

1930 - 1950s



ALAN'S ART DECO

OCTOBER 2023 - APRIL 2024

WELCOME TO THE EXHIBITION

Alan's Art Deco explores the uniquely Australian way Art Deco manifested in Australia through the work of 20th century artist Alan D. Baker.

The exhibition takes viewers back in time, framing Baker's commercial art in the context of its era.

Art Deco is first and foremost a style. Years in the making, its vision came into full force after WWI spawned from the desire to discard the past and celebrate a bright, modern future. Distinguished by clean shapes and lines, geometric and stylised ornamentation and above all, a celebration of the luxury of modernity, the style influenced every visual medium, from architecture to fine art. Art Deco truly began to make its mark on Australian design and art in the 1930s. It was actively spread in a distinctly Australian way when Tooth and Co., a major 20th-century beer brewer in NSW, incorporated the Art Deco style in their pub designs. The brewery, and their competitor Tooheys, acquired existing pubs to refurbish, adding Art Deco motifs and facades as well as constructing entirely new Art Deco buildings. To advertise the products sold within these pubs, Tooth and Co. commissioned artists to paint posters and murals to adorn their interior and exterior walls. The breweries also commissioned artwork to use as print collateral. This included artwork for bottle labels and coasters, and advertisements in newspapers, magazines, restaurant menus and theatre programmes. Alan D. Baker was one of these artists.



ALAN D. BAKER (1914-1987)

Alan D. Baker, to whom Alan Baker Art Gallery is dedicated, was a prolific local artist. He influenced the Australian art scene as the vice-president of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales and as a repeat exhibitor in the Archibald and Wynne Prizes. His works are held in collections across Australia, the Alan Baker Art Gallery housing a permanent collection of significant pieces. Baker, like many of his contemporaries, also worked as a commercial artist.

Portrait of Alan D. Baker from the Alan Baker Art Gallery archives.





WELCOME TO THE ERA

GALLERY 1

This series of works was created by Alan D. Baker during the 1930s - 1950s. Unlike his commercial artwork from this era which celebrated an idealised vision of modern Australian life, his fine art provides a glimpse into Baker's world during one of the most turbulent periods of the 20th century. During the 1930s when the Great Depression was in full force, Baker transformed from an art student to an art instructor at the J.S. Watkins Art School. After the closure of the art school, following the retirement of John Watkins in 1938, Baker turned to commercial art for his income. This pursuit was briefly interrupted by WWII when Baker served in Papua New Guinea. He resumed his commercial art career upon his return to Australia.





Seated Nude, c1930s

Alan D. Baker

Graphite on paper, 25 x 18 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Russell Steele.



Untitled (Seated Tivoli Dancer), 1939

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 23 x 15.5 cm

Private collection.



Monday

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 33 x 25 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



Untitled (Artist's model)

John S. Watkins

Graphite on paper, 36 x 55 cm

Baker family collection.



Untitled, c1930s

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 64.1 x 76 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



Self Portrait, 1950 (verso)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on canvas on board,
76 x 64.1 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



Untitled (Artist's model)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on paper, 36 x 55 cm

Baker family collection.



Hickson Road, Sydney, 1933

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 29 x 36.5 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Max and Nola Tegel under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.

Hickson Road (1933) is a significant historical artefact. The cityscape traces the edges of the wharves the road once bordered, then occupied by shipping companies. It was during the Great Depression, at the time of Baker's painting, that Hickson Road became known as "The Hungry Mile." The name referenced the plight of the wharf labourers who would crowd around the dockyard gates before sunrise trying to get a day's work, but more often than not, would go home hungry.

*"They tramp there in their legions on the mornings dark and cold
To beg the right to slave for bread from Sydney's lords of gold;
They toil and sweat in slavery, 'twould make the devil smile,
To see the Sydney wharfies tramping down the hungry mile..."*

-Ernest Antony, *The Hungry Mile* (1930)



BLACK & WHITE

GALLERY 2

When you open a newspaper, magazine or theatre programme today, most advertisements are created digitally. In the 1930s - 1950s, artists created artwork for print by hand. The series of works in Gallery 2 were created by Alan D. Baker for Tooth and Co. using a scratchboard. The scratchboard originated in Europe in the 19th century as a cheaper and quicker alternative to other existing print-making methods. It was particularly effective for newspaper image printing as the original artwork could be reproduced using photolithography while retaining the fine lines of the original piece. The scratchboard technique requires the artist to use sharp knives or tools, or "scratch knives," to scrape dark ink off a surface to reveal the white clay beneath.





Leadership

Alan D. Baker

Print proof and newspaper clip,

35.5 x 43 cm

Baker family collection.



Tooth's new winter drink

Alan D. Baker

Newspaper print, 30 x 43 cm

Baker family collection.



I like Sheaf

Alan D. Baker

Newspaper print, 42 x 23 cm

Baker family collection.



Design for a happy Christmas

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 35 x 24 cm

Baker family collection.



Design for a peaceful evening

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 34 x 19 cm

Baker family collection.



Design for a perfect meal

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 35.5 x 19 cm

Baker family collection.

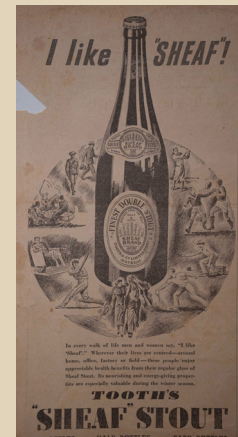


Whats best for Xmas?

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 32 x 23 cm

Baker family collection.



I like Sheaf

Alan D. Baker

Newspaper print, 35 x 17 cm

Baker family collection.



Leaves from the book of gracious living

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 35 x 24 cm

Baker family collection.



What's best after tennis?

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 27 x 24 cm

Baker family collection.



Design for a restful afternoon

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 33 x 22 cm

Baker family collection.



Daily Mirror, 22 October 1941

Newspaper print, 41.5 x 30 cm

Baker family collection.



Specially brewed to enjoy with meals!, 1939

Alan D. Baker

Newspaper print, 30.5 x 17 cm

Baker family collection.



Mr. J. S. WATKINS

(Student of Colarossi's, Paris)

ART CLASSES

56 MARGARET STREET
(off George Street)
Telephone : B2265

Portrait, Figure and Landscape Painting

Monday: Painting from Life, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Tuesday:** Painting from Life, 10 a.m. to 12.20.
Wednesday: Life Drawing 7.30 to 10 p.m. **Thursday:** Life Drawing, 7.30 to 10 p.m. **Saturday:** Painting, 1.30 to 4 p.m. Special Instruction in drawing for Commercial Art. Ladies' Sketch Club meets at the Studio on Mondays. Special Class for ladies, and also for miniature painting. Special training for School Teachers.

4,000 students have been trained in these classes, and many of them fitted for different professions in which a knowledge of drawing, color or design is necessary.

GETS FREE LESSONS



Tries It Herself 7 Helene Sits For Herself. Any spare time devotes to her sketching. Many models study art. Model who is art student can learn much by listening attentively to art teachers' comments. She hears such advice as: "The mouth is not a slit..."



ART STUDENT, SHE GETS FREE LESSONS





Amateur Movies
IN
NATURAL COLORS

A dream
come
true



The glorious colors of nature captured and wondrously recreated on the screen in your own home. Flowers showing their true richness and beauty—and similarly the bloom on youthful cheeks, the glory of the sunset. A miracle of science and art!

No words can describe the fascination of Kodachrome. You must go to your Kodak-Kodak dealer and ask him to show you Kodachrome on the screen. He will do so gladly. As soon your imagination will be profoundly stimulated—realization will come to you of the possibilities of natural color photography that are yours for the taking.

Demonstration on request

KODACOLOR

Of All Colors, Dishes out
KODAK (Australia) PTY., LTD.
77 George Street and 2nd Market Street, Sydney
and all Branches and B.C.

*Out of a great past
a Greater Future*



QANTAS
EMPIRE AIRWAYS



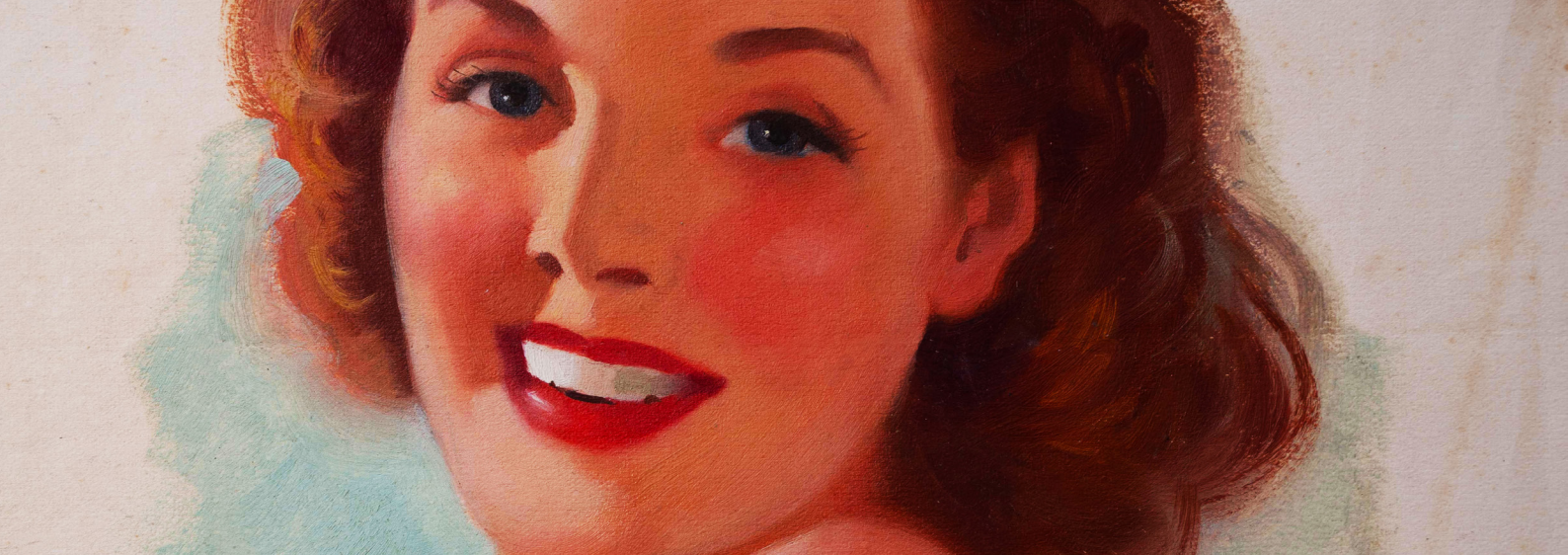

World War Two Service

PRIVATE
ALAN DOUGLAS BAKER
N445757



AUSTRALIAN ARMY
10 FEBRUARY 1914
PLACE OF BIRTH
14 DECEMBER 1914
PLACE OF ENLISTMENT
14 DECEMBER 1942
PLACE OF ENLISTMENT
LOVEPOOL, NSW
NAME OF NEXT OF KIN
MRS. HENRY
DATE OF DISCHARGE
13 AUGUST 1947
POSTING AT DISCHARGE
24001 WATERLOO W/SHOP
A386

Australian Government
Department of Veterans' Affairs



THE ORIGINALS

GALLERY 3

Tooth and Co. commissioned Baker to paint original commercial poster artworks. These posters were created to associate vitality, cultural sophistication, and athleticism with the consumption of Tooth and Co. products. Some of the characters featured in Baker's K.B. and Resch's paintings were created from self-portraits, as seen in *Now for a K.B!*, others featured those Baker was close with, as seen in *...and a very good night* which depicts his father, Henry Baker.





Now for a K.B!

Alan D. Baker

Oil on canvas, 101 x 76.7 cm

Powerhouse collection. Gift of Tooth & Company Ltd under the Australian Government's Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1986.



...and a very good night

Alan D. Baker

Oil on canvas, 104.3 x 79.2 cm

Powerhouse collection. Gift of Tooth & Company Ltd under the Australian Government's Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1986.

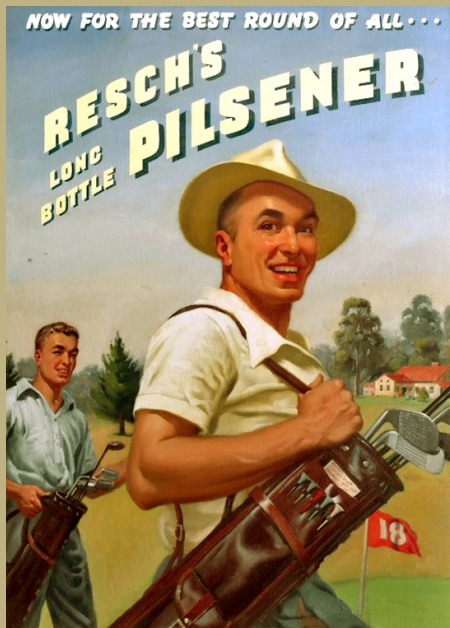


A great stout

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 50 x 95.7 cm

Powerhouse collection. Gift of Tooth & Company Ltd under the Australian Government's Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1986.



Now for the best round of all..., c1940s

Alan D. Baker

Oil on canvas, 99.5 x 71.5 cm

Courtesy of Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney.



Self Portrait, 1935

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 51 x 41 cm

Alan Baker Collection, Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



Port of Sydney (promotional study)

Alan D. Baker

Watercolour, oil on paper, 34 x 29 cm

Baker family collection.



Untitled (portrait study)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on paper, 33 x 25 cm

Baker family collection.



Untitled (portrait study)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on paper, 30 x 24 cm

Baker family collection.



Untitled (portrait study)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on paper, 30 x 30 cm

Baker family collection.



Untitled (portrait study)

Alan D. Baker

Oil on paper, 30 x 24 cm

Baker family collection.



- and "K.B." on the ice for supper!

Alan D. Baker

Digital print, (original oil on board), 42 x 89.2 cm

Powerhouse collection. Gift of Tooth & Company Ltd under the Australian Government's Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, 1986.

Photographed by Ryan Hernandez



COMMERCIAL PRINT

GALLERY 4

Baker's original commercial paintings depict classic Art Deco scenes with flawless figures, precise draftsmanship and idealised scenes. Baker's success as a commercial artist supported him as he established his career as a fine artist and started a family. In 1946, Baker married Marjorie Kingsell, a fellow student of J.S. Watkins Art School and someone who he had reconnected with after the war. Baker painted many portraits of Marjorie during their marriage. *Artist's Wife*, painted in 1953, was a finalist in the Archibald Prize. It is one of two portraits of Marjorie featured in Gallery IV.





Blue Bow, Juiso

Lithograph print, 51.5 x 39 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



...and a very good-night - with Sheaf Stout

Lithograph print, 97 x 72 cm

Alan Baker Collection. Gifted by Gary and Melissa Baker under the Australian Government, Cultural Gifts Program.



Now for a K.B!

Lithograph print, 99.5 x 76 cm

Baker family collection.



Now for the best round of all...

Lithograph print, 99.5 x 76 cm

Baker family collection.

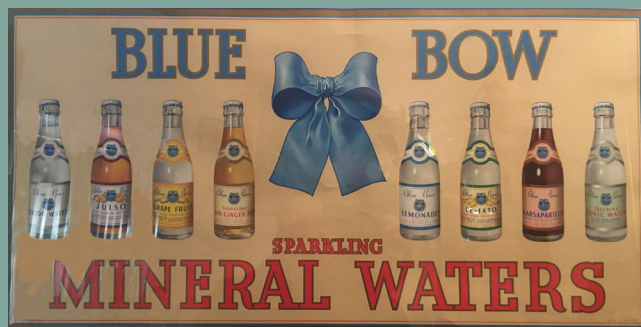


Great Northern Hotel, Newcastle NSW

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 31.8 x 24.5 cm

Baker family collection.



Blue Bow, sparkling mineral waters

Alan D. Baker

Lithograph print on paper, 57.5 x 100.5 cm

Private collection.



Healthy days ahead

Alan D. Baker

Print on paper, 32.5 x 23 cm

Alan Baker Collection.



Artist's Wife, 1953

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 76 x 58.8 cm

Baker family collection.



The Artist's Wife, 1958

Alan D. Baker

Oil on board, 101 x 76 cm

Baker family collection.



Macaria, 37 John St, Camden NSW



www.alanbakerartgallery.com.au



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Open Thursday-Sunday, 11am-4pm



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
Office for the Arts



ALAN BAKER
ART GALLERY

