



GALLERY ONE:

LOCAL LANDSCAPES

# SELECTED WORKS



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## ARTWORK DETAILS:

1. Alan D. Baker, 'Cawdor', Oil on board, 40cm x 61cm
2. Alan D. Baker, 'Camden from Macquarie Grove', Oil on board, 42cm x 61cm
3. Alan D. Baker, 'Menangle', Oil on board, 813cm x 970cm
4. Alan D. Baker, 'Landscape at Mowbray Park', Oil on board, 14cm x 19cm
5. Alan D. Baker, 'Sunshine and Shade', Oil on board, 60cm x 90cm
6. Alan D. Baker, 'Razorback Landscape', Oil on board, 89cm x 58cm
7. Alan D. Baker, 'Gum Trees', Oil on board, 49cm x 59cm

8. Alan D. Baker, 'Summer Landscape', Oil on board, 40cm x 60cm
9. Alan D. Baker, 'The Track', Oil on board, 33cm x 45cm
10. Alan D. Baker, 'The Oaks Petrol Station', Oil on board, 31cm x 42cm
11. Alan D. Baker, 'The Oaks Council Chambers', Oil on board, 30cm x 38cm
12. Alan D. Baker, 'The Struggle for Survival', Oil on board, 75cm x 92cm
13. Alan D. Baker, 'Autumn', Oil on board, 24cm x 29cm
14. Alan D. Baker, 'Razorback Landscape', Oil on board, 43cm x 52cm

# LOCAL LANDSCAPES

Living with wife Marjorie and his young family in Milperra, right on the Georges River, Baker enjoyed frequent escapes from 1950's Sydney suburban life to the much loved 'weekender' in Belimbla Park.

The couple's 6-acre bush block invited hard work as they cleared the land and built a modest family cabin and shed as a humble retreat. Baker was fascinated by the area, the climb from the rich agricultural Cumberland plains of Camden, along the Burragorang Road, to the elevated bushland of the Oaks inspired his artistic creativity. Not only did the area provide respite for their small family it was fuel for many of Bakers 20th century landscapes.

Baker's response to the landscape is reflected in his work. The work depicting the harsh natural, pastoral and built environments. The extent of their raw and rugged landscape is captured in the family's photographic archives, Bakers works generally of surrounding areas.

After a devastating family tragedy, the loss of their two sons in 1961, The Baker's took residence permanently in Belimbla Park, escaping the torment of their memories on the Georges River. It is a fact that both Alan and Marjorie spoke very little of their torment and loss. Instinctively Baker threw himself into his work both on the property, and with brush to board. He began capturing his life in the new rural community. His works depicting the untouched, the new and the beginning which paralleled with his families new beginning.

Their energies went into expanding the family home and gardens, living life on the land, building a studio and gallery for Baker to create and display his works. As a landscape artist the surroundings were inspirational, perfect Australian landscape.

The landscapes Baker created were entirely en plein air works. He set his easel in locations possibly earmarked on route to and from the local villages and townships. Baker worked vigorously with powerful movement creating expressive works rich in colour and application. Using a Masonite surface, he could convey the light of day and the subtle tonal elements of the Australian palette with confidence.

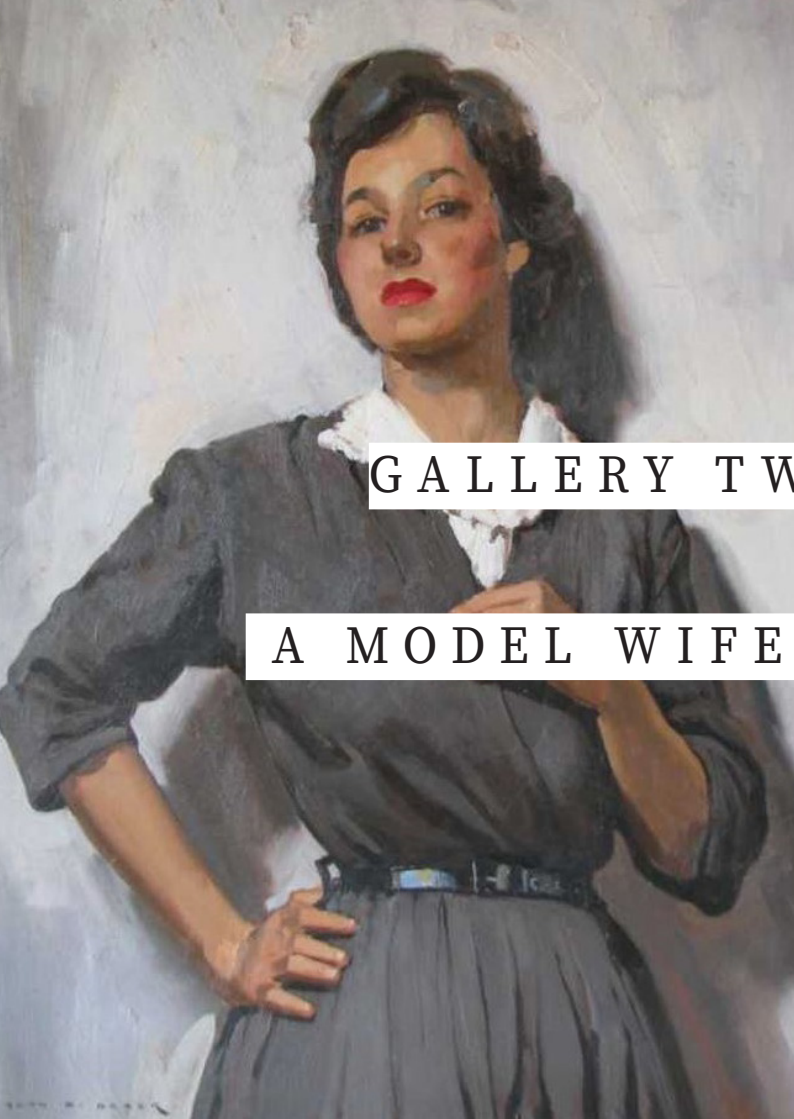
The selection of local landscapes displayed provide a significant example of Baker's work during his years in Belimbla Park as a glimpse of the 20th Century landscape through the eyes of a truly dedicated artist. Baker's works, whilst largely undated, were hung in significant galleries all over the nation, his Macarthur landscapes gained recognition for the area, an appreciation for our local landscape far greater than Baker ever imagined.

To this day Baker's work and style inspires its admirers to appreciate, protect and preserve the magnificent landscape and capture its beauty for those of the future to admire.

- Roger Percy

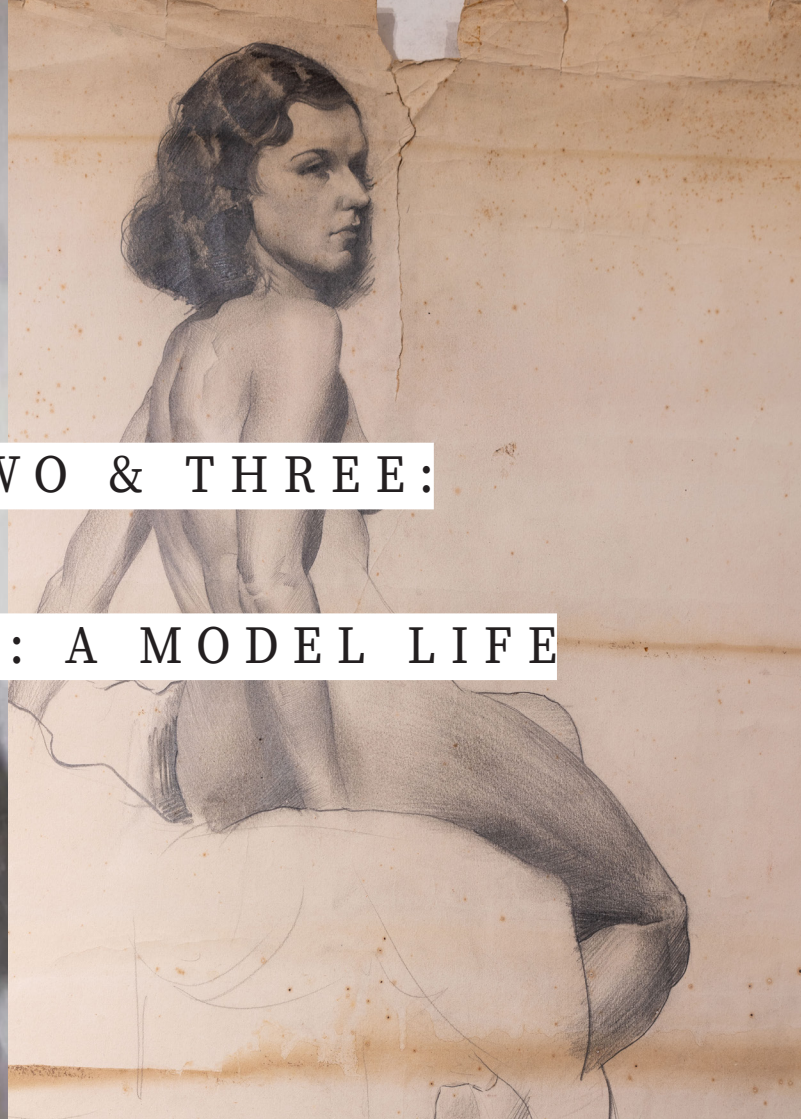


ALAN BAKER  
ART GALLERY

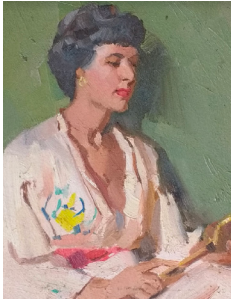


GALLERY TWO & THREE:

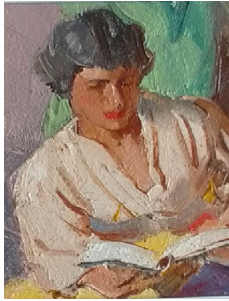
A MODEL WIFE: A MODEL LIFE



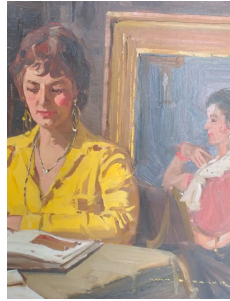
# A MODEL WIFE: SELECTED WORKS



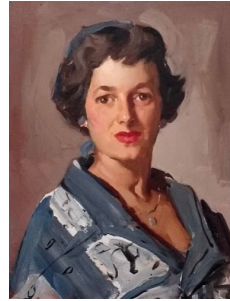
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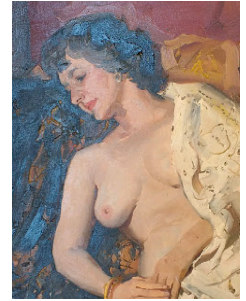
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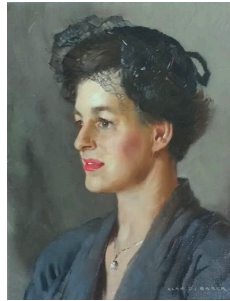
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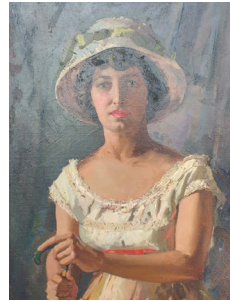
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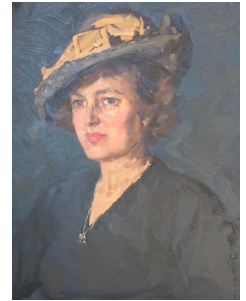
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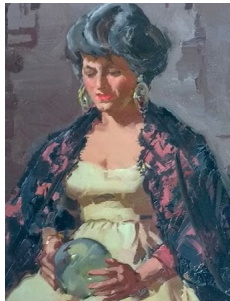
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#### ARTWORK DETAILS:

1. Alan D. Baker, [Seated Kimono], Oil on board, 20cm x 15cm
2. Alan D. Baker, [Reclining Kimono], Oil on board, 33cm x 25cm
3. Alan D. Baker, [Marjorie Reading], Oil on board, 55cm x 45cm
4. Alan D. Baker, [Grey Kimono], Oil on board, 45cm x 55cm
5. Alan D. Baker, [Draped Nude], Oil on board, 65cm x 60cm
6. Alan D. Baker, 'Lady in Pink', Oil on board, 101cm x 76cm
7. Alan D. Baker, [Newspaper Portrait], Oil on board, 85cm x 75cm
8. Alan D. Baker, [Woman in Black - with Veil], Oil on board, 65cm x 54cm
9. Alan D. Baker, [Marjorie: White II], Oil on board, 95cm x 85cm
10. Alan D. Baker, [Woman in Black - with Hat], Oil on board, 73cm x 61cm
11. Alan D. Baker, [Marjorie: Crystal Ball I], Oil on board, 60cm x 55cm
12. Alan D. Baker, [Marjorie: Crystal Ball II], Oil on board, 65cm x 80cm
13. Marjorie Baker, 'Wattle', Oil on board, 22cm x 35cm
14. Marjorie Baker, [Pink Still Life], Watercolour on paper, 45cm x 33cm
15. Marjorie Baker, 'Pink Camelia', Oil on board, 35cm x 56cm
16. Marjorie Baker, 'Honfleur', Watercolour on paper, 42cm x 56cm
17. Marjorie Baker, [Blue Still Life], Oil on board, 52cm x 68cm

\*Please note that square brackets have been used in titling to indicate that these are not true titles given by the artist, but have been applied here for the purpose of identification.

# A MODEL WIFE

Alan's wife, Marjorie, was a resilient woman. Losing her first husband in Malaysia in WWII, she narrowly escaped Singapore before its fall, finding a place on a ship to South Africa (via Antarctic waters to avoid German U-Boats). Finally returning to Australia, she married Alan. The portraits in this room depict her as Alan's wife, model and muse, and an artist in her own right.

Over the fireplace hang portraits of Marjorie in classic artist's model role: costumed as a fortune-teller, two gentle portraits in a pale kimono, a draped nude, and an arresting portrait in a grey kimono suggesting both dignity and allure. Two more portraits in fortune-teller costume, colourful and full of fantasy, hang in the adjoining vestibule.

Wall 2 (including the wall cabinet) displays two works which showcase Alan's admiration for his wife. In these two portraits, she is depicted as elegant, poised and a woman of significant strength and presence. They are among Alan's best paintings of her. This wall also houses items from Alan and Marjorie's collection of Asian ceramics – a shared knowledge and lifelong enthusiasm.

Wall 3 hangs three portraits of Marjorie: two in black, of interest for the manner in which they demonstrate Alan's virtuoso handling of this difficult colour, and also the progression from his initial classical style, already loosening in 'Woman in Black - with Veil', toward a more modernist technique as in 'Woman in Black - with Hat'. Between these paintings hangs a portrait of Marjorie in white, notable for the nuanced colour in her 'white' dress, and the looser brush and palette-knife application of paint.

The fourth wall, backing onto Reception, hangs a selection of Marjorie's own work. While not academic in style, these works in watercolour and oils nevertheless display a liveliness and lightness of touch. Here Marjorie's own skills as a painter are showcased.

- Eva Hampel



# A MODEL LIFE

'A Model Life' contemplates the role of professional life models in Australia during the 1940's within the framework of women's social history.

The collection of works selected for this space are predominantly early works of Alan D. Baker's, produced mostly during his time with the J.S Watkins Art School both pre and post WWII. While life modelling was not an exclusively female practice, the conditions under which models worked speak to broader realities of women's work. At this time, women were generally excluded from attending life drawing classes, but the majority of models were female<sup>1</sup>.

There is also deliberate focus in this exhibition on Sydney's top-ranking artists' model in the 1940's, Rita Lee. The critical acclaim applied to Lee asserts the notion that the role of the model was not passive or indifferent to the process but in fact can be quite potent. Norman Lindsay, among other prominent artists of the time credit Rita Lee for the success of their depictions of her; describing her performative nature and ability to create character within her poses. This relationship evolved more collaboratively than perhaps the artist/model relationship is generally thought to be.

Recognition of this collaboration between artists and models was uncommon but can perhaps be likened to the impact seen in Baker's portraits of his wife Marjorie; which similarly depict significant depth and character that is likely only possible to create with familiarity and respect.

- Hannah James

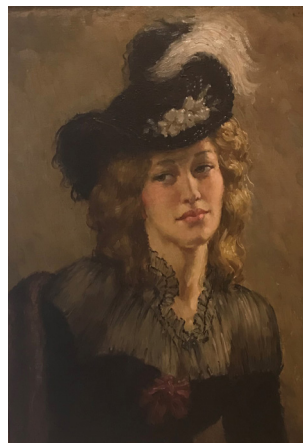
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1 Nochlin, Linda (1971). "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?". In Gornick, Vivian; Moran, Barbara (eds.). *Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness*. New York: Basic Books.

# A MODEL LIFE: SELECTED WORKS



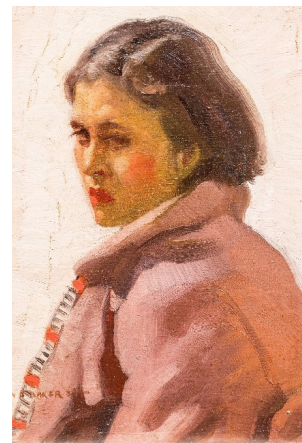
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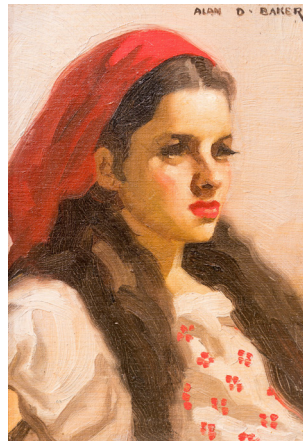
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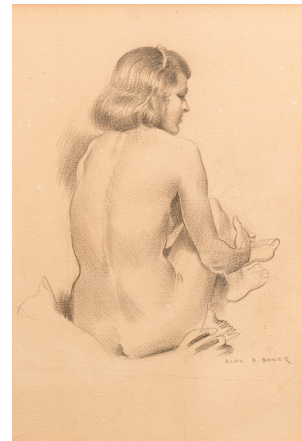
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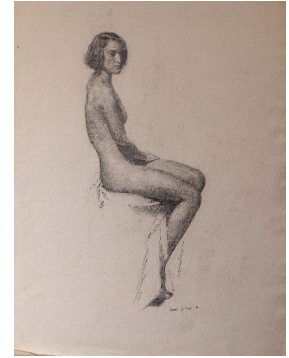
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#### ARTWORK DETAILS:

1. Alan D. Baker, 'Rita Lee', Oil on board, 10cm x 8cm
2. Norman Lindsay, 'The White Feather', Oil on board, 42cm x 30cm
3. Alan D. Baker, 'Portrait II', Oil on board, 14.7cm x 12cm
4. Alan D. Baker, 'Portrait of an Art School Model', Oil on board, 26cm x 21cm
5. Alan D. Baker, 'The Fair Haired Girl with the Red Pullover', Oil on board, 27cm x 24cm
6. Alan D. Baker, 'Girl with Shawl', Oil on board, 26cm x 21cm
7. Alan D. Baker, 'Standing Nude', Graphite on paper, 52cm x 29cm
8. Alan D. Baker, 'Life Drawing', Graphite on paper, 24cm x 18cm
9. Alan D. Baker, [Standing Model], Graphite on paper, 48cm x 46cm
10. Alan D. Baker, [Seated Model], Graphite on paper, 64cm x 48cm
11. Alan D. Baker, [Dual Drawing], Graphite on paper, 56cm x 38cm
12. Alan D. Baker, [Seated Model III], Graphite on paper, 64cm x 48cm
13. Alan D. Baker, [Seated Model II], Graphite on paper, 56cm x 38cm

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# A MODEL WIFE: A MODEL LIFE

## What is the place of women in the arts?

The concept for the 'Model Wife' revolves around extracting Alan Baker's wife Marjorie from the traditional 'artist's model' role, emphasising her poise, strength of character, and considerable presence, her own skill as an artist, and Alan's image of her - as his wife and a woman he clearly deeply admired - as well as performing the long-established function of artist's model and muse. She appears as model, muse and wife - as a woman of great dignity and presence, made more poignant by the many blows life dealt her, and as an accomplished artist in her own right.

The exhibition aims, from a contemporary perspective, to return to 'the wife' the autonomy that was often denied women in 1950s and 1960s Australia, and also to reveal the humanity behind 'the model'. Marjorie was pivotal in Alan's career, mothering their three children and, as a 'model wife', enthusiastically and with great poise supporting her husband at exhibitions and sales of his work. She posed as Alan's model for many portraits, including six Archibald entries, and also cultivated ten acres of garden, providing many of the roses, camellias, blossoms and other blooms for the 'floral works' for which Alan was justly renowned. Yet she had a dramatic and tragic life story of her own, throughout which she maintained great dignity and strength.

Seeking Marjorie herself, through Alan's varied visions of her committed to canvas through the many years of their marriage, through a selection of Marjorie's own paintings, and through their shared enthusiasm for Asian ceramics about which she was very knowledgeable, the exhibition hints at Marjorie's broader life: her life in Malaysia before the war, tragically losing her first husband with the wartime invasion of Malaysia, her own talent, joy in living, and her travels with friends after Alan's death. By friends' accounts, she was an inveterate traveller, particularly within Asia to which she maintained a lifelong connection. Marjorie is featured as a woman of strength, achievement, poise and intellect.

The 'Model Life' segment of the exhibition maintains the focus on women: investigating the role of the 'artist's model' - indispensable to artistic practice since the days of the Old Masters and before. Artists' models, too, are often overlooked, and this part of the exhibition explores the role of female life models in mid 20th century Australian artmaking. At this time women were not permitted to attend life drawing classes as students, yet the overwhelming majority of life models were female.

This segment of the exhibition seeks to highlight this inequality, but also showcases Alan Baker's exceptional classical life drawing technique, and his ability to develop an emotive quality in these highly accomplished works. It also features 'Sydney's top-ranking artist's model' in the 1940s, Rita Lee. Rita was a favourite model of artist Norman Lindsay, for her ability to bring the character of the pose to life, and an exceptional example of Lindsay's work, featuring Rita Lee, is included in this exhibition, along with several beautiful oil paintings of Rita and other models by our own Alan D. Baker.



GALLERY FOUR:

FLORA

# SELECTED WORKS



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## ARTWORK DETAILS:

1. Alan D. Baker, 'Pink Stocks', Oil on board, 59cm x 74cm
2. Alan D. Baker, 'Zinnias', Oil on board, 34cm x 29cm
3. Alan D. Baker, 'Lilies and Gladioli', Oil on board, 73cm x 59cm
4. Alan D. Baker, 'Amber Bowl Japonica', Oil on board, 48.3 x 56.8cm
5. Alan D. Baker, 'White Roses in a Chinese vase', Oil on board, 59cm x 49cm
6. Alan D. Baker, 'Gladiolas', Oil on board, 61cm x 76cm
7. Alan D. Baker, 'Yellow Daisies', Oil on board, 36cm x 54cm
8. Alan D. Baker, 'Peach Blossom', Oil on board, 72cm x 98cm
9. Alan D. Baker, 'Pansies', Oil on board, 20cm x 38cm
10. Alan D. Baker, 'Yellow Daisies', Oil on board, 36cm x 54cm
11. Alan D. Baker, 'Yellow and White Chrysanthemums', Oil on board, 71cm x 96cm
12. Alan D. Baker, 'Cecil Bruner Roses', Oil on board, 24cm x 37cm
13. Alan D. Baker, 'Almond Blossom', Oil on board, 73cm x 99cm
14. Alan D. Baker, 'White Gordonias', Oil on board, 55cm x 48cm
15. Alan D. Baker, 'Red Roses in a Brown Vase', Oil on board, 59cm x 79cm
16. Alan D. Baker, 'White Azaleas', Oil on board, 57cm x 61cm
17. Alan D. Baker, 'Red Roses', Oil on board, 59cm x 84cm
18. Alan D. Baker, 'Cecil Bruner Roses', Oil on board, 48cm x 58cm
19. Alan D. Baker, 'Peach Blossom', Oil on board, 72cm x 98cm
20. Alan D. Baker, 'Petunias', Oil on board, 44cm x 59cm



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21. Alan D. Baker, 'White Chrysanthemum', Oil on board, 51cm x 71cm
22. Alan D. Baker, 'Contessa Callini', Oil on board, 45cm x 38cm
23. Alan D. Baker, 'Camelia Alba Plena', Oil on board, 37cm x 45cm
24. Alan D. Baker, 'Contessa Callini Camelias', Oil on board, 51cm x 66cm
25. Alan D. Baker, 'White Petunias', Oil on board, 41cm x 61cm
26. Alan D. Baker, 'White Cosmos', Oil on board, 61cm x 82cm
27. Alan D. Baker, 'White Roses in Chinese Bowl', Oil on board, 45 x 60cm
28. Alan D. Baker, 'Wild Camelias', Oil on board, 30cm x 25cm

# FLORA

Within the 'Flora' exhibition we introduce a small selection of loaned artworks amidst the significant gallery collection. Flora represents Baker's most prolific subject. Baker himself described that he probably painted roughly one hectare of flowers per year<sup>1</sup>, most examples of this practice emerging in the final two decades of his life whilst living on his property at Belimbla Park.

Alan's wife, Marjorie, was an avid gardener. Consequently, they had a wide variety of flowering plants growing plentifully on their property, including many blossoming fruit trees which Baker loved to paint. As a couple, they shared a mutual interest in ceramics, particularly of Asian origin, Marjorie collected many of the ceramic objects seen in this collection of works from antique stores and later auctions where she and Baker acquired more valuable pieces (Alan estimated their collection to consist of over 400 pieces)<sup>2</sup>. The selected works feature many ceramic pieces from their collection coupled with stunning arrangements of flowers from their own garden arranged by Baker himself. Fine linens and ceramic pieces personalised and added depth of character to the paintings.

The two predominant factors; home grown flowers and ceramics, are key to the development of Baker's floral art. He preferred home-grown flowers to those of a florist's; feeling the latter were always too consistent in length, quality and character. He felt the flora selected within his works was more natural, wilder and carried greater character as a subject.

- Roger Percy, with Hannah James.

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1 'Alan's Got Flower Power', Newspaper Article, Brisbane, 1978

2 Ibid.