

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE5977

Crossley, Jill

(1929 -)

Born 1 January, 1929, Katanning Western Australia Australia

Occupation Professional photographer

Summary

Jill Crossley is regarded equally as a commercial and an artistic photographer. In addition to freelance advertising photography, Crossley has taken photographs in collaboration with ABC productions, the Craft Council of Victoria, and an Australian archaeological team in Pompeii. Crossley's style has been described as an interplay of realism and abstraction. Her early camera was a 116 folding camera, and in 1959 she used a Mamiyaflex and a Fujica camera. In recent years Crossley has worked with a small digital camera with a zoom lens.

Details

Jill Crossley is known equally for her commercial and artistic photography.

She grew up on her parent's sheep station at Katanning in Western Australia 277 km south-east of Perth. Her father was known to take photographs of his stud sheep and to process the photographic prints using Pyrex dishes and a washbasin. Jill and her brother Michael would watch on – their intrigue so great that they used their savings to buy a camera when Jill was only nine years old. Brother and sister consequently learnt how to develop films and print photographs using improvised equipment, just like their father.

Jill remained at home after finishing her schooling so she could pursue her interest in photography. She used a 116 folding camera and a cheap enlarger, setting up a darkroom in the bathroom using dishes made of wood which were painted with bitumen that sat on planks of wood placed over the bath tub. The first public showing of her work occurred when she submitted her photographs for display at the local agricultural show.

Crossley set her mind on becoming a portrait photographer and received some training in negative retouching from Mattie Hodgson. This led to her obtaining work with the photographer Susan Watkins in Perth in the period 1949-1950. She also worked in the studios of Allan Gough and John Dent. This experience made her realise that with her shy disposition she was not ideally suited to portrait photography.

Crossley moved to Sydney in 1954 intent on becoming an occupational therapist but before long she went back to photography. From 1957 to 1958 she worked as an assistant to Max Dupain in his Sydney studio and she was later to remark that his aesthetics and high standards were an inspiration to her.

1959 saw her becoming a freelance photographer working in a mainly commercial capacity. For a while she worked for the ABC taking still photographs for their productions and photographs for the advertising industry; however she continued to make portraits of children and to produce photographs that were used for book illustrations or were published in magazines such as *Art in Australia*. Then throughout the 1970s and 1980s she collaborated with the Craft Council of Australia, producing a number of instructional resource kits relating to weaving, woodcraft and leatherwork.

In the 1970s she also accepted an assignment in Papua New Guinea, which saw her travelling to New Britain and New Ireland; she accompanied an Australian archaeological team to Pompeii, Italy taking photographs of excavated artefacts.

Jill Crossley went on to have a number of solo exhibitions, starting in the 1980s at the Australian Centre for Photography (1980), and the David Reid Gallery in Paddington (1981). On the latter, Max Dupain commented '[i]t would be safe to say that this little exhibition of photographs is one of the most consequential of its kind we have witnessed for some time.' She also exhibited at the Studio Gallery in Brisbane (1982).

Well into her eighties Jill Crossley continues to photograph and exhibit her work, with her exhibition at the Kerrie Lowe Gallery drawing praise from the art critic Robert McFarlane, who described her as 'a tenacious, talented, photographer.'

In 2013 her exhibition *Beyond Looking* opened at the Arthere gallery. This was followed by her *Unreliable Witness* exhibition, held at the Stanley Street gallery in Darlinghurst, NSW, 2015, and consisted of studies of the natural world, plants, the water, the style being an interplay of realism and abstraction.

Technical

Her early camera was a 116 folding camera, in 1959 she used a Mamiyaflex and a Fujica camera. In recent years she has worked with a small digital camera with a zoom lens.

Collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archive

Deakin University

Powerhouse Museum

State Library of Queensland

University of Western Sydney

State Library of Victoria

Events

2015 - 2015

Jill Crossley featured in the exhibition *Jill Crossley Unreliable Witness Headon Photo Festival*

1949 -

2013 - 2013

Jill Crossley featured in *Beyond Looking Photographs*

2010 - 2010

Jill Crossley exhibited her work at the Kerrie Lowe Gallery.

1997 - 1997

Jill Crossley featured in the exhibition *The Studio of Max Dupain*

1983 - 1983

Jill Crossley featured in the *Lady James Oswald Fairfax Memorial Competition*

1982 - 1982

Jill Crossley featured in the *Cumberland Art Show*

1982 - 1982

Jill Crossley exhibited her work in a *Solo Exhibition*

1981 - 1981

Jill Crossley exhibited her work in a *Solo Exhibition*

1981 - 1981

Jill Crossley featured her work in the *Wilderness Exhibition*

Published resources

Newspaper Article

Up Close and Botanical,

<http://www.southsydneyherald.com.au/up-close-and-botanical/#.ViR9kH4rLIU>

Beyond Looking in the Analogue Age of Post-war Australian Photography, Jill Crossley was One of the rare Female Spirits, Fitzgerald, Michael

Book

Australia's Craft Heritage Old Crafts in a new Land: Estonian Basketry, Abraham, Felicity, Crossley, Jill, Soobik, Kalju, Scott, Judith and Crafts Council of Australia, 1982

Woodcraft goes to the Opera [slide], Crafts Council of Australia, 1985

Woodcraft Goes to the Opera II, Crafts Council of Australia, Information Service, 1988

Dale Frank: University Gallery, the University of Melbourne, 1 August-31 August 1984., Frank, Dale, Taylor, Paul. Crossley, Jill et al, 1984

Photographs for the Book 'Hilda Rix Nicholas', McArdle, James, Lord, Derek., Weight, Gregg, Crossley, Jill, Busby Geoffrey et al., 2000

An Extension of Identity: A Representative Collection of Aboriginal Art, Miller, Steven, 1990

Australian Women Photographers 1840 - 1960, Hall, Barbara and Mather, Jenni, 1986

Picture

Posters (2), 'Australia Clay', Chan, Kevin and Israel, Kevin, photography by Jill Crossley

Photograph

Greek Rug Weaving [slide], Crafts Council of Australia, photography by Crossley, Jill, 1970

New Work [slide], Crafts Council of Australia, photography by Crossley, Jill, 1983

Designing Your Rug [slide], Feddersen, Jutta, photography by Crossley, Jill, 197?

Leather for Living [slide]., Papadaki-Klavdianou, A., Photography by Crossley, Jill, 1978

Resource Section

Jill Crossley,

<https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/jill-crossley>

Jill Crossley: Unreliable Witness Headon Photo Festival, Ryan-Clark, Fiona,

<http://stanleystreetgallery.com.au/exhibition/jill-crossleyunreliable-witness20th-may-6th-june-2015/>

Archival resources

Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and Archive, Art Gallery of New South Wales

[[Jill Crossley : Australian Art and Artists file](#)]

Author Details

Anne Maxwell (with Morfia Grondas and Lucy Van)

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