

The Avenue at War; artistic ideas and interpretations

Professor Paul Gough
RMIT University, Australia
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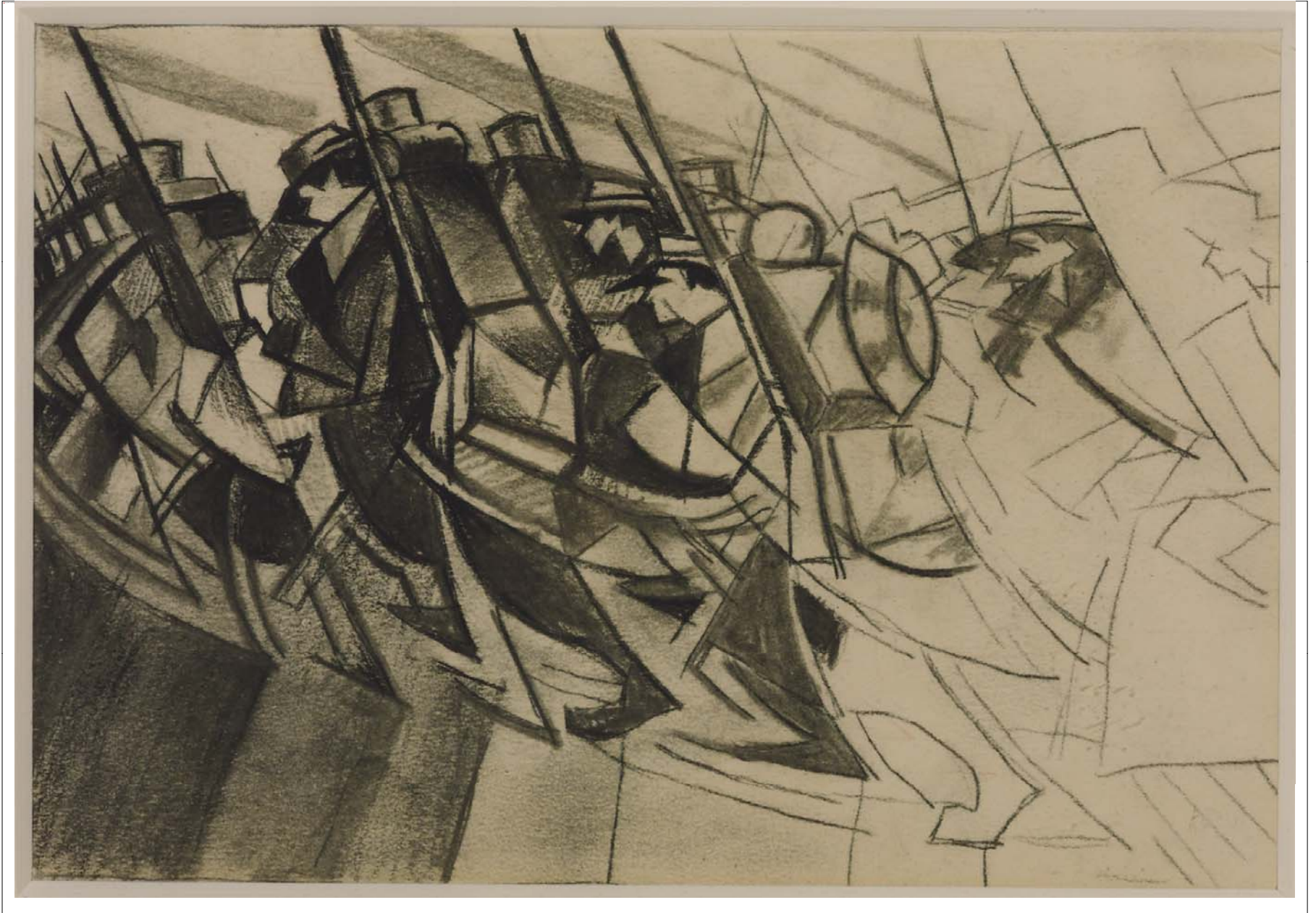
Meindert Hobbema, *The Avenue at Middelharnis* 1689, 103.5 × 141 cm



**C.R.W.
Nevinson**
Study for
*Returning to
the Trenches*
- 1914-5

charcoal and
crayon on
paper
14.6 x 20.6
cm

© Tate,
London 2018





‘... on the way to Shrapnel corner: a long road across a wide plain, no buildings no trees except an avenue of precisely spaced Lombardy poplars which tucked in the road, so to say: no abrupt turnings, no side tracks, no ups, no downs. A road not to be taken casually, the first step obviously committing one to going on to some end.’

Bernard Martin, *Poor bloody Infantry: A Subaltern on the Western Front*, 1987, p.41.



‘... the tree-lined sides stretched ahead, the perspective drawing them together in a never-ending V for a couple of kilometres or so. There would be a slight change of direction and straight ahead another taunting V...’

George Coppard, *With a Machine Gun to Cambrai*, 1980.







“... a late moon appeared, ascending slowly into a perfect round above the dark line defining the far distance, the trees silhouetted against it appeared to slide backwards as we moved forwards.”

Paul Nash (1889-1946) *Marching at Night*, 1918

Edward
Handley-Read
*Sunshine and
Dust: Vimy
Ridge*



'Along the voluminous velvety roads one rolls under plummy avenues of trees. And then the road becomes less velvety, and the avenues by degrees less plummy, till at once they are only stark skeletons, gap-toothed and shell-shattered in their rows.'





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Contalmaison in 1916

Edward
Hadley-Read

*Contalmaison
in 1916*

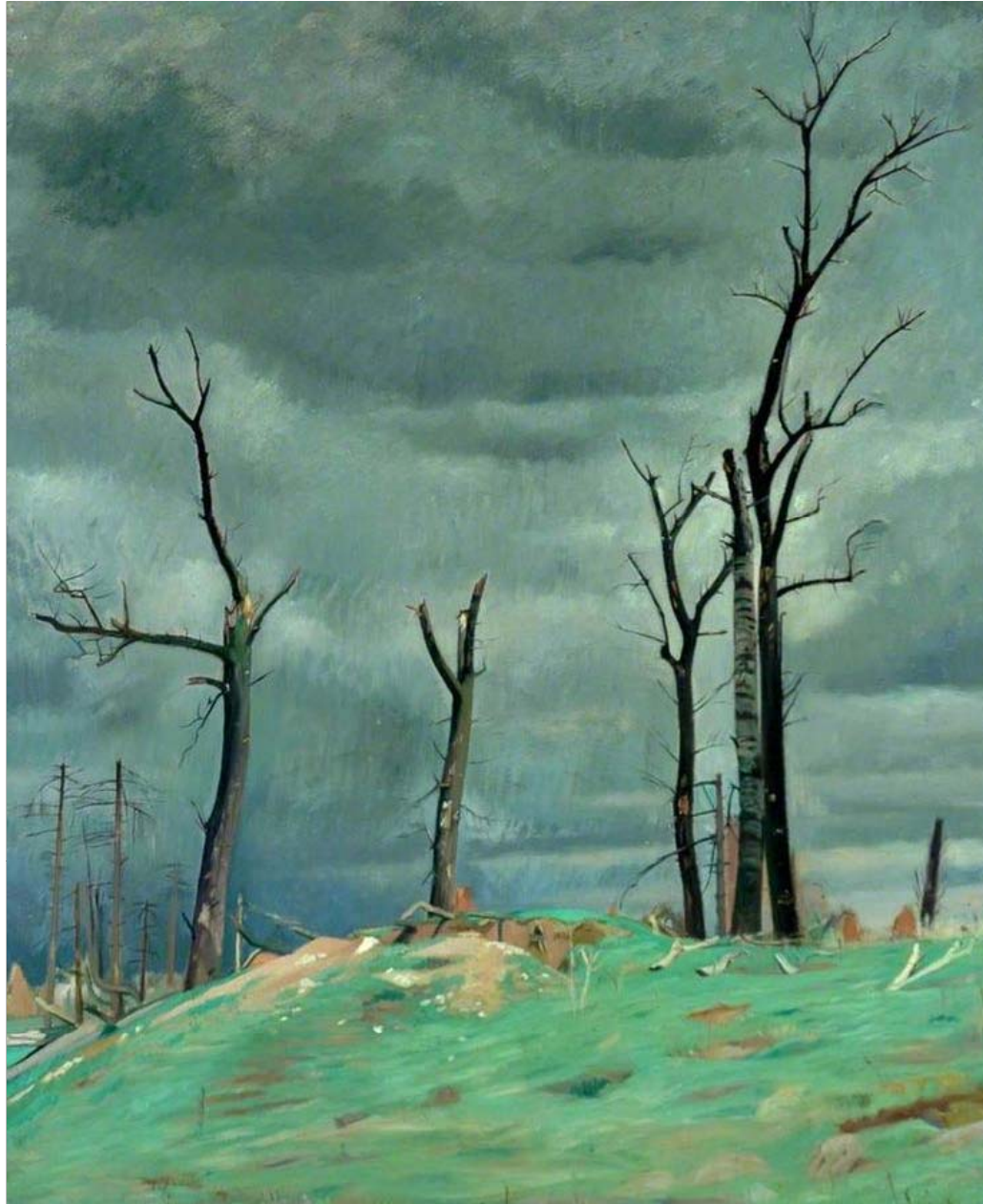
'In peacetime' wrote T.E.Hulme, 'each direction of the road is as it were indifferent, it all goes on *ad infinitum*. But now you know that certain roads lead as it were, up to an abyss.'



Edward Handley-Read, *Neuve Chapelle, Road in France, 1915*

William Rothenstein

*Avenue of the Château,
Bourlon, Western Front*





Ian Strang, *The Menin Road with Tanks*





Paul Nash *The Menin Road* – 1919
oil on canvas. 182.8 x 317.5 cm.

© Imperial War Museums (IWM: ART 2242)



‘Hopeless greyness, a landscape with only one colour, the dim greyness of mud below and a pall of cloud above. It was surely man’s greatest devastation to date, nothing unobliterated that had been there before, but now only the duckboard tracks, the broken white tapes, the ‘corduroy’ road over the sea of shell-pitted mud.’



Louis John
Ginnett, *Ypres
Salient Dawn*,
1918



Mary Riter Hamilton : *Sadness of the Somme*, 1919



‘It would make a fine broad road on the ‘No Man’s Land’ between the lines, with paths for pilgrims on foot, and plant trees for shade, and fruit trees so that the soil should not be altogether waste’.



British officer Alexander Douglas
Gillespie, writing from the trenches in
1916



Thank you