

# Keys to the collection— Form

## Lionel Lindsay

“I gamble with the ultimate result, but my chief care is to establish a true graver cut, keep its drawing quality and to preserve the intervening black. I keep thus to a classic ideal...”

—Lionel Lindsay, quoted by J.S. Macdonald in  
*The woodcuts of Lionel Lindsay*, 1934

Born in Creswick, Victoria, in 1874, Lionel was the third child in a family of 10 children. Of these, five became full-time artists. All the boys were educated at the local state school and at Creswick Grammar School, where Percy, Lionel and Norman, in turn, edited the *Boomerang*, the school's unofficial magazine. Their early interest in art was encouraged by their maternal grandfather, the Reverend Thomas Williams, who took them on regular visits to the art gallery in Ballarat.

After completing school, Lionel and his brother Norman moved to Melbourne. Later they both moved to Sydney. As skilled and high profile artists who worked in black and white, they were hired by the most famous magazine of the day, *The Bulletin*.

Lionel loved travel and met Jean Dyson, the woman he was to marry, during a trip to Italy. On their return to Australia, he began to etch the old buildings and historic landmarks of Sydney. Today these etchings are regarded as some of the finest impressions of early Australia ever recorded.

In 1922 Lionel completed a series of woodcuts depicting birds. The prints from these woodcuts are regarded as some of the finest in the world, showing great depth of feeling, through the artist's mastery of expression and form.



Lionel Lindsay continued to work as a printmaker until the end of his life. Sadly, he requested his son Peter to destroy the actual woodblocks on his death.

### Goat and rhododendron—

*Goat and rhododendron* exemplifies how Lionel preferred to work from life, to preserve realism and also vitality, so that his subject matter resembled life. His wood-engraved representation, design, scale, texture and form were outstanding. His peaceful, still-life wood engravings highlighted the intensity of Japanese-influenced design and the creative use of the 'negative' black space. This technique brings strength to this piece enhancing detail in texture and form.

**Geelong  
Gallery**

AusVELS level 7 to VCE  
[geelonggallery.org.au/learn](http://geelonggallery.org.au/learn)

Lionel Lindsay  
*Goat and rhododendron*  
(detail) 1925  
wood engraving  
Collection: Geelong Gallery

G E E L O N G  
E E L O N G A  
E L O N G A L  
L O N G A L L  
O N G A L L E  
N G A L L E R  
G A L L E R Y



## Lionel Lindsay

Australian 1874–1961

*Goat and rhododendron* 1925

wood engraving

22.8 x 20.0 (sheet)

17.1 x 15.4 cm (image)

Collection: Geelong Gallery

Purchased 1944

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### Question

Norman Lindsay was sixteen years old and was apprenticed to, or 'ghosted' for, his older brother Lionel Lindsay as an illustrator in the magazine publishing industry. What is meant by 'ghosted' and why did the brothers do this?

### Research

Research and discuss the following in reference to Lionel Lindsay works:

- What were his influences?
- What and who inspired him?
- In which ways was he distinctive in his artistic activities?
- What contributed to his success?

### Activity

Using appropriate digital software, create images utilising variable exposures and continuous tonal images to reproduce the positive image in a number of steps. Transfer to wood blocks. Consider space, texture and form in your design, before cutting into the block. Ink and create an edition of prints.