



HANS HEYSEN

Art Gallery of South Australia • Adelaide

This trail is intended as a guide for young people and families as they enjoy the Hans Heysen retrospective exhibition.



Judith Fletcher, photographer
Hans Heysen, 1917



A. Wilkinson, photographer
Hans Heysen at work in his studio, 1921

Hans Heysen (1877–1968) is South Australia's best-known artist. He is recognised Australia-wide as a most influential artist, one whose work was pivotal to the development of Australian landscape art in the twentieth century.

Comprising over one hundred and twenty works, the exhibition includes oil paintings, watercolours, drawings and prints. It showcases Heysen's well-known landscapes celebrating the magnificence of the Australian gum tree; his groundbreaking paintings of the Flinders Ranges which date from the late 1920's; and his lesser-known work from his student days in Europe.

front cover detail: *Red Gold*, 1913
oil on canvas, 129.5 x 174.5 cm
Gift of the Rt Hon. Sir Charles Booth 1913
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

The wet road, 1894



Heysen painted *The wet road* at the age of seventeen. It was the first painting he ever sold. It was purchased by his art teacher, James Ashton, for ten shillings.

Heysen received traditional art training at the Norwood Art School in Adelaide. His teacher would encourage students to develop their techniques by making copies of other watercolours, particularly those by British landscape artists.

The wet road, 1894,
watercolour on paper,
21.0 x 33.7 cm
Gift of Sir James McGregor
1959
Art Gallery of South
Australia, Adelaide

Look at how Heysen has used layers of watercolour to paint this landscape.

What weather report would you give after looking at this painting?

From the apartment window, Paris, 1901



*From the apartment window,
Paris, 1901*
oil on canvas, 44.5 x 37.0 cm
Private collection

From 1899 to 1903 Heysen travelled and studied overseas, visiting Holland, Scotland, England, Germany and Italy. He was greatly influenced by the landscapes he travelled through, the paintings he saw, and the places in which he lived.

Look at the painting *From the apartment window, Paris*.
Can you write a story beginning with the words 'From the apartment window . . .?'

The Doge's Palace, Venice 1903



The Doge's Palace, Venice, 1903
watercolour on paper, 22.3 x 28.7 cm
Private collection

Look now at *The Doge's Palace, Venice*.
What is the day like?
Do you know what the boats in the foreground are called?
Look at the two paintings to see how Heysen painted different seasons.

Approaching storm with bushfire haze, 1912



Heysen based his Australian paintings on the close observation of nature. He recorded various events and the effects of these on people and the land. The bushfires that swept through the Adelaide Hills in February 1912 were amongst the worst in memory.

The scene depicts the landscape near Heysen's home, The Cedars, near the town of Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills.

Approaching storm with bushfire haze, 1912
oil on canvas, 61.0 x 82.5 cm
Gift of the artist 1944
Art Gallery of South Australia,
Adelaide

Imagine you can step into the painting.
Describe what you can see, hear and smell.
What are the farmers doing?

Find the painting *Bushfire, Hahndorf*, 1912.
How has Heysen suggested danger in this painting?

The Toilers, 1920



Around 1918 Heysen's main focus changed from pure landscape to the subject of rural workers, particularly the men and animals in the fields around the town of Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills. Heysen felt a great connection with local farmers. He was often inspired by what he saw on early morning visits to Hahndorf to collect mail.

The two draught horses, Polly and Jack, were favourite subjects for Heysen's paintings. They belonged to old Kramm, the farmer who came regularly to do the ploughing at The Cedars.

The Toilers, 1920
watercolour on paper,
40.4 x 51.8 cm
Bequest of the artist 1969
Art Gallery of South
Australia, Adelaide

What is the farmer in the painting doing?

Find the patterns in the soil made by the horse-drawn harrow. What type of lines has the harrow made?

Can you explain how a harrow and a tine are used to plough a field?

Gums under mist, 1917



This painting was a gift to Heysen's wife, Sallie, for her birthday. It was the first finished watercolour in a series of watercolours and drawings produced from studies of a gum tree at the front gate of The Cedars. Heysen was interested in capturing the mysterious effects of early morning frosts and mists.

Gums under mist, 1917
watercolour on paper,
46.8 x 61.5 cm
Bequest of the artist in memory
of his wife 1969
Art Gallery of South Australia,
Adelaide

Look at the painting. What time of day is it?
How can you tell?

How has Heysen created a sense of mood and atmosphere in this painting?

Can you find this same tree in other paintings in the exhibition? Look for *Morning mist*, 1918; and *Autumn morning*, 1928–30.

Sallie (the artist's wife), 1912



Heysen's portrait of his wife shows her in a thoughtful mood, gazing outward. Heysen has drawn in charcoal which he smudged with his fingers to create a soft effect.

Sallie (the artist's wife), 1912
charcoal on paper, 37.5 x 27.9 cm
Private collection
(This work of art will not travel to all venues)

Why has the artist drawn Sallie in profile?

Make a list of words you would use to describe this portrait.

Spring, 1925



In some of Heysen's works of art the viewer is drawn particularly to the detail.

Spring, 1925
watercolour on paper, 39.3 x 49.2 cm
Private collection

What are the naughty cats doing in *Spring*?
How many birds are in the tree?
Do you know what kind they are?

Bronzewings and saplings, 1921



Bronzewings and saplings, 1921
watercolour on paper, 56.7 x 76.4 cm
South Australian Government Grant 1937
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

On first glance these turkeys all look similar. But focus on the details.
What differences do you notice the longer you look?

Still life with pumpkins and onions, 1922



Still life with pumpkins and onions, 1922
oil on canvas, 65.5 x 92.5 cm
The Cedars, The Hans Heysen Estate,
Hahndorf, South Australia

Still-life painting interested Heysen from around 1914. He explored subjects such as flowers, fruit and vegetables, and household objects. Heysen could paint still-life subjects when the weather was bad and he was prevented from sketching out-of-doors. He worked directly from the subject without making studies. This method was different to his landscape work.

What objects can you see in the painting?

Look at the way the artist has created shadows and reflections.

Try your own still-life painting or drawing at home.

Drought sheep, 1916-21



Drought sheep, 1916-21
watercolour on paper, 57.6 x 79.0 cm
Purchased 1950
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
photo: Brenton McGeachie

Heysen travelled extensively in South Australia painting and drawing various landscapes and subjects, in various seasons.

What season do you think this is?

How do you know?

How has Heysen captured the dryness of the landscape?

The Land of the Oratunga, 1932



The landscape of the Flinders Ranges was totally different to that of the Adelaide Hills, and Heysen had a challenge to paint this different landscape. The Flinders Ranges works of art were considered significant records of this little-known part of inland Australia.

The Land of the Oratunga, 1932
watercolour on paper, 47.3 x 62.6 cm
South Australian Government Grant 1937
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Describe the colours Heysen has used in *The Land of the Oratunga* to suggest a harsh and dry landscape.

Aroona, 1939



Aroona, 1939
watercolour on paper, 42.2 x 62.0 cm
Private collection

Look at the cool colours in the background of the painting *Aroona*, and the warm colours in the foreground. Which colours stand out most for you?



detail: *Patawarta: Land of the Oratunga*, 1929
oil on canvas, 66.2 x 92.0 cm
M.J.M. Carter AO Collection 1969
Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide



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