



“THE CEDARS”
HOME OF SIR HANS HEYSEN

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I and I enjoyed a long weekend in the Adelaide Hills to celebrate a friend's wedding in November, 2016. I had time to visit "The Cedars", the delightful Federation Art and Craft style family home of Hans Heysen. I also visited the Hahndorf Academy where the Heysen Prize for Landscape 2016 was exhibited – it is a biennial event.

"The Cedars" contains an extensive collection of the work of Hans Heysen, master of the Australian landscape, and of his daughter Nora, a pioneer among Australian women artists. They are displayed in the artist's wonderfully preserved home and studio. The collection reveals Heysen's remarkable versatility in both subject and medium.

Just this year, The Heysen family bequeathed the house and studio and contents to a Foundation for ongoing preservation and exhibition. A new building is planned to display many Heysen paintings currently stored in the South Australian Art Gallery.

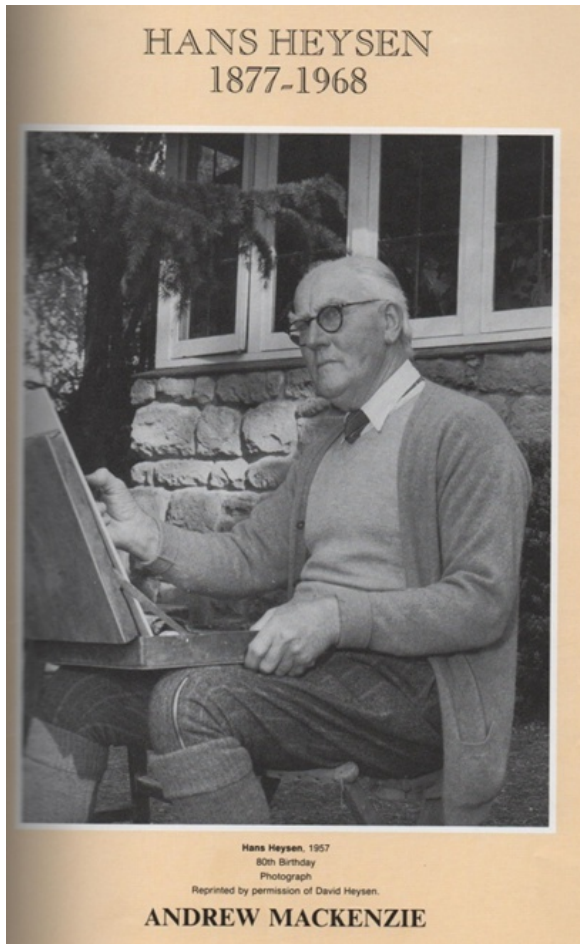


"The Cedars" on a beautiful Spring Day

The house is named for the beautiful established Mongolian Cedars extending from the house down to the front fence. The studio has been maintained as he built it, behind the house with a wonderful view over paddocks, trees and hills.

Hans Heysen is regarded as one of the greatest landscape artists of Australia, best remembered for his large landscape works in oils depicting the tall white and red gums of the Hahndorf region in the Adelaide Hills. He is acknowledged as the first to paint a portrait of a gum tree and he noted "Some say nobody ever painted the bark of gum trees before I did".

He is also remembered for his watercolours of the bare hills of the Flinders Ranges. He produced numerous oils, watercolours and a large number of sketches, especially in Charcoal. He won, apart from other prizes, the Wynne Prize for Landscape Painting on nine occasions. He was knighted in 1959 for services to Australian Art.



The Artist Aged 80 yrs outside 'The Cedars'

Hans Heysen's output of work is amazing in many ways. He was born in Hamburg Germany in 1877, and was the sixth child of a family who migrated in 1883. The family's first years in Adelaide were poor and hard. However, young Hans gave early indications of a natural artistic ability.

He was recognised by James Ashton who bought an early work, "The Wet Road" for ten shillings. He was further encouraged by several benefactors who noticed his skill – four prominent Adelaide businessmen offered him four hundred pounds to further his art studies in Europe for as long as the money would last. In return, they reserved the rights to the pictures he produced while abroad.

He was away studying in Europe from October 1889 until September 1903. He was ready to pursue art and teach in Adelaide. There he met his future wife Sallie Bartels. They married in December 1904, and she provided a happy and secure home life in which to work, and she had strong social contacts in Adelaide. On a visit to her sister in Mosman, he met Lionel Lindsay, who became a close friend and correspondent over the next fifty years.



The Wet Road 1892, purchased by James Ashton for ten shillings



His work "Coming Home" was purchased by the Art Gallery of NSW for 150 guineas.



A similar price was paid by the Art Gallery of South Australia for his work "Mystic Morn".

In 1925, he sold one of his works to Dame Nellie Melba, and won the Wynne Prize. The work is "Hauling Timber". This work may have been more than an accurate portrayal of a scene; it was also Heyesen's way of making a statement, warning of the irreversible damage being done to the Adelaide Hills by



"Hauling Timber" by Hans Heyesen

removal of trees by bullockies and axemen. He was very much a conservationist; the eucalypts of Hahndorf and the Onkaparinga River Valley were more than just subjects for his canvases, but were seen as an integral part of the natural environment.

Heyesen was also aware of other dangers – especially droughts and bushfires – he captured the haze created by one bushfire in 1912 –“Approaching Storm with Bush Fire Haze”.



Approaching Storm with Bush Fire Haze, 1912



*Hans Heysen's stone studio above his house
"The Cedars"*

In 1912, Heysen and his wife and four children purchased “The Cedars”. He quickly set about erecting a stone studio on the slope above the house, and here he produced many of his major works. His fifth child and first son was born in 1913.

During the First World War, Heysen was maligned due to his German heritage; he was not interned as were many of the Germans who had migrated to the area, however at one stage it was suggested he had a transmitting wireless in the house. He spent much of the War in isolation; he wanted nothing to do with The Establishment who had demanded he state his allegiance. Instead, he stated that "if a man's feeling for Australia cannot be judged by the work he had done – then no explanation on his part would dispel the mistrust". He continued with painting and sketching in the Adelaide Hills.

Until his death in 1968, Heysen produced a large and enduring body of work. He had eight children, lived through a scarcity of painting sales during the Depression, and was treated quite differently during World War II. Four of his works were chosen for inclusion in the Exhibition "Art of Australia 1788-1941" held in 1941 in the USA and the Dominion of Canada.



Camping trip car and trailer, 1947

In 1947 Heysen accompanied his son David on a camping trip to the Flinders Ranges; he did not drive, however the car and trailer his son drove are preserved in the garage at "The Cedars". His previous trip had been in 1933.

A retrospective exhibition of his work was opened on what would have been his 90th birthday – it marked the opening of the Hahndorf Academy Gallery and Historic Museum – one of the rooms is named 'The Heysen Gallery'.

In "The Cedars" the interior is maintained as it was for the family, and there are many paintings, including some figures and still life paintings.



"Sewing" (Artist's Wife Sallie) 1913 – In the window of a room in "The Cedars"



Spring Flowers 1931- hung in "The Cedars"



Interior "The Cedars"

Heyesen will be remembered for his superb draughtsmanship, his handling of light and his control of the watercolour medium. He had a true love of Nature and captured in his works the landscapes of South Australia, the gums and people of the Onkaparinga River Valley and the hills and gorges of the Flinders Ranges.

