

## **Nora Heysen**

*By Tony Saunders*

Nora Heysen and her painting in our gallery "Fig Tree Church"

Born 11 January 1911 in Hahndorf, South Australia, daughter of the famous Australian painter Sir Hans Heysen. She studied art in Adelaide and in Sydney at the Julian Ashton School of Art. As her father was fairly well off and able to pay her expenses, in 1934, she was able to travel to London to study art and paint for a few years.

She then came back to Australia in 1937, this time to Sydney and in 1938 became the first woman to win the Archibald prize. It was a controversial choice with a few male artists at the time who thought a woman should not be chosen! In 1943 she became the first woman to be appointed a war artist with the rank of Captain serving mainly in Papua New Guinea. She completed over 170 works of art – a lot are with the War Memorial Museum in Canberra.

Nora was a long-time resident of Hunters Hill. In 1954 she moved to Hunters Hill and her residence "The Chalet" in Yerton Street, has one of our historical plaques outside. Whilst she painted some buildings, Nora mainly painted portraits. Also, flowers and her favourite cats. She said "my father has a copyright on gum trees"

Nora died in Hunters Hill 30 December 2003 and was buried back in Hahndorf, South Australia.