



Image: Sidney NOLAN, *Head of Gallipoli soldier saluting (detail)*, 1977  
synthetic polymer paint on hardboard, 125 x 95 cm, ART91435

## Media Release

**Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli series**, a travelling exhibition from the Australian War Memorial, comes to the Samstag Museum from 20 April. This is a rare opportunity to view these striking and iconic works, many of which have not been exhibited for almost 30 years.

Sidney Nolan (1917–1992) was one of Australia's most complex, innovative, and prolific artists. In 1987 Nolan presented the Gallipoli series, as it came to be known, to the Australian War Memorial. These 252 drawings and paintings, completed over a 20-year period, were donated by Nolan in memory of his brother Raymond, a soldier who died in a tragic accident just before the end of the Second World War.

**Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli Series** showcases a selection of these works, which constitute both a personal and public lament, commemorating not just the death of Nolan's brother but a campaign that had cost so many Australian lives. The 10 paintings and 70 works on paper offer a different perspective on an otherwise well known campaign and are arranged thematically into the five main concerns of the series; origins, landscape, Australian identity, battle, and the sea.

The series was inspired not only by the Gallipoli campaign but also the myths and legends of the Trojan War. Nolan saw a direct link between both campaigns, and drew not just on the geographic proximity of Gallipoli and Troy but also on the similarities between the Greek warriors and the Australian soldiers. His paintings and drawings of the Australian soldiers on Gallipoli recall the images of Greek heroes, who are shown fighting naked and without their armour on vases of the classical period. Inspired by these powerful, physical figures, Nolan depicts the modern soldier as someone caught up in a bloody and violent war.

Nolan also explores how Australian identity was influenced by the Gallipoli story. His Gallipoli portraits represent an attempt to define the Australian national character, they provide timeless images of the ANZACs: the young and the old, the innocent and the war-weary, the bushman and the city-dweller.

Samstag Director Erica Green said *'We are delighted to present this exhibition from the Australian War Memorial. Coinciding with ANZAC Day 2012, Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli series gives Samstag visitors the opportunity to revisit this historical event, which looms large in the Australian consciousness, through the eyes of one of our greatest artists.'*

**Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli series opens Friday 20 April and continues until Friday 1 June 2012. Opening hours are Tuesday to Friday 11–5pm, Saturday and Sunday 2–5pm (Closed ANZAC Day).**

For further information contact Erica Green, Director, Samstag Museum of Art, T 08 8302 0872, M 0438 821 239 or visit [unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum](http://unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum)

## ***Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli series Events***

- Exhibition opening **5.30pm Friday 20 April**  
by The Hon Jack Snelling MP, Treasurer and Minister for Veterans Affairs
- Floor talk by Australian War Memorial and *Sidney Nolan: the Gallipoli series*  
exhibition curator Lola Wilkins at **3pm Saturday 21 April**



From left: Sidney NOLAN, *Head of Gallipoli soldier*, 1977, synthetic polymer paint on hardboard, 122.2 x 91.4 cm, ART91445

Sidney NOLAN, *Drowned soldier at ANZAC as Icarus*, 1958, textile dye, sgraffito, coloured crayon on coated paper, 25.4 x 30.4 cm, ART91309



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