

The work of landscape architect John Oldham helped to soften the consequences of the massive reclamation of land along the Swan River banks.

The park at the base of the Freeway interchange was named John Oldham Park in his honour.

John Oldham

Southern Cross Fountain, 1966

watercolour, pen and ink on paper

59 x 95

City of Perth Collection

John Oldham

Waterfall, 1966

watercolour, pen and ink on paper

77 x 55

City of Perth Collection



ERNEST PHILPOT (1906–1985)

Ernest Philpot was born in England and arrived in Western Australia in 1913. He was a member of the Western Australian Society of Artists and exhibited in Perth between 1934 and 1984. Philpot won the Claude Hotchin Prize in 1948 and the inaugural Perth Prize for landscape in 1952. He taught at Wesley College (1957–1968) and was an art critic for the Sunday Times (1961–1965).

Ernest Philpot

Market Day, 1935

Oil on hessian bag

51 x 81

City of Perth Collection

Artists were resourceful during the depression, as illustrated by the use of a hessian bag for this painting. The painting depicts a lively bustling scene with trucks and horse drawn carts at the markets on Wellington Street, Perth.

Ernest Philpot

East Perth, 1945

Oil on Canvas

31 x 35.5

The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

This view of East Perth takes in the old railway bridge and the East Perth Power Station. The Power Station was constructed between 1913 and 1916 by the Western Australian State Government and provided electricity for the whole of the Perth metropolitan area. The Power Station was sited near the railway for transportation of coal fuel and alongside the Swan River for the cooling water required for the condensing plant. It was upgraded with new power generators in the 1920s, 1930s and 1950s to meet the city's growing demand for power. The station was decommissioned and closed in December 1981.

The East Perth Power Station is considered to be one of the State's most significant industrial heritage buildings. It includes a range of remnant machinery and equipment that is believed to be unique in the world because it contains the five different stages of power generation technology that occurred in the 20th century.

At left: Ernest Philpot
East Perth, 1945
Oil on Canvas
The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

Harald Vike
Perth Nocturne 1934
Oil on Canvas
The Janet Holmes à Court Collection



GEORGE PITT-MORISON (1861–1946)

George Pitt-Morison studied at the National Gallery School and went to Paris in 1890 to study at the Academie Julian. In 1906 he was employed by the Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia and was curator from 1928 until his retirement in 1942. He was an influential figure in the Perth art community as President of the W.A. Society of Arts in 1906, a foundation member of the Perth Society of Artists in 1932 and an advisor to and lecturer at the University of Western Australia's fine art course from 1927–32.

George Pitt-Morison

The Distant City, 1937
Watercolour
25 x 37
Private Collection

EDITH TRETHOWAN (1901–1939)

Born in Perth Trethowan had private lessons with Henri van Raalte, and later studied at the Linton School of Art under JWR Linton and at the Perth Technical College under AB Webb. She was a member of the Perth Society of Artists and exhibited at their inaugural exhibition in 1933.

Edith Trethowan

Mounts Bay Road Towards Perth, c1931
Wood Engraving
15.3 x 10.2
The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

HARALD VIKE (1906–1987)

Harald Vike was born in Norway and came to Perth in 1929. He studied intermittently under George Pitt Morison (1930–41) while working as an advertising illustrator and a banner designer for the Workers' Art Guild and the Communist Party.

He exhibited in Perth from 1938 until 1945, and then moved to Melbourne where he worked as a painter and freelance newspaper artist, contributing caricatures to the newspaper The Argus. He was principal décor designer for HSV7 television in Melbourne from 1958–71.

During his time in Perth, Vike was a trade union supporter and a foundation member of the Workers' Art Guild. He painted many images of public buildings and drew character studies of local inhabitants. Vike held fifteen solo exhibitions between 1937 and 1977, and participated in many group exhibitions until his death in 1987.

Harald Vike

Perth Nocturne 1934
Oil on canvas on board
49.5 x 59
The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

Vike made this painting of Perth at night from his studio which was above the old Grand Theatre in Murray Street looking east across Barrack Street.

Harald Vike

West Perth Rooftops, 1934
Pencil
31 x 38
Private Collection



Harald Vike
Perth Foreshore, 1936

Harald Vike

Perth Foreshore, 1936

Watercolour

27 x 37

Private Collection

Harald Vike

A View to William St

Watercolour

26 x 36

Private Collection

CLIFFORD WOOD

Perth, 1946

Watercolour on Paper

33 x 42

City of Perth Collection

Clifford Wood was a war artist during World War II from 1943–45 and later taught at Swinburne Technical College from 1962–1970. He is known for his use of vivid colours in his depiction of bush landscapes and related subjects.

LENDERS

The City of Perth is extremely grateful to the lenders listed below, as well as those who have chosen to remain anonymous. Without their generosity this exhibition would not have been possible.

The Buchan Group Architects – formerly Oldham, Boas and Ednie-Brown

The Janet Holmes à Court Collection

The Royal Perth Hospital Art Collection

The University of Western Australia Art Collection

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EXHIBITION CURATOR AND COORDINATOR

Belinda Cobby, Curator City of Perth

ESSAY

Dr Robyn Taylor

FURTHER READING

Western Australian Art and Artists 1900–1950 by Janda Gooding.

A City and Its Setting by George Seddon and David Ravine.

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