



Art in the Sir John Monash Centre

The Sir John Monash Centre features a range of Australian artworks with the dual role of showcasing Australian culture and reflecting a cultural interpretation of Australia's wartime experience.

Each artwork is unique and embodies the individual response of the artist to the story of the Australians on the Western Front in the context of commemoration and remembrance.

The Morning Star Tapestry, designed by Lyndell Brown and Charles Green

The Morning Star Tapestry, created specifically for the foyer in the Sir John Monash Centre, was designed by Lyndell Brown and Charles Green.

The overall image of the tapestry is a pathway through eucalyptus trees and the Australian bush, illuminated by the pale dawn light of winter. The eye is drawn to the path which winds through the softly dappled foliage towards the sunlight.

The inset images are photographs of young men queuing to enlist, family and friends farewelling departing soldiers, and ships carrying these men to foreign battlefields. Wounded soldiers lined up on stretchers add an ominous element, warning of the future that may await some of the young men who stand smiling at the camera, eager to enlist.

While the tapestry appears almost monochromatic, it is threaded with subtle colours, both throughout the dominant image and in the photograph insets.

The Rising Sun, artwork by Lisa Cahill

The *Rising Sun* artwork is a three-dimensional sculpture which consists of twenty-eight lead crystal rays. Each ray has been cast individually to create the very angular forms inspired by the Rising Sun emblem that frames the entrance to the [Australian National Memorial](#). The sculpture sits on a rail of bronze-plated steel, each ray resting against the next, slotting into sleeves on the rail.



The artwork as a whole stands between two panes of crystal-clear laminated glass to protect it from the elements. The curved rail supports the arch of the glass sculpture so that the viewer sees the lead crystal Rising Sun resting on the horizon.

The subtle textures and brush strokes of the artist's tools on the surface of the cast glass are clearly visible, evoking the shell-pitted terrain and shattered buildings in which the Battle of Villers-Bretonneux was fought. Sitting side by side, the rays are visible through one another, creating depth and shadows.

The sculpture is amber in colour, graduating from the lightest shades in the centre to medium amber at the sides. The colour mimics the glow of the rising sun and, as the sculpture is three dimensional, the rays capture and reflect the surrounding natural light and act as a focal point and beacon of light as the viewer approaches from the darkness below.

Kulata Tjuta, an interpretive artwork by Ray Ken

Anangu elder Ray Ken grew up on Ernabella Mission, now known as Pukatja, in northern South Australia. Ken's work maps the important sites of his land and depicts the stories and knowledge passed down through the generations.

Kulata Tjuta portrays the traditional Anangu spear story of the relationship with and defence of country, and the deep connection to those past and present who have fought to protect this land. It also celebrates the importance of the traditional craft of carving spears. The artwork is executed in synthetic polymer paint (acrylic) on linen, stretched on a standard timber frame.

Goolburris on Foreign Soil, an interpretive sculpture by Laurie Nilsen

Goolburris on Foreign Soil is the creation of renowned Aboriginal artist Laurie Nilsen. The emu ('goolburri' in Mandandanji language) is a significant cultural totem for the Mandandanji people and most Aboriginal groups across Australia and is one of the faunal emblems depicted on Australia's coat of arms.



An estimated 700 to 1000 Aboriginal soldiers served in the AIF during the First World War, around 250 to 300 of whom were killed. These men fought in a foreign country beneath an unfamiliar sky, far from their traditional homelands, with no Southern Cross to guide them home. Dying on foreign soil meant that their families believed that their spirits would wander forever, unable to return to their country.

Goolburriss on Foreign Soil features two male emus, representing two young soldiers fighting a war in a foreign land. The emus are constructed of barbed wire, symbolising the unforgiving battlefields of the Western Front.

Timberwork within the Centre, Grant Rollinson

All of the timberwork throughout the Sir John Monash Centre is by one of Australia's finest craftsmen, Grant Rollinson, from Enigma Design near Canberra.

Grant has produced 1032 chevrons, furniture, wall panels and doors. Chevrons carried a special significance for Australians on the Western Front, symbolising years of service among the civilians who volunteered to join the Australian Imperial Force.

The chevron, a V-shaped line or stripe, is a powerful motif in the Sir John Monash Centre. It is featured in the timberwork panels through the foyer and surrounding the Immersive Gallery.

Nearly 21 tonnes of crafted timber has been shipped from Australia to the Sir John Monash Centre, providing a distinctly Australian atmosphere which, Grant hopes, will be warm and earthy, reassuring and familiar.

For more information go to www.sjmc.gov.au