

MEDIA RELEASE

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ARTHUR STREETON: THE ART OF WAR ON SHOW AT THE NGA

An impressive exhibition of Arthur Streeton's paintings and sketches of World War I has opened at the National Gallery of Australia today.

Arthur Streeton was appointed as an official war artist in 1918, and was dispatched to the Western Front. Streeton focused on modern machines in the Great War which rode on the back of technology, with advancements in shelling, machine guns and aircraft.

'Whilst one of our most valued Australian Impressionists, Arthur Streeton is also one of the nation's foremost war artists,' said Gerard Vaughan, NGA Director. 'His contribution in capturing the historical significance of Australian troops in France was unequalled. Streeton's unique perspective, drawn from his Impressionist roots, provides an exhibition that is powerful, engaging and often surprising.'

Arthur Streeton: The Art of War depicts the dramatic simplicity of the gaping townscapes, dislocated remnants of the battlefield and temporary field hospitals, offering a new aspect to the Australian Impressionists' 'gold and blue' paintings for which he is famous.

'If you think you know the works of Arthur Streeton, take another look at his war art for a surprising new perspective,' said Dr Anna Gray, Curator. 'He was at the forefront, being one of the few war artists who chose to depict the aftermath of the damage, eschewing scenes of action for the implication of violence.'

His watercolours, sketches and oil paintings—many of which are on loan from the Australian War Memorial—show not only the machinations of war, but also the haunting after-effects. The finest works from this collection, such as *Barracks Péronne* 1918, capture the dramatic ruins of Péronne in powerful watercolours, portraying the yawning holes in old buildings and tumbledown staircases obliterated by shelling.

Arthur Streeton: The Art of War continues until 29 April.

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