

Chamber Works

Photographs from the City of Fremantle Civic Collection

Chamber Works draws upon the holding of historic photographs of the City of Fremantle Civic Collection. These impressive period framed, individual and group studio portraits capture the spirit of the time at which they were made. A time before photography was considered a legitimate art form.

Grandly formal and decorative, these sober and temperate portraits mirror the rigid pictorial conventions of the Royal Academy (English) painting school and the heavy hand of 'funereal' style associated with the late Victorian period (1870 - 1901). Later portraits reflect the emerging modern taste for more natural poses and subtle geometric presentation style popular with Art Deco (1925 -1945).

These portraits mark significant milestones of service of those men who were the City's elected members and provide 'social witness' for the benefit of future generation's, of important events of the day. Unsmiling and solemn people were aiming to give the impression of being serious, dependable, honest and moral types - they were not necessarily grim, humourless people in everyday life.

Majority of these photographs were produced by celebrated Fremantle studio photographers Charles Millington Nixon, Frank Peterson and Abraham "Izzy" Orloff.

Photographs selected for this exhibition have recently been documented as stage one of a comprehensive Civic Collection conservation project.

Chamber Works was developed by the Curator of the City of Fremantle Art Collection with assistance from Alison Bauer of the City's Local History Library and is presented in association with Fotofreo, City of Fremantle Festival of Photography, March 25 - April 25, 2006.

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City of Fremantle Art Collection Gallery, Fremantle Arts Centre
and City Library
March 25 - May 14, 2006.

