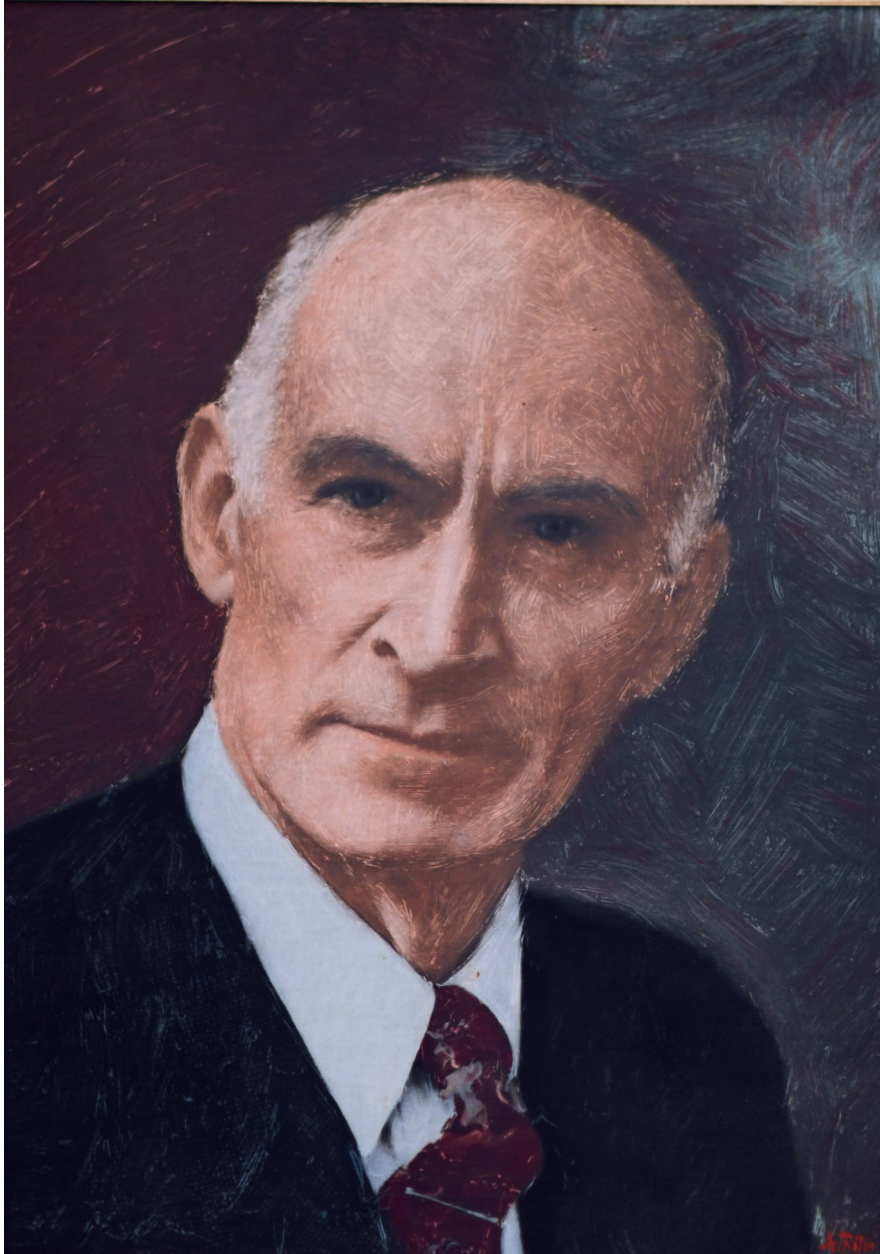


Shire of Northam ART COLLECTION



ARG Hawke



Artist - Alex Risco

Dates - 1968

Alexander Risco : Master of Photography (by articleship), Photography1984

Articled for 5 years under the late Alexander Risco, Master Photographer, FRSA, FBIPP, AIPP. Awarded membership of Professional Photographers Association in 1981. Recognised as equivalent to Masters Degree in Photography.

Specialised in architectural, fine art and portrait photography.

In March 1970, Mitchell House was purchased by Alex Risco, a local photographer, artist and musician, and his wife, Svetlana. The Riscos named the place Mitchell House in honour of Sir James Mitchell. They carried out extensive work on the place. Upstairs, the false ceilings and partitions on the landing were removed and the rooms were painted. The staircase from the old Northam hospital was installed. Downstairs, the jarrah floors were sanded and polished and the rooms painted.

The jarrah doors and pediments above the doors and windows in the entry hall and salon were French polished. The stucco finish of the portico and gallery was painted and the gallery floors were totally replaced. The kitchen was renovated and wooden sleepers from Fmr Northam Railway Station and stone from the recently demolished Northam R&I Bank were used as decoration around the hotplate. A set of glass doors salvaged from the R&I Bank were hung in the stables, and the copper boiler was removed from the wash house.¹¹

Alex Risco purchased large mirrors from the local drapers to hang in the salon and used the room as a studio for his photography business. A bedroom upstairs was used as a darkroom and drying room. The gardens and fishpond were re-established. The sewerage and drainage system, damaged by tree roots, was completely replaced and the whole house rewired. Circa 1975, the original jarrah fence was removed. A massive pile of stones, originally the facade of the R&I Bank, were dumped in the garden with the intention of building a Classical Garden as a backdrop for wedding

photographs. They were never used for this purpose and the stones remained in a pile untouched for nearly twenty years.

In September 1977, the place was purchased by Susan and Quentin Ward. Before the Wards took possession of the place, the Riscos held an auction in the grounds of Mitchell House. Amongst items offered for sale were 30' jarrah timbers (possibly from the original staircase). Once they moved in, the new owners received a letter from the Riscos welcoming them to the house and commenting that Sir Frederick Sampson had described Mitchell House as '... one of the most beautiful houses in WA.

Damien Smith A Western Australian based photographer born in Melbourne, Victoria. Having studied a Diploma of photography at Mt. Lawley Central Institute of Technology, he went onto be mentored by Russian master photographer Alexander Risco. Damien took over the running of Alexander Gallery studios for seven years before establishing his own studio in Perth's CBD.

No tangible online presence regarding studio practice as a painter (rather as a photographer) The painting is most probably painted from the photo shown probably taken by Alex Risco himself.

