

Download Battle Lines : Australian Artists At War

Military art is art with a military subject matter, regardless of its style or medium. The battle scene is one of the oldest types of art in developed civilizations, as rulers have always been keen to celebrate their victories and intimidate potential opponents. (Dr Karl James is a Senior Historian at the Military History Section at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. A graduate of the University of Wollongong, his research focuses on Australia's involvement in the Second World War and the history of Australia's Special Operations Forces. War artists and war correspondents such as Willem van de Velde are considered to be the first war tourists. Van de Velde took to sea in 1653 in a small boat to observe a naval battle between the Dutch and the English, making many sketches on the spot. During the First World War the Australian Government established an official war art scheme, sending artists to the front lines to create a visual record of the Australian experience of the war.