

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6021

Hookey, Mabel Madeleine

(1871 - 1953)

Born 29 January, 1871, Clarence Tasmania Australia

Died 13 June, 1953, Hobart Tasmania Australia

Occupation Artist, Journalist, Photographer, Poet

Summary

Mabel Hookey was the first woman journalist in Tasmania. She was also a poet, a painter and an amateur photographer.

Details

Mabel Hookey was born on 29 January 1871 at Clarence, in Tasmania. She was the eldest daughter of Vernon William Bligh Hookey, a barrister and solicitor, and Dorothy (née Stokell). She had a sister, Dora, and a brother, Vernon. The three children grew up with their maternal grandfather, George Stokell, at the Rokeby estate, which Mabel later inherited.

Hookey attended the Ladies Grammar School in Hobart. Her mother's paintings of bush flowers and her sketches of the landscape were an inspiration to Hookey, and ignited her love for art. Hookey studied painting with Edward Officer as well as A.H. Fullwood when he visited Tasmania in 1897 and 1899. In 1902 she attended the Hobart Technical College and was taught by Benjamin Sheppard. She also took part in sketching camps run by Lucien Dechaineux. Hookey studied woodcarving at the Hobart Technical College from 1913-1916. She was also already showing an interest in photography.

Hookey joined the Art Society of Tasmania in 1893, where she eventually held the position vice president. Hookey was also a member of the Royal Society of Tasmania. She was commended for her oil and watercolour paintings, as well as for her drawings, which she exhibited across Tasmania, in Sydney (at the Society of Women Painters), as well as in Europe, participating in the Old Salon in Paris, 1928, and the British Empire exhibition in Wembley, 1924.

Hookey also wrote poetry, with published collections including *The Rubaiyat of Solomon* and *The Romance of Tasmania*. Hookey was the first woman journalist in Tasmania, writing for *The Post*, *The Tasmanian Mail*, and *The Mercury*. She became a subeditor of the *Daily Telegraph*.

Hookey had an adventurous spirit. She enjoyed bushwalking, and travelled around Tasmania, Maria Island, Sydney, Queensland, and the Pacific Islands. At around the turn of the century she travelled further afield, visiting North Africa and Palestine, England, France, China and Japan.

Her photographs include shots of her family and friends, but also document her travels. The photographs depict people set within a landscape, framed in order to draw the viewer into the scene. The compositions are formal in nature; however, her photograph of two women swimming naked in Tasmania broke with the conventions of the time. Hookey did not exhibit any of her photographs.

Mabel Hookey died on 13 June 1953, aged 82, at St John's Park, in Hobart.

Collections

State Library of Tasmania

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery

Events

1983 - 1983

Mabel Hookey's work featured in *The Launceston Art Society in Retrospect 1891-1983*

1990 - 1990

Mabel Hookey's work featured in *The Misses Hookey, Murphey. Oldham and Swan* exhibition

1995 - 1995

Mabel Hookey's work featured in *Colonial Pastime to Contemporary Profession: 150 years of Australian Women's Art*

Published resources

Resource

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book

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

The Song: The Song of Songs Which is Solomon's, Done Into Verse., Hookey, M. (Mabel), 1917

The Chaplain: Being Some Further Account of the Days of Bobby Knopwood, Hookey, M. (Mabel), 1943

The Romance of Old St David's, Hookey, M. (Mabel), 1920

The Rubaiyat of Solomon: Being the First and Second Chapters of the Book Called Ecclesiastes Done into Quatrains, Hookey, M. (Mabel), 1912

The Edge of the Field, Hookey, M. (Mabel) and Dechaineux, L., 1913

The Romance of Tasmania, Hookey, M. (Mabel), Murphy, B., Connor, J., and Dechaineux, L., 1921

Bobby Knopwood and His Times: From the Diaries of 1804-8, 1814-17, Knopwood, Robert and Hookey, M. (Mabel), 1929

Exhibition Catalogue

The Misses Hookey, Murphy, Oldham and Swan, Johannes, Christa E. and Backhouse, Sue, 1990

Resource Section

Mabel Hookey,

<https://www.daao.org.au/bio/mabel-madeleine-hookey/>

Archival resources

National Library of Australia

[\[Biographical cuttings on Mabel M. Hookey, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals\]](#)

State Library of Victoria

[\[Mabel Hookey: Australian Art and Artists file\]](#)

Author Details

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