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# History in the frame

**Kim Shaw**

Deep in the dusty archives of a picture library in London lay a forgotten collection of work by pioneer portrait photographer Emil Otto Hoppe.

The German born artist had faded from the limelight after the Second World War and then fallen from the pages of history. It wasn't until Australian photo historian Graham Howe gathered the photographs into a single collection that Hoppe's true place at the birth of modern art photography was recognised.

Australians now have the opportunity to see examples of Hoppe's photography at Customs House in the first major showcase of his work since the 1930s. He took portraits

of Mussolini, Hitler and Nijinsky, but Mr Howe said he believed the photographer's best work was taken in Australia, during an extensive photo-documentary tour of the young nation in 1930.

"They are highly organised, intelligent pictures that show us who we are as a nation," Mr Howe said. "They show our multiculturalism and the cultural gap that existed in the 1930s between our indigenous and immigrant population."

"It is an epic body of work and I wanted to show the geographical diversity of Hoppe's portraits of working men and women."

The free exhibition, entitled *Hoppe's Australia*, will be on display until July 1 at Customs House, Circular Quay.



**Graham Howe shows some of the works by photographer E.O. Hoppe.** Photo: Melanie Russell