

# OFFICIAL WAR ARTISTS

## ARTISTS RESPONDING TO WARTIME EXPERIENCES

### HOW TO USE

This resource is aimed at helping secondary students investigate the art collection at the Shrine of Remembrance and build gallery literacy.

We recommend teachers introduce the idea of official war artists to students in a lesson before coming to the Shrine of Remembrance. Below is a brief introduction to the official war artists program and what constitutes an official war artist.

We encourage you to hold a discussion and look at examples of other official war artists from across the world and how they depict the effects of war, experiences of people on the front line and daily rituals.

Students will get the most out of this resource when it is completed in the Galleries of Remembrance, standing in front of each work. All of the required information to answer the questions can be found in the captions provided at each stop. Here students read short paragraphs on historical context, artist practice and artist biography.

Education staff at the Shrine of Remembrance will provide you and your students with a brief introduction. Here we inform them of appropriate behaviour, emergency protocols and what to expect during their Shrine experience.

Shrine visits are free for schools but bookings are required. Book online at [shrine.rezdy.com](http://shrine.rezdy.com) or by emailing us at [education@shrine.org.au](mailto:education@shrine.org.au).

Please note we regularly change the artworks on display and reflect this in the worksheet. For the most current version of the worksheet please visit [shrine.org.au/teacher-led-tours](http://shrine.org.au/teacher-led-tours).

### CURRICULUM LINKS

#### Level 9 & 10

- Explore how artists manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and express their intentions in art works. (VCAVAE041)
- Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artwork considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience. (VCAVAP044)
- Analyse, interpret and evaluate a range of visual artworks from different cultures, historical and contemporary contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to explore differing viewpoints. (VCAVAR046)

### PRE-VISIT CHECKLIST

- Hold discussion on official war artists.
- Remind students to bring pencil and workbook to work through questions.
- Indicate arrival time and provide directions to Education Courtyard.
- Talk about gallery etiquette (no touching artworks, running or leaning on cases and quiet voices).
- Print out student work sheets.
- Designate students into groups of 2-3 for Shrine visit, to work together in discussing then answering the question sheet.

Artists interpret and help us understand the impact of many social events. We invite you and your class to view and engage with our galleries, which hold a number of artworks that were created as a result of experiencing war.

The collection at the Shrine of Remembrance focuses on remembering Victorian service people who served locally and overseas in war, peace-keeping and peacemaking. We encourage your students to research what artists or service-people may be local to them or your school community.

The term 'official war artist' is used to describe artists directly employed by the Australian War Memorial or Army Military History Section. It is the longest running art and commissioning program in Australia, starting in the First World War and continuing to the present day.

The selected artists visited various conflicts where Australian service people were deployed. They lived, ate and worked alongside Australian Defense Force personnel, in order for the artists to observe their daily life and real experiences during their deployment.

The artists also made a number of artworks that explore the sensory and emotional dimension of war. Official war artists were often in dangerous settings with active combat and war zones happening around them. The sense of danger, anxiety and struggle is captured in many works and filters through to the viewer.

Though technically employed by the Australian Government after being appointed by the Australian War Memorial, their initial goal was not to make propaganda, but to present a balanced, objective and factual view. Their works are personal and show the artists' experience, allowing the public back home to begin to understand what they felt and saw.

Many official war artists work in a similar way; they make sketches and preliminary drawings in the field. After arriving home and with access to materials, space and time, they make larger finished works.

The Shrine Collection permanently displays a number of works by official war artists. Others on display are donated temporarily from families, some are reproductions and others loaned from different cultural institutions.

In the 20th century the majority of artists who were commissioned to be official war artists were male. This is a reflection of the time and the historically strict social roles that men and women played. War was a male domain and therefore artists who made it to the front lines or to war zones were male. The Shrine Collection displays an artwork by Victorian Second World War official war artist, Sybil Craig who captured the social changes on the home front.

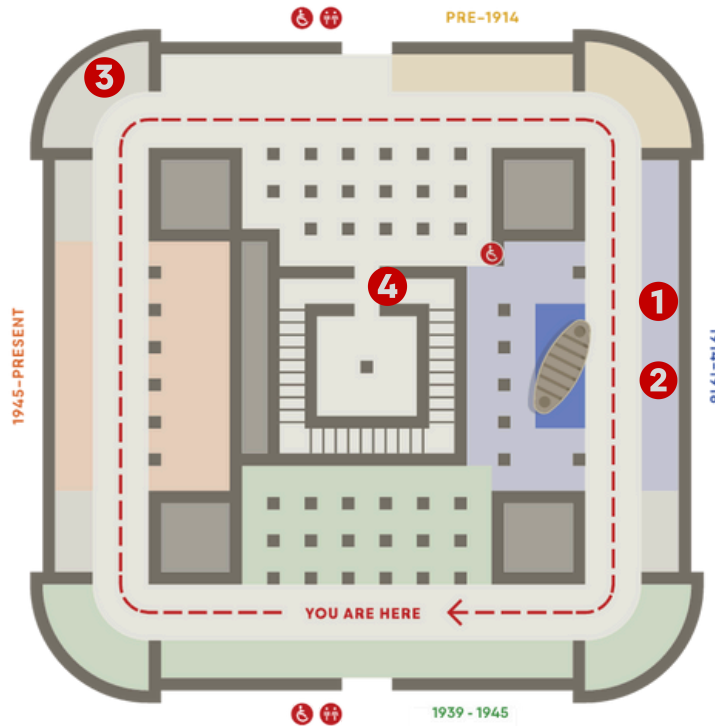
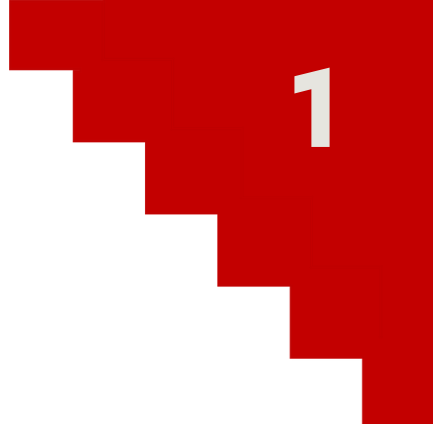
## CLASSROOM DISCUSSION POINTS

- What is a 'commission'? Who are official war artists employed by? Do you think these works are considered propaganda?
- Are these works more powerful because they are created out of lived experiences? Does an official war artist present a biased viewpoint?
- What can an artwork capture, that a photograph or written record cannot?
- How did these artists work. Why did they make preliminary sketches? When would they have made an oil painting?
- Why are there more male official war artists than female?

TRAIL ONE

# OFFICIAL WAR ARTISTS

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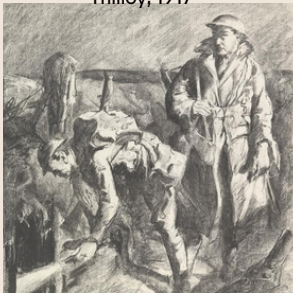
- ELEVATOR
- BATHROOM

1

## STOP ONE

**Will Dyson**

Searching for German booby traps near Ligny-Thillois, 1917



Read the caption when standing in front of the work.

Dyson was Australia's first official war artist. He felt it was important to give the world a faithful picture of Australian soldiers and the war.

2

## STOP TWO

**Frank Hurley**

Over the Top, 1918



Read the caption then look at other photographs of battlefields in the First World War Galleries.

3

## STOP FOUR

**Ben Quilty**

Trooper Luke Korman, Tarin Kowt, 2012



Read the caption and look at the artwork for 1 minute with a partner. Write down any questions you have for Trooper Luke Korman, and compare these with your partner.

4

## Go up to the Sanctuary



This room is a space for remembering and respecting the sacrifice given by past and present service people. It was designed by the Shrine of Remembrance's architects Philip Hudson and James Wardorp. They were both ex-soldiers who served in the First World War.



The Shrine of Remembrance is dedicated to remembering and reflecting on Australian wartime service and sacrifice. Please move and speak with quiet respect while you are here.

The Official War Artists who created the artworks held in the Shrine of Remembrance are all Victorian or have very strong Victorian ties. This is because the Shrine of Remembrance was made after First World War to give the Victorian community a place to grieve, commemorate and remember the people who served.

Official War Artists had a large role to play in sharing the experiences of the wars that were happening over on the other side of the world with an Australian community back home.

Answer the following questions below when standing at each stop:

1

## STOP ONE

## Will Dyson

- Describe the use of tone, shape, contrast and texture in this image.
- What impression do you get of a soldier's life on the Western Front?
- Do you think an artist would make a scene like this now? Why or why not?
- Look at other examples of Dyson's work. Does he have a clear style? Evaluate if his style lends itself to documenting war and the experiences of people in war. Why?

2

## STOP TWO

## Frank Hurley

- Read the caption and summarise how this image was created.
- What is another word for this image manipulation?
- Explain why you think this is or is not a truthful representation of the battleground.
- What does the title, Over the Top have to do with the image? How does this image make the viewer feel?

3

## STOP THREE

## Ben Quilty

- Describe the use of print, paint and physical texture.
- The sitter's pose is straight-on, close-up and large format. How does this make you feel? Evaluate if this is Quilty's intention?
- This is a portrait of Trooper Luke Korman who Quilty spent time with in Afghanistan. Read the caption and elaborate on why you think he is painted like this?

4

## STOP FOUR

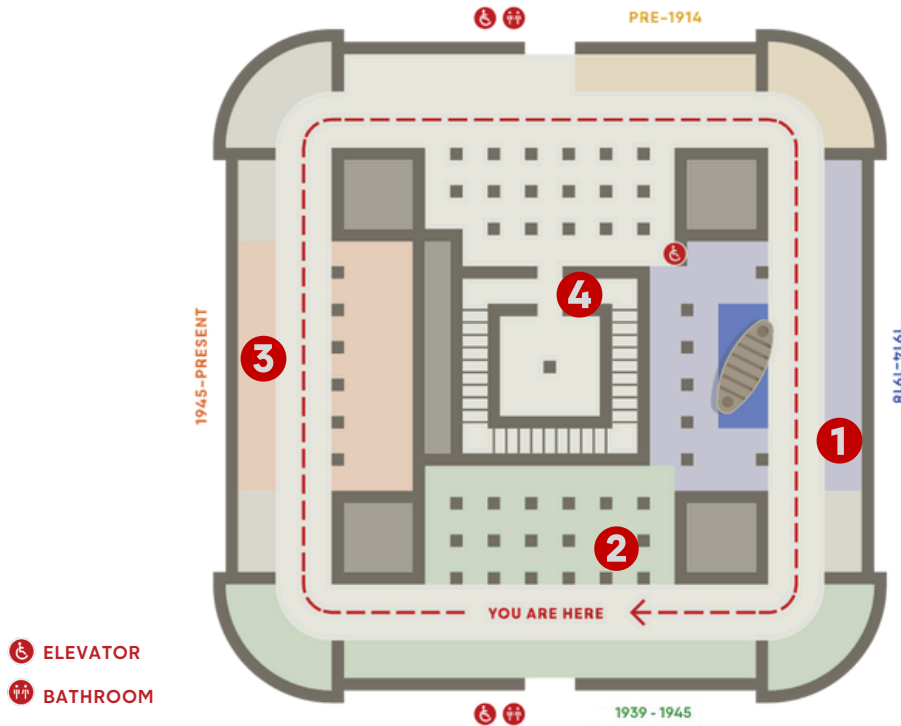
## Sanctuary

- Reflect on how you feel in the Sanctuary. List 5 emotions that describe what you feel.
- Describe the architecture in the Sanctuary. What does it remind you of?
- Research what a 'Sanctuary' is and write a description of it in your own words. Find another example of a Sanctuary in architecture.

TRAIL TWO

# OFFICIAL WAR ARTISTS

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ELEVATOR  
 BATHROOM

## 1 STOP ONE

**Will Dyson**  
 Summer day near Ville-sur-Ancre, 1918



Read the caption when standing in front of the work.

As an official war artist, Dyson preferred to be with soldiers in or near to the front line. There is where he saw the suffering and loss associated with war.

## 2 STOP TWO

**Sybil Craig**  
 Lathe Worker from the Paper Room (Florence Sandiford), 1945



Read the caption to understand more about this work.

When you are standing in the Second World War Galleries look at some artifacts connected to other roles women had in the Second World War.

## 3 STOP THREE

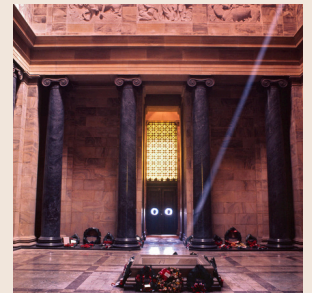
**George Gittoes**  
 Female Body Search-The Problem with Gender, 1993



Make sure you read the text in the artwork when you are standing in front of it.

Did you expect to find an artwork like this here at the Shrine?

## 4 Go up to the Sanctuary



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The Official War Artists who created the artworks held in the Shrine of Remembrance are all Victorian or have very strong Victorian ties. This is because the Shrine of Remembrance was made after First World War to give the Victorian community a place to grieve, commemorate and remember the people who served.

Official War Artists had a large role to play in sharing the experiences of the wars that were happening over on the other side of the world with an Australian community back home.

Answer the following questions below when standing at each stop:

**1**

### STOP ONE

#### Will Dyson

- Describe the use of tone, shape, contrast and texture in this image.
- Research the process of lithography. Outline when you think he made his edition of prints.
- The title of this work is 'Summer Day near Ville-sur-Ancre'; does this look like a summer day? What is Dyson trying to tell the viewer?

**3**

### STOP THREE

#### George Gittoes

- Describe the format of this work. What does it remind you of?
- Why has the artist used these materials? Where do you think the artist has drawn this?
- This work talks about the role of gender in different cultures. How does Gittoes tell the audience the whole story?

**2**

### STOP TWO

#### Sybil Craig

- Read the caption and summarise where this image was created.
- Craig was not a typical Official War Artist. Why is her story unusual?
- List 5 words to describe the aesthetics of the work.
- What does this portrait tell us about a changing society in Australia?

**4**

### STOP FOUR

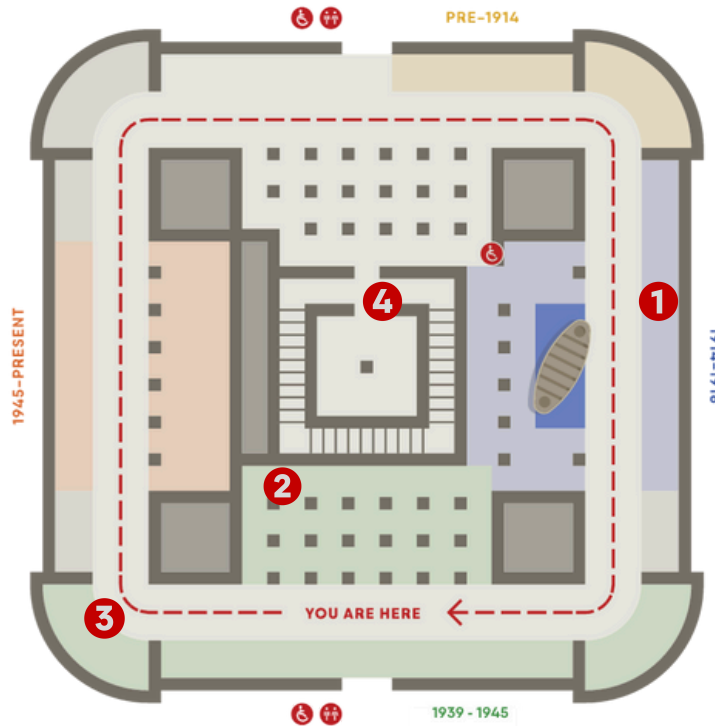
#### Sanctuary

- Reflect on how you feel in the Sanctuary. List 5 emotions that describe what you feel.
- Describe the architecture in the Sanctuary. What does it remind you of?
- This is described as a 'sacred space'. Assess what you think makes it feel sacred.



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- ELEVATOR
- BATHROOM

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2

**STOP TWO**

**Murray Griffin**  
The Studio & Bedroom, c1944



Read the caption then look at and read about the other objects in the case.

In the Second World War Galleries, find other illustrations of Murray Griffin.

3

**STOP THREE**

**Alan Moore**  
Australian Lancasters loading exPOWs for England, 1945



Read the caption to learn This work was painted at the end of the war. What do you think the figures in the work may be saying to each other?

4

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## 2

### STOP TWO

**Murray Griffin**

- Where is the focal point of the work? What is pictured in the work?
- This drawing does not contain any people. Why do you think this is the case?
- Describe the medium Griffin has used for this work. Why has he used it? Does the medium contribute more meaning to the work?
- Is this piece 'art' or simply 'documentation'? Evaluate using another example from the glass case.

## 3

### STOP THREE

**Alan Moore**

- Read the caption. Summarise what is going on in the scene?
- Describe the atmosphere in the work. Think about what art elements are used to make this mood.
- List 5 emotions the soldiers in the painting may be feeling.

## 4

### STOP FOUR

**Sanctuary**

- Reflect on how you feel in the Sanctuary. List 5 emotions that describe what you feel.
- Describe what is in the centre of the room? What does it remind you of?
- Look at the sculptures above you. What are they doing and who do you think is shown? Write down as many characters, roles, occupations as you can.