

# The Australian Women's Register

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**Entry type:** Person

**Entry ID:** AWE5985

## Simmonds, Rose

(1877 - 1960)

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**Born** 1 January, 1877, Islington, London England United Kingdom

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**Died** 3 July, 1960, Auchenflower Queensland Australia

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**Occupation** Professional photographer

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### Summary

Rose Simmonds was a Brisbane-based photographer who was the only female member of the Queensland Camera Club. She consistently won prizes in competitions run by the club and by the *Australasian Photo-Review*. She worked in the Pictorialist style from 1926-1932, using the bromoil process to achieve romantic effects, and in the Modernist style from 1933-1940.

## Details

Rose Simmonds was a Brisbane-based photographer who was an active member of the Queensland Camera Club. From 1926-1932 she worked as a Pictorialist, and then from 1933-1940 her style was Modernist. She exhibited nationally and was made an associate member of the Royal Photographic Society of London.

Rose Simmonds was born in Islington, London in 1877. She was the second daughter of Millice Culpin, a medical doctor, and her mother was Hannah Louisa Munsey, née Muncsey. The family migrated to Brisbane, Australia in 1891, her father setting up a medical practice at Taringa. Rose was educated at the Brisbane Girls' Grammar School and went on to study art at the Brisbane Technical College.

She married John Howard Simmonds on 30 March 1900 and they had two sons. John Simmonds was a stonemason who made a point of photographing the tombstones he worked on. He used a large-plate camera and set up a darkroom in the family home, where he developed and printed his photographs. Rose began assisting him with the photography side of the business and it was not long before she began taking and processing photographs herself. Initially, they were just snapshot photographs of the children, but a lifelong passion had been ignited and she was soon trying her hand at other subjects.

From the late 1920s she was an active member of the Queensland Camera Club, being the only woman among the 14 members. She participated in excursions and presentations organised by the Queensland Camera Club, where an exchange of ideas and creative techniques was fostered. Rose Simmonds began entering her photographs in the monthly competitions that were organised by the Queensland Camera Club and the *Australasian Photo-Review* (APR) and consistently won prizes for her entries. By 1928 she had been elected onto the Queensland Camera Club's committee.

From 1926 to 1932 she worked in the new international style of Pictorialism, her subject matter including portraiture, still life and landscape. Like so many other Pictorialists, she experimented with soft focus and dramatic lighting, but her images were of a particularly high technical standard. She was especially fond of the bromoil process, which she used to create romantic effects. On more than one occasion her works from this period were reproduced in the *APR*. However, after 1933 her style changed as she came under the influence of modernist photography. Gone was the soft focus and representational approach; instead, she worked in a semi-abstract style using both man-made structures and nature to explore light and shade. Her photograph, *Last Rays on the Sand Dunes 1939-1940*, is representative of this style, the image capturing the soft undulating ripples of the sand dunes but removing them from any specific geographical or temporal context. As with her Pictorialist phase, she continued to be recognised for her outstanding technical ability during this time.

From 1932 Simmons participated in exhibitions organised by the Photographic Society of New South Wales. She also participated in exhibitions organised by the Professional Photographers' Association of New South Wales and the Sydney Camera Circle in 1938. Her first solo exhibition was held in Brisbane in 1941. She became an associate of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1937 and her work was included in an exhibition of Pictorialist photography held in Adelaide in 1940.

Rose Simmonds died on 3 July 1960 in Auchenflower, Brisbane, Queensland.

## Technical

Rose Simmonds was noted for her technical skills including her clever use of the bromoil process.

## Collections

John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

Queensland Art Gallery

Picture Queensland, State Library of Queensland

## Events

### 1926 - 1932

### 1933 - 1940

### 1932 - 1932

Rose Simmonds' work featured in the Photographic Society of NSW Exhibition

### 1938 - 1938

Rose Simmond's work featured in the Sydney Camera Circle exhibition

### 1938 - 1938

Rose Simmond's work featured in the Professional Photographers' Association of New South Wales exhibition.

### 1940 - 1940

Rose Simmonds' work featured in a Pictorial photography exhibition in Adelaide, SA.

### 1941 - 1941

A solo exhibition of Rose Simmonds' work

## Published resources

### Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

### Resource Section

Simmonds, Rose (1877-1960), Bradbury, Keith,  
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simmonds-rose-11691/text20893>

Rose Simmonds,  
<https://www.daa0.org.au/bio/rose-simmonds/>

### Book

A Complementary Caste: A Homage to Women Artists in Queensland, Past and Present, 5 November-4 December 1988, The Centre Gallery, Bundall Road, Surfers Paradise, Larner, Bronwyn, Considine, Fran and Centre Gallery, 1988

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

### Photograph

Rose Simmonds, Queensland Photographer, 1905?,  
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/167816705>

### Exhibition Catalogue

Queensland Pictorialist Photography 1920-1950, Exhibition Catalogue, Smith, Sue, 1984

## Archival resources

### John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection

[Rose Simmonds Papers 1902-1941](#)

[4570 Rose Simmonds Photographs: Louis Wilhelm Karl Wirth and Hubert Jarvis \[Works of Art\] Undated](#)

### State Library of Victoria

[\[Victorian Salon of Photography : Australian Gallery File\]](#)

## Author Details

Anne Maxwell (with Morfia Grondas and Lucy Van)

**Created** 1 November 2016

**Last modified** 2 November 2016