

Basic Detail Report



00054638

Title

Morts Dock, Balmain

Date

c 1923

Primary Maker

Harold Cazneaux

Medium

Gelatin silver photograph, chloro bromide print

Dimensions

Overall: 208 × 260 mm Display dimensions: 435 × 590 mm

Name

Photograph

History

Harold Cazneaux was working first as an artist-retoucher at Hammer Studio in the 1890s (He was born in 1878, was only 13 when his mother died in 1892) and had a low opinion of the formulaic studio portraiture. He was inspired to pursue art photography in the 1890s in Adelaide after seeing local work by John Kauffman and imported examples of the new impressionistic art photography movement known as Pictorial Photography. He moved to Sydney in 1904 and obtaining his own camera started taking photographs around Sydney in a Pictorial style stressing atmosphere and also nostalgia for the old Sydney world of the Rocks and local manual workers and residents. A parallel focus on Old Sydney was a feature of print makers at the turn of the century. His first one man show in 1909 included many harbour side city images often in soft focus taken early morning and after work on his way home to North Sydney and on weekend ferry excursions at Watsons Bay and Mosman etc.. From his arrival in Sydney Cazneaux was struck by the contrasts of old and new in the 'big smoke' of Sydney especially the harbourside shipping but treated these as atmospheric romantic images in a style well established by late Victorian era printmakers and painters. He was commissioned to photograph BHP plants in NSW and South Australian for the Company's 1935 Jubilee. The industrial images combined both pictorialist atmosphere with the drama and scale of modernist celebrations of the machine age. From as early as 1915 with his art -deco striped child study *The Bamboo Blind*, Cazneaux developed a hybrid Pictorialist -Modernist style incorporating clearer geometric lines and brighter sunshine. In his work for *The Home* magazine Cazneaux most often worked in a sun-lit style although still exhibiting more impressionistic works in the Pictorialist Salons. In the late 1920s and 1930s his modern style was the equal of his younger contemporaries like Max Dupain but always retained a human interest element and perspective even rather than the colder machine age

aesthetic and distorting angles favoured by modernists. See <http://www.photo-web.com.au/ShadesofLight/11-pictorial.htm> From Gael Newton