

MAX DUPAIN

A Nation on the Sand

MICHAEL REID

SYDNEY

BERLIN

BEYOND

MAX DUPAIN

A Nation on the Sand

For the first time in over three decades, Max Dupain's iconic Australian beach photographs – among them *Sunbaker* (1937) and *Bondi* (1939) – are reunited in a single exhibition, and available for acquisition. Not since a remarkable cluster of shows in 1991–92 – Helen Ennis's landmark National Gallery of Australia survey *Max Dupain: Photographs*; the Mitchell Library and Blaxland Gallery exhibitions in Sydney; and the Art Gallery of New South Wales's posthumous *Max Dupain: An Appreciation* – have collectors had the opportunity to view and acquire works by one of Australia's most important mid-twentieth-century photographers.

Currently on view at the State Library of New South Wales is a major museum retrospective of Dupain's work, honouring the library's 200th anniversary. He is that important.

Max Dupain: A Nation on the Sand

12th November - 12th December

Monday - Friday 9-5, Saturday 11-3

109 Shepherd Street
Chippendale, NSW
2008

For all enquiries, please contact:

Sydney
Hugh Holm
hughholm@michaelreid.com.au
0488 354 985

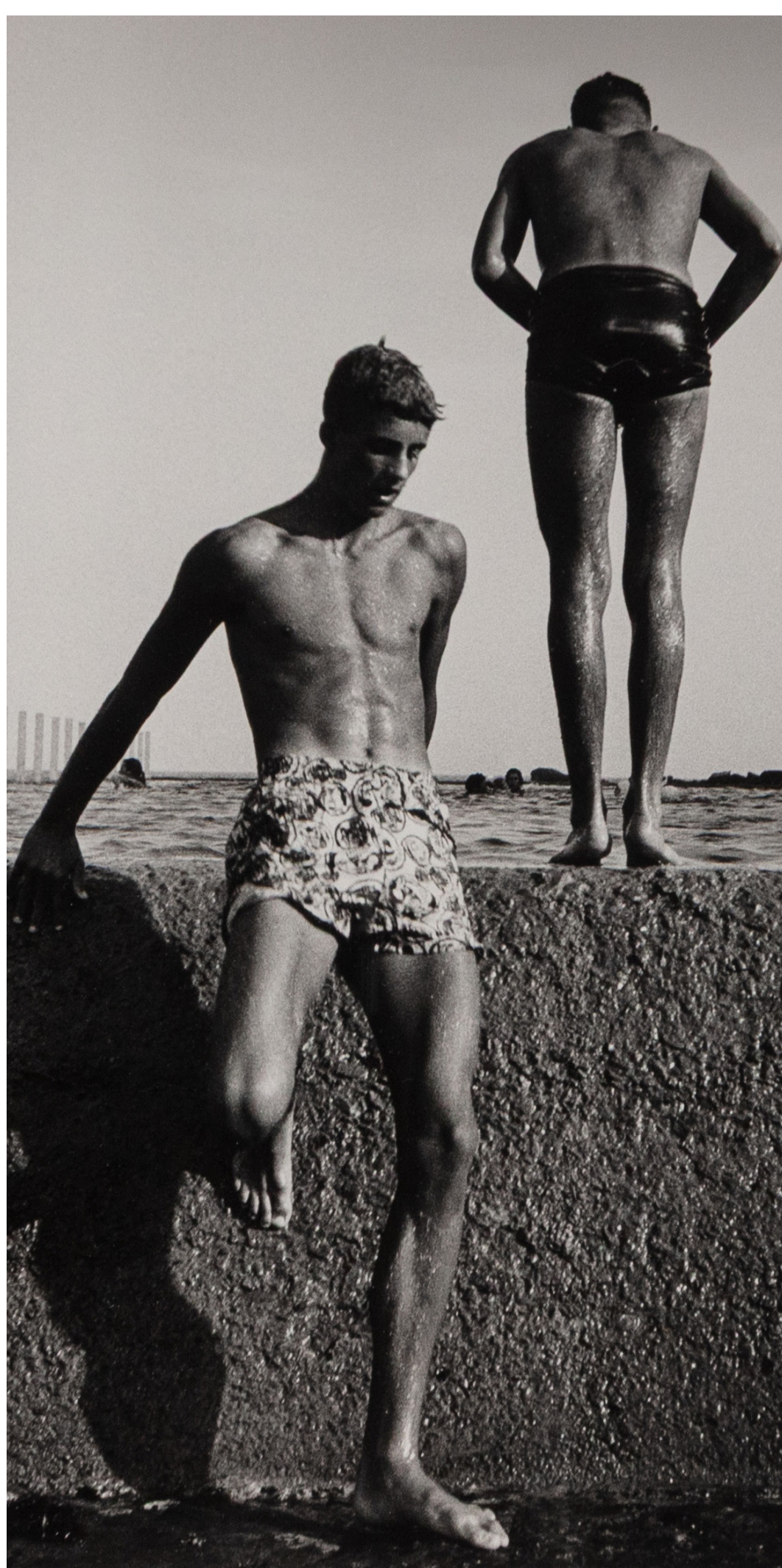
Berlin
Coline Soria
colinesoria@michaelreid.com.au

MICHAEL REID

SYDNEY

BERLIN

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Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Sunbaker, 1937 / printed c.1980s
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 47 × 52.2 cm
framed size: 86 × 86 cm
\$75,000

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Authenticity stamp with pencil title verso; signed by Rex Dupain verso. (Not signed by Max Dupain.)

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* (1937) is Australia's most iconic photograph. Although taken years after the First World War, it resonated with nationalist ideals, evoking the bronzed Anzac spirit.

In an era recovering from war, sunlight symbolised renewal, promoting both physical and spiritual well-being. The image captures a young man lying "sun-slain" on Culburra Beach, immersed in the elemental forces of sun, sand and sea. Dupain's low-angle composition emphasises his connection to nature, reinforcing themes of vitality and renewal. Often described as "the most famous and admired photograph in Australia", *Sunbaker* reflects European modernist influences, focusing on abstract form over literal description. It has become ingrained in Australian consciousness, symbolising health, outdoor living and leisure. Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Victoria, links *Sunbaker* to vitalism and the "body culture" movement of the 1930s, describing it as an "archetype" of the ideal Australian.

Dupain himself recalled its spontaneous creation: "It was a simple affair. We were camping down the South Coast, and one of my friends leapt out of the surf and slammed down onto the beach to have a sunbake - marvellous. We made the image, and it's been around, I suppose, as a sort of icon of the Australian way of life." Judy Annear, Curator of Photography at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, credited Dupain with capturing "a moment in time that came to symbolize the ambitions of a nation." The photograph combines two interwar social mythologies: the "old sunburnt country" and physical health as a marker of modernity's promise.

Despite its modest origins - taken during a 1937 trip with friends Harold Salvage and Chris Vandyke - *Sunbaker* only gained widespread recognition in 1975 when it was used to promote *Max Dupain: Retrospective* at the Australian Centre for Photography. Four years later, it featured on the back cover of *Australian Photographers: The Philip Morris Collection*, curated by James Mollison, cementing its status as a national icon.

Formally, *Sunbaker* departs from Dupain's earlier surrealist studio work. The subject's bronzed skin, glistening with salt and sweat, embodies an idealised vision of the antipodean male - ironically, he was a recent English immigrant. Unlike migration advertisements of the era, *Sunbaker* offers an introspective view of man's communion with nature. The stark simplicity of composition, dramatic light and lack of spatial context create a timeless, universal image - one that continues to define Australian identity.



AUCTION RESULTS (SISTER IMAGES)

Mossgreen Auctions, *Estate Photographs*, Sydney, 19 June 2016, Lot 11. Estimate \$20,000-30,000. Sold \$105,400.

Deutscher and Hackett, *Twenty Classics of Australian Art*, Melbourne, 11 November 2020, Lot 1. Estimate \$30,000-40,000. Sold \$61,364.

Menzies, *Australian and International Fine Art & Sculpture*, Sydney, 19 November 2020. Estimate \$20,000-30,000. Sold \$79,773.

EXHIBITIONS

The Thirties and Australia, S. H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney, 19 June-13 July 1980, cat.101 (another example)

Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 29 August - 28 September 1980, cat.28 (another example)

Ten Years On, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, January 1986 (another example)

Celebrity Choice - Sam Neill, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 8 January - 8 February 1987 (another example)

Four Photographers, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 June - 19 August 1990 (another example)

Fine and Mostly Sunny: Photographs from the Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 28 September - 1 December 1991, cat.22 (another example)

Max Dupain - An Appreciation, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 11-30 August 1992 (another example)

Soft Shadows and Sharp Lines: Australian Photography from Cazneau to Dupain, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 30 September - 17 November 2002 (another example)

On the Beach: with Whiteley and Fellow Australian Artists, The Brett Whiteley Studio, Sydney, 1 March - 29 June 2003 (another example)

Modern Times, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, 1 August 2008 - 8 February 2009 (another example)

The Photograph and Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 21 March - 8 June 2015; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 4 July - 11 October 2015 (another example)

LITERATURE

Missingham, H. & Dupain, M., *Max Dupain Photographs*, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1948, pl.7 (another example)

Newton, G., *Max Dupain: Photographs 1928-80*, The David Ell Press, Sydney, 1980, p.64 (another example)

Free, R. & Newton, G., 'Onsight No. 7', *PROFILES*, Sydney, 1984, p.22 (another example)

Max Dupain's Australia, Viking Press, Sydney, 1986, p.104 (another example)

Byron, S., 'Photography', *Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection Handbook*, Sydney, 1988, p.127 (another example)

Lebovic, J. & Ennis, H., 'Twentieth Century Photography', *Masterpieces of Australian Photography*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1989, pp.150-1, cat.262 (another example)

Newton, G., *Silver and Grey*, Sydney, 1980, p.78 (another example)

Newton, G., *Shades of Light*, Sydney, 1988, p.124 (another example)

M. Dupain, *Max Dupain*, Sydney, 1991, p.77 (another example)

Ennis, H., *Max Dupain: Photographs*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 1991, p.18 (another example)

White, J., Smee, S. and Cawood, M., *Dupain's Beaches*, Chapter and Verse, Sydney, 2000, p.69 (another example)

Conrad, P., *At Home In Australia*, Sydney, 2003, p.185 (another example)

Annear, J., *The Photograph and Australia*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2015, pp. 40, 50, 104, 294 (another example)



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Bondi, 1939 / printed 1990s
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 38 × 38 cm
framed size: 76 × 71 cm
\$30,000

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Authenticity stamp with pencil title verso; signed by Rex Dupain verso. (Not signed by Max Dupain.)

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

Max Dupain is one of Australia's most significant photographers, responsible for some of the country's most iconic images. His long career was dedicated to celebrating Australian culture and identity.

As a leading figure in modernist photography, his work is distinguished by its formal exploration of space, shape and tone. During the 1930s, Dupain was influenced by the European New Photography movement, which emerged in the late 1920s. This style marked a departure from the soft, atmospheric tones of Pictorialism, a dominant aesthetic in earlier Australian photography, particularly among artists such as Harold Cazneaux. New Photography emphasised bold compositions, unusual angles and stark tonal contrasts – techniques that became central to Dupain's work.

Together with *Sunbaker* (1937), *Bondi* reflects a pivotal shift in Dupain's practice – from private snapshot to public icon, from modernist experimentation to a deliberate documentation of Australian life. This photograph exemplifies Dupain's interest in the human form, both as a symbol of national identity and as an exploration of abstract form.

By the late 1940s, Dupain moved away from his earlier experimental approach, favouring a more documentary style. Reflecting on his evolving philosophy, he wrote: "Modern photography must do more than entertain; it must incite thought, and by its clear statements of actuality, cultivate a sympathetic understanding of men and women and the life they create and live."



EXHIBITIONS

Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 29 August - 28 September 1980 (another example)

On the Beach, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 8 December - 28 December 1982 (another example)

Four Photographers, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 June - 19 August 1990 (another example)

Fine and Mostly Sunny: Photographs from the Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 28 September - 1 December 1991 (another example)

Max Dupain - An Appreciation, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 11 August - 30 August 1992 (another example)

On the Beach: with Whiteley and Fellow Australian Artists, The Brett Whiteley Studio, Surry Hills, 1 March - 29 June 2003 (another example)

Bondi: A Biography, Museum of Sydney, 17 December 2005 - 19 March 2006

LITERATURE

Newton, G., *Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1980, cat no. 27 (another example)

Slutzkin, L., *On the Beach*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1982, cat. 38 (another example)

Dupain, M., White, J., Moore, D., *Max Dupain*, Print Room Press, Sydney, 1991, pl. 70 (another example)

Byron, S., *Fine and Mostly Sunny: photographs from the collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1991, cat. 23 (another example)

White, J., Smee, S., and Cawood, M., *Dupain's Beaches*, Chapter & Verse, Sydney, 2000, p. 41 (another example)

Sayers, A., 'Order and transcendence: art between the wars 1919-39', in *Australian Art*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2001, p. 137, pl. 78 (another example)

White, J., Moorhouse, F., *Dupain's Australia*, Chapter & Verse, Sydney, 2003, p. 10 (another example)

Peel, R., 'Australian postwar photodocumentary', in *Photography: Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007, p. 195 (another example)



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

At Newport, 1952 / printed c.1980

silver gelatin photograph

image size: 40 x 49 cm

framed size: 82 x 77.5 cm

\$24,000

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed by Max Dupain in pencil lower right recto; titled and signed by Rex Dupain verso.

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

At Newport (1952) is one of the three most iconic photographs by Max Dupain, alongside *Sunbaker* (1937) and *Bondi* (1939). The photograph is both highly structured and spontaneous – spontaneous in the serendipitous presence of the young man, whom Dupain referred to as the “Adonis”, stepping down from the pool wall.

Dupain had been standing for some time on or near a large rock, attempting to capture the activity within the pool: figures sitting, swimming and standing. He aimed to remain unnoticed, ensuring people did not look directly into the camera. The image conveys a sense of the photographer's invisibility. As Helen Ennis writes, *At Newport* is “one of Dupain's most admired and refined photographs”, noted for its “linear, sculptural form and architectural quality”.

In terms of his photography, this was one of Dupain's last major images depicting people at the beach before his focus shifted towards architectural and commercial photography, as well as still life, particularly flowers and shells in his private work.



EXHIBITIONS

Three Years On: Acquisitions 1978-81, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 15 October - 1 December 1981

Celebrity Choice - Sam Neill, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 8 January - 8 February 1987

Four Photographers, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 June - 19 August 1990

Fine and Mostly Sunny: Photographs from the Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 28 September - 1 December 1991

Max Dupain - An Appreciation, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 11 August - 30 August 1992

Celebrating Paradise - The Artist and the Northern Beaches: 1890-2000, Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Manly, 10 December 1999 - 30 January 2000

Australian Postwar Photodocumentary, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 12 June - 8 August 2004

Great Collections, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo, 3 April - 10 May 2009

Great Collections, Albury Regional Gallery, Albury, 29 May - 5 July 2009

LITERATURE

Newton, G., *Max Dupain*, Sydney, 1980, p.84

Byron, S., *Fine and Mostly Sunny: Photographs from the Collection*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 1991, cat. no. 21

Dupain, M., *Max Dupain*, Sydney, 1991, p.72

Bullock, N., *Australian Postwar Photodocumentary*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2004

Conrad, P., *At Home in Australia*, Sydney, 2003, p.188

M. Dupain, *Max Dupain's Australia*, Sydney, 1986, p.157

McPhee, J., *Great Collections*, Sydney



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Rhythmic Form, c.1959 / later printing

silver gelatin photograph

image size: 47 × 34 cm

framed size: 67 × 85 cm

\$13,000

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed by Max Dupain in pencil lower right recto; authenticity stamp with pencil title verso; stamped, titled and signed by Rex Dupain verso.

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

Titled, Nude, Art in Australia, p. 70, 15 November 1935.

McFarlane, R., "Max Dupain - Modernist", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 June 2007.

"Flesh and stone were the two great influences on Max Dupain's vision. From his earliest photographs, he strove to transform the naked human body into something resembling the marble forms of antiquity. Women, especially, were often rendered as triumphantly sensual yet naturalistic, as if the sculptor Bernini had suddenly picked up a camera."

— Robert McFarlane, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 June 2007.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

The Meat Queue, 1946 / printed 1990s

silver gelatin photograph

image size: 43 × 48 cm

framed size: 72.5 × 81 cm

\$9,500

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Authenticity stamp with pencil title verso; signed by Rex Dupain verso. (Not signed by Max Dupain.)

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

EXHIBITIONS

Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 29 August - 28 September 1980 (another example)

Four Photographers, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 June - 19 August 1990 (another example)

Federation: Australian Art and Society 1901-2001, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 8 December 2000 - 11 February 2001, and touring (another example)

Australian Postwar Photodocumentary, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 12 June - 8 August 2004 (another example)

Soul of a City: Modernism and Sydney Photography 1930 to 1950, Delmar Gallery, Sydney, 17 May - 15 June 2014

After the War, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 8 October 2018 - 8 October 2019 (another example)

Max Dupain, Lismore Regional Gallery, 5 May - 8 August 2021

LITERATURE

Newton, G., *Max Dupain: Photographs 1928-80*, The David Ell Press, Sydney, 1980, cat. 68

This photograph is part of a series commissioned by the Department of Information. While classified as documentary photography, it is not necessarily social commentary. The image captures postwar food rationing in Australia through Dupain's signature modernist approach. In a 1991 interview with Helen Ennis at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Dupain recalled: "We were doing a story on queues after the war... queues for buses, vegetables, fruit. I just happened to come across this butcher shop in Pitt Street... Here they were all lined up, and I went around it, took a number of pictures, ultimately ending up with this sort of architectural approach with four or five females all dressed in black with black hats, not looking so happy about the world. Suddenly, one of them breaks the queue when I'm focused up, all ready to go - pure luck." The composition's solidity is enhanced by the linear arrangement of the figures, captured from a mid-distance perspective beneath a meat coupon scale. This scale, essential for rationing, symbolises postwar austerity. The women's dark coats contrast with the central figure's lighter-coloured coat, forming a balanced composition. The black hats, aligned in a rhythmic wave, visually echo the row of meat hooks above. The unexpected movement of a woman breaking from the queue injects spontaneity into an otherwise structured scene. Despite its documentary nature, the image is primarily defined by form rather than content, showcasing Dupain's modernist aesthetic through black-and-white shapes arranged in shallow space.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Untitled (Nude – head & shoulders diagonal), 1930s / printed later
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 29.2 × 21 cm
framed size: 51 x 41 cm
\$8,800

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed in ink on image lower right. (Not signed by Rex Dupain verso.)

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

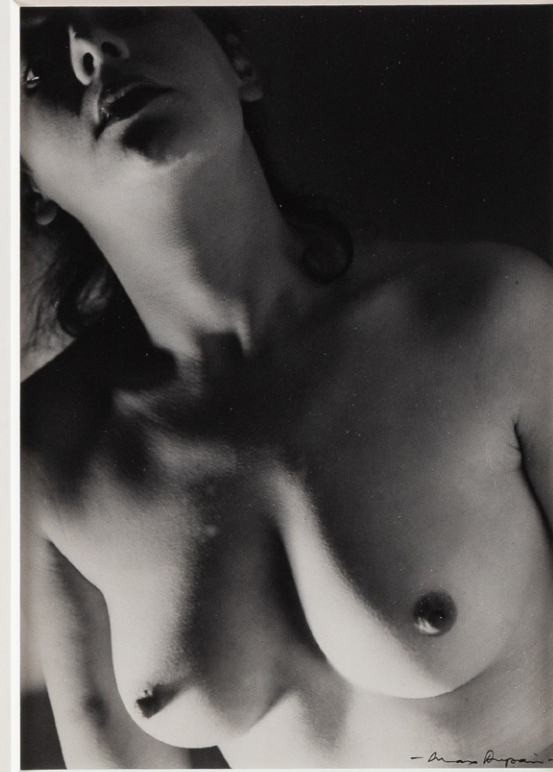
LITERATURE

The work is catalogued in the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection as part of Portfolio No.4 The female form, a portfolio of nudes produced in the 1930s

SISTER ARTWORK

Art Gallery of New South Wales collection, gifted by Edron Pty Ltd in 1995 through the auspices of Alistair McAlpine.

This early nude study demonstrates Dupain's interest in the human form, a subject that would occupy him throughout his career. The composition is typical of his 1930s studio work, focusing on abstraction, tonal contrast and sculptural form. The diagonal placement of the figure creates dynamic tension within the frame, reflecting the influence of European modernism on Dupain's practice during this period. As Robert McFarlane observed, "Flesh and stone were the two great influences on Max Dupain's vision. From his earliest photographs, he strove to transform the naked human body into something resembling the marble forms of antiquity."



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Landscape Nude, c.1935 / later printing
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 19 × 24 cm
framed size: 46.5 x 42.1 cm
\$6,600

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed in pencil on image lower right

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

This photograph is a fine example of Dupain's early modernist nudes from the 1930s, a period when he emerged as Australia's leading modernist photographer. Many of his images from this period explored the human form through the depiction of nude or partially clad figures in the natural environment, serving as anchors for semi-abstract or surrealist compositions. The title *Landscape Nude* suggests the figure is integrated within a natural setting, a theme that preoccupied Dupain throughout the 1930s as he moved away from the soft-focus Pictorialism of his predecessors toward bold compositions and stark tonal contrasts.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Homage to Man Ray, 1937

vintage silver gelatin photograph, solarised

image size: 37.5 x 30 cm

framed size: 58 x 49 cm

\$9,900

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Title in pencil in lower left margin; signed and dated in ink on image lower right

CONDITION

Minor creases

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

EXHIBITIONS

Man Ray and Max Dupain, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 6 August - 9 November 2025

LITERATURE

Dupain, M., "Man Ray: his place in Modern Photography", *The Home*, 1 October 1935

SISTER ARTWORK

An example of this work is held in the Art Gallery of South Australia collection, acquired through the Contemporary Art Acquisition Fund of Visual Arts Board in 1980 (accession number 801Ph9).

This solarised nude is a direct homage to the American surrealist Man Ray (1890-1976), whose technical experiments profoundly influenced Dupain's practice. Dupain placed Man Ray's importance for photography alongside Cézanne's for painting; writing for *The Home* magazine in 1935, Dupain declared of Man Ray: "He is alone. A pioneer of the 20th century who has crystallised a new experience in light and chemistry". The solarisation technique employed in this work - briefly exposing the negative or print to light to produce a halo-like effect - was famously pioneered by Man Ray. The image depicts a woman's chest covered by her hands and makes Dupain's debt to the American artist explicit. Dupain was more interested in technical experimentation than in Surrealism's psychological and unconscious aspects. This work is one of several surrealist-influenced images Dupain created in the 1930s before shifting towards a more documentary style.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Untitled (Nude behind screen), from *Portfolio No.4, The female form*, 1930s / printed later
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 43.5 × 39.5 cm
framed size: 68.1 x 62.6 cm
\$8,800

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated in pencil on image lower right, "Max Dupain '30's".

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

SISTER ARTWORK

An example of this work is held in the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection, gifted by Edron Pty Ltd in 1995 through the auspices of Alistair McAlpine

This work is from Dupain's *Portfolio No.4, The female form*, a series of nude studies produced in the 1930s. The female nude was a central subject for Dupain during this period, informed by vitalist and naturalist theories, his interpretations of surrealism and his studies of painting. The screen in this image creates an interplay of concealment and revelation, a device Dupain employed to explore abstract form and the sculptural qualities of the human body. The work reflects the influence of European modernism on his practice, particularly the surrealist photography of Man Ray, whom Dupain greatly admired.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Capstan Rum Advertisement, 1938

vintage silver gelatin photograph

image size: 35.9 × 27.7 cm

framed size: 64 × 53.6 cm

\$4,900

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Estate stamp verso. Auction sticker on back.

PROVENANCE

Max Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Mossgreen Dupain sale

Private collection, Sydney

This photograph is an uncommon example of Dupain's commercial advertising photography from the late 1930s. By 1938, Dupain had established himself as a leading commercial photographer in fashion, advertising and portraiture, gaining exposure through the lifestyle magazine *The Home*, which featured 186 pages of his photographs. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Dupain was best known for his fashion illustrations, advertising and social portraits regularly published in *The Home* magazine until it ceased publication in 1942. This Capstan Rum advertisement was most likely created for publication in *The Home*, reflecting Dupain's modernist approach to commercial work - characterised by bold compositions, stark tonal contrasts and creative use of light.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Valentina Blinova and Valentin Froman, Ballets Russes, c.1938 / later printing
silver gelatin photograph
image size: 36.8 × 35 cm
framed size: 68 x 57.4 cm
\$5,500

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated in pencil on image lower right

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

Valentina Blinova was a principal dancer with the Monte Carlo Russian Ballet during its first tour of Australia and New Zealand (1936-1937), where her principal partners included dancers Léon Woizikowski, Igor Youskevitch and Valentin Froman. Dupain photographed the Ballets Russes during their Australian seasons, capturing both performance and behind-the-scenes imagery. This work depicts Blinova performing alongside Froman, reflecting Dupain's engagement with the theatrical and modernist currents of the late 1930s. The Ballets Russes toured Australia extensively between 1936 and 1940, and Dupain's photographs from this period remain among his most significant documentary works.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Solarised Arum Lilies, c.1939 / 1970s print

silver gelatin photograph

image size: 37.8 × 28.6 cm

framed size: 64 × 53.5 cm

\$6,900

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated "30s" in ink on image lower right

CONDITION

Pinholes, crinkles, crazing

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

EXHIBITIONS

A related work was included in the AGNSW 2004 exhibition subtitled *Dupain's work in the context of Man Ray's influence*.

SISTER ARTWORK

A sister edition is held in the State Library of New South Wales.

Dupain was inspired to experiment with different printing techniques, including solarisation, by American photographer Man Ray (1890-1976). His admiration of Man Ray is highlighted in the following statement from the AGNSW 2004 exhibition subtitled *Dupain's work in the context of Man Ray's influence*: "Max Dupain, one of Australia's great modernist photographers, placed Man Ray's importance for photography alongside Cézanne's for painting. Writing for *The Home magazine* in 1935, Dupain said: 'He is alone. A pioneer of the 20th century who has crystallised a new experience in light and chemistry.'" Dupain bookended his personal photographic explorations of form with flowers, beginning with his experimentation with surrealist photography such as solarisation and double exposure in the early to mid-1930s and ending with often single light source subjects taken in the studio and in his garden. A sister edition of this solarised image of arum lilies is held in the State Library of New South Wales collection.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Deksels Toumanova, Swan Lake, 1940

vintage silver gelatin photograph

image size: 29.6 × 36.7 cm

framed size: 47.5 x 54 cm

\$5,500

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Titled, signed and dated in pencil on image lower margin; also titled verso Petroff in Toumanova Swan Lake

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

This photograph depicts Tamara Toumanova, a renowned Russian ballerina who performed with the Ballets Russes. Toumanova and Serge Lifar were photographed by Dupain performing Swan Lake in 1939-1940. The Ballets Russes toured Australia extensively between 1936 and 1940, and Dupain's photographs from this period capture the artistic vitality of the company during its Australian seasons. This work is one of several Dupain created of the Ballets Russes, documenting both the dancers and their performances. A related photograph by Dupain, Serge Lifar and Tamara Toumanova, Ballets Russes, signed and dated 1938, has appeared at auction.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Manly Beach, 1940s
vintage silver gelatin photograph
image size: 30.8 × 27.9 cm
framed size: 64 × 53.5 cm
\$8,800

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Estate stamp verso; signed by Rex Dupain on back

CONDITION

Old crease upper right

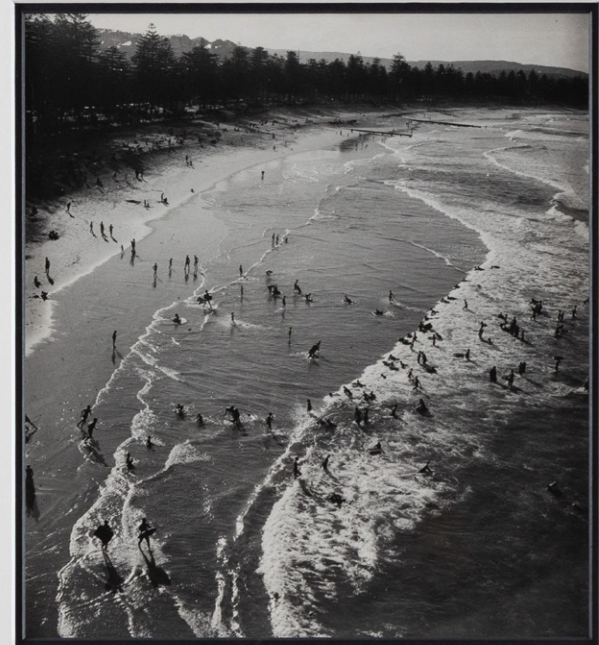
PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate
Rex Dupain
Private collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

Max Dupain's Australia, edited Jill White, Viking, p.156

This photograph was taken from the Manly Shark Tower, which was built in 1938 alongside the award-winning Manly Surf Pavilion. Lifeguards manned the tower with binoculars to spot approaching sharks; when a shark was sighted, a large shark bell was rung to warn swimmers to evacuate the water. The structure became susceptible to concrete cancer and was subsequently demolished in 1981. The image captures the beach from an elevated perspective, demonstrating Dupain's interest in bold compositions and unusual angles. Several negatives of scenes at Manly Beach from the 1940s are held in the State Library of New South Wales, and other works from this series are held in the Northern Beaches Council collection.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Surf Race Start, 1940s / later printing

vintage silver gelatin photograph

image size: 35 x 37.5 cm

framed size: 64 x 53.5 cm

\$11,000

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Titled, signed and dated in pencil on image lower right; estate stamp verso signed by Rex Dupain

CONDITION

Slight colour variation and retouching to image

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

Max Dupain's Australia, edited Jill White, Viking, p.144

Dupain's Beaches, Jill White, edited Carol Dettmann, Chapter & Verse, p.93

Considered one of Dupain's iconic images of the Australian beach. An earlier scene by Dupain, *Manly* (1938) (Newton 1980), shows an objective aerial shot of swimmers enjoying the day, but in *Surf Race Start* Dupain partakes of the action as the male lifesavers step high through the waves as they challenge themselves against nature and each other to run then swim the course. This photograph by Max Dupain is one of his best known. Taken at Newport Baths on Sydney's northern beaches, it encompasses the "Australianness" that Dupain became known for. A beach lover himself, Dupain shows a natural affinity for the coastal landscape and an intimacy with those swimmers who also embraced it. A related work, *Surf Race Start* (1940), inscribed and dated 'SURF RACE 1938' lower left, has appeared at auction.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Brooms for Sale, c.1940s

silver gelatin photograph

image size: 35.5 × 37.5 cm

framed size: 72.8 x 70.5 cm

\$5,500

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated in pencil on image lower right; label verso dated 1951

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Private collection, Sydney

EXHIBITIONS

None known for this specific print. A sister image in the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection was exhibited in *Maitland Annual Exhibition of Photography* (1951), *Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980* (AGNSW, 1980), and *Four Photographers* (AGNSW, 1990).

LITERATURE

Max Dupain's Australia, edited Jill White, Viking, p.56

Newton, G., *Max Dupain retrospective 1930-1980*, Sydney, 1980, catalogue no. 70 (sister image)

Newton, G., *Max Dupain*, Sydney, 1980, plate no. 30 (sister image)

SISTER ARTWORK

An example of this work is held in the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection (accession number 275.1982), titled *Brooms for sale* (1950), gelatin silver photograph, 36.1 × 37.7 cm image/sheet, signed and dated lower right image in pencil "Max Dupain '51", dated upper centre verso original board "...50", purchased 1982.

The AGNSW example has been shown in three exhibitions: *Maitland Annual Exhibition of Photography* (1951), *Max Dupain Retrospective 1930-1980* (AGNSW, 1980), and *Four Photographers* (AGNSW, 1990). It is referenced in two publications: Gael Newton, *Max Dupain retrospective 1930-1980* (1980, catalogue no. 70) and Gael Newton, *Max Dupain* (1980, plate no. 30). A related work is held in the State Library of New South Wales.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Korner's (Junk Shop), 1953
vintage silver gelatin photograph
image size: 28.5 × 36 cm
framed size: 64 × 53.5 cm
\$4,400

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Estate stamp verso signed by Rex Dupain; auction sticker on back

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate
Rex Dupain
Mossgreen Auction sale
Private collection, Sydney

This photograph is held in the State Library of New South Wales collection as part of File 06: *Korner's (junk shop)*, July 1953. The image captures a junk shop interior, reflecting Dupain's interest in documentary photography and urban life during the 1950s. After the Second World War, Dupain moved away from his earlier experimental approach toward a more documentary style, capturing the everyday life of Sydney and its suburbs.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Old Dolls Resprayed, 1955
vintage silver gelatin photograph
image size: 30 x 21.2 cm
framed size: 64 x 53.5 cm
\$5,500

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

On original album page; estate stamp verso signed by Rex Dupain; auction sticker

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate
Rex Dupain
Mossgreen Auction sale
Private collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

Max Dupain's Australia, edited Jill White, Viking, p.60

Also known as *Dolls Hospital, Sydney*, which was located on Stoney Creek Road in Bexley in Sydney's south and was operating from 1913 to 2015. After leaving Bexley, it relocated in 2018 to Appin, New South Wales (near Campbelltown), and in 2026, after 113 years of operation, the physical Doll Hospital closed its doors. The State Library of New South Wales holds a related work, File 27: *Old dolls resprayed*, 1940s.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Shell Series No. 5, 1986
vintage silver gelatin photograph
image size: 42 x 40 cm
framed size: 66.1 x 63.1 cm
\$4,400

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated in pencil on image lower right

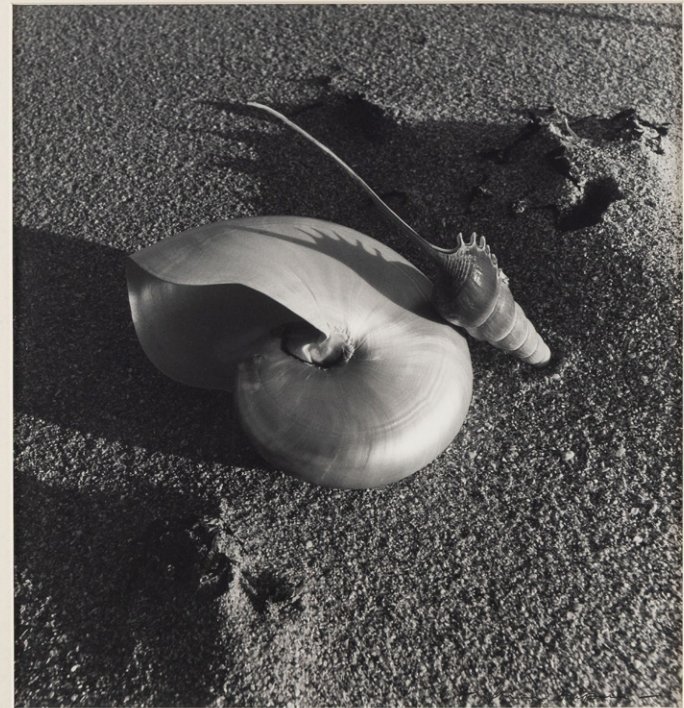
PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate
Rex Dupain
Josef Lebovic Gallery
Private collection, Sydney

LITERATURE

Max Dupain's Australian Landscapes, Viking, p.190

In his later career, Dupain turned increasingly to still life subjects, particularly flowers and shells in his private work. This image is from Dupain's Shell Series, a body of work exploring the formal qualities of shells through dramatic lighting and careful composition. The State Library of New South Wales holds a related work, File 05: *Shell series*, late 1970s, call numbers ON 609/Box 16/no. 24. Dupain bookended his personal photographic explorations of form with flowers, beginning with his experimentation with surrealist photography such as solarisation and double exposure in the early to mid-1930s and ending with often single light source subjects taken in the studio and in his garden.



Max Dupain (1911-1992)

Pumpkin with Butterfly and Magnifying Glass, 1990

vintage silver gelatin photograph

image size: 47 × 38.2 cm

framed size: 68.6 × 59.6 cm

\$4,400

SIGNATURE/AUTHENTICATION

Signed and dated in pencil on image lower right

PROVENANCE

Dupain Estate

Rex Dupain

Josef Lebovic Gallery

Private collection, Sydney

This later still life demonstrates Dupain's enduring interest in the formal qualities of natural objects, a preoccupation that occupied him throughout his career. This work is held in the State Library of New South Wales collection as part of File 07: *Pumpkin with butterfly, still life*, May '90. In his later years, Dupain focused increasingly on still life subjects, particularly flowers and shells in his private work, finding solace and peace in capturing the beauty within these forms.



MAX DUPAIN

A Nation on the Sand

MICHAEL REID

SYDNEY

BERLIN

BEYOND

For all enquiries, please contact:

Sydney
Hugh Holm
hughholm@michaelreid.com.au
0488 354 985

Berlin
Coline Soria
colinesoria@michaelreid.com.au