

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6032

Smith, Mrs William

(1848 - 1925)

Born 1 January, 1848

Died 31 December, 1925

Occupation Photographer

Summary

Mrs William Smith was an award-winning photographer who was well known for her photograph of *The Snake Charmer*, 1909.

Details

A number of possible records exist that refer to Mrs William Smith. One records her as born in 1848 at Bridgman as Susan Andrews, the daughter of Mr Abraham Andrews. She married Mr Ross, with whom she had four children, and then married Mr William Smith and had a further five children. These Smiths lived in Hunter Street, Camberwell, where Smith died in 1925, aged 77 (*Singleton Argus*). A second record refers to an Elizabeth Teena Rawson, who married Fred William Smith in Victoria, c.1901. Records show that she died in Victoria c.1920 and was buried at the Boort cemetery.

Exactly which of these is the Mrs William Smith known for her photographic work is unclear. It is also unknown when she developed an interest in photography. However, by 1907, her photographic skills were well developed and of a standard that saw her photographs exhibited in the *Exhibition of Women's Work* in 1907, as well as the *Victorian Photographic Affiliation Exhibition* in 1909, in which she won first prize in the architectural and the genre section.

Mrs Smith's photograph, *The Snake Charmer*, c.1909, was reproduced in the *Australasian Photo-Review* and much commented on at the time. One critic commented: '[w]ho cannot realise the thrill of the spectators in Mrs William Smith's picture, *The Snake Charmer* ... It presents artistically but faithfully all the garish opulence of the glare of the midday sun. It contravenes many pet principles of photography; it shows hard lights and black shadows, but it is art all the same and there is no doubt it is true' (*APR*, 1909; cited by Hall 45)

Events

1907 - 1909

1907 - 1907

Mrs William Smith's work featured in the *Exhibition of Women's Work*

1909 - 1909

Mrs William Smith's work won first prize in both the architectural and the genre section of the *Victorian Photographic Affiliation Exhibition*, *Victorian Artists Gallery*

Published resources

Newspaper Article

Death of Mrs Wm. Smith,

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article81043801>

Women Photographers, Bee, Queen,

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/139688515>

Thesis

Making Pictures: Australian Pictorial Photography as Art 1897-1957, Ebury, Francis, 2001

Book

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

Catalogue

Inter-state and inter-club competition [catalogue], Victorian Photographic Affiliation and Photographic Association of Victoria, 1910

Resource

Australia, Marriage Index, 1788-1950 [database on-line]., Ancestry.com, 2010

Photograph

The Snake Charmer, Smith, Mrs William, c.1909

Author Details

Anne Maxwell (with Morfia Grondas and Lucy Van)

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