Off the Press: Exploring Reproducible War Art

Emily Rose Hankins

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

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OFF THE PRESS: EXPLORING REPRODUCIBLE WAR ART

by

Emily Rose Hankins

A Thesis Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art History

at

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ABSTRACT

OFF THE PRESS: EXPLORING REPRODUCIBLE WAR ART

by

Emily Rose Hankins

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2022
Under the Supervision of Professor Sarah Schaefer of Art History

Aspects of modernity, such as the news cycle and ever-changing technologies, have played large roles in the construction of the history of wars through the power of reproducible war art imagery as seen in various public spheres and contexts. These include engravings and photographs of the war in news publications, propaganda posters promoting patriotism, protest posters pleading for peace, and prints and books made by artists for display in galleries. The inundation of these images become ubiquitous with the conflict, and the artists who have a hand in creating these images also have the power to construct and reconstruct histories, inform the public, and reclaim neglected narratives.

This paper and the related exhibition running from March 10-May 12, 2022, at the UWM Emile H. Mathis Gallery explores these various contexts through examples of reproducible war art spanning chronologically from the mid nineteenth century up to our contemporary time. The work on display comes mainly from the UWM Art Collection, with some supplemental broadsides and artists’ books loaned from the Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries. Each section of the paper and the exhibition addresses the historical and technological context of the work at a specific point in time, usually connected to a specific conflict, and the unique ability for reproducible art to reach various audiences and convey various connotations. Through this context and the experience of the exhibition, patterns and
connections emerge across time and material, therefore highlighting not only the breadth of reproducible artwork but also the power and influence that art has on the historic record.
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Every war already carries within it the next war, until everything is destroyed.

-Kathe Kollwitz
1. Introduction

*Off the Press* is an exploration of reproducible art’s contributions to the historical construction and understanding of modern war. Spanning the mid-nineteenth century origins of photojournalism up to the present day, this exhibition highlights the intersections between news, history, technology, and printable artwork. Modern wars are identified through the imagery that surrounds them in history, and these examples of reproducible artworks are viewed in the news, in public spaces, and on gallery and museum walls. The examples on display come from multiple contexts and points of view, representing some of the complex and varied responses to war that have come from reproducible art media.

Perhaps the most ubiquitous and obvious space for war imagery is the news, as this is where most people will learn information about specific battles and events in a war’s timeline as it happens. This is especially true of, for example, Americans during World War I and World War II, since the physical fighting of the war took place elsewhere in the world. Even for those who deal with war directly in their day to day lives, the visual context of modern news persists as a main source for viewing and understanding a given war.

The impact of the news, especially for information about wars, is an important facet of modernity. The concept of modernity is complex, but for the scope of this exhibition, it relates to the rapidity of new technologies and ideologies that in turn create new formats for discussion and information.¹ These parameters line up with the time frame of the majority of works that are exhibited, linking them through major wars and technology advancements, and implicating them as byproducts of the continually changing world of modern-life.

Reproducible art – prints, artists’ books, posters, illustrations – comprise a large portion of art related to modern warfare. They also all have varied contexts that contribute to their use in
constructing history and public perceptions of different wars. Although the works in this exhibition were made by artists from various countries in Europe and the United States, they all share a broadly “western” viewpoint. They are not meant to be indicative of all art made at a certain time, but they do provide an understanding of how artists have responded to their given circumstances at certain times and interacted with the information of their immediate past and present. These works tell stories from many points of view, and their mode of display suggests a specific power innate in the visual sources of information and discussion that are sent out to various publics. The power to create indelible stories can also be applied to posters, advertising, and art, all of which have the ability to construct identities and histories through their images and implications. For printed media, the medium truly is also the message; these works provide the viewer with visual cues that evoke the circulation of easily disseminated imagery while providing artistic catharsis and exploration, concepts that in another medium may not be so immediate or obvious.

The main focus of Off the Press is on imagery dealing with wars that involved the United States from the mid-19th century to the early 21st century, but there are also foundational examples of war prints, such as the work of Francisco Goya, that display the enduring legacy of artists. The beginning of this time frame coincides with photography being introduced as a tool for journalism, and in the subsequent century and a half, artists have gained enhanced access to news and history through a variety of new media via the internet. These changes in technology have allowed artists to not only quickly react to the news but also coopt news sources and news formats for the purpose of inserting new narratives or viewpoints that may not get as much press.

The exhibition is divided chronologically into six sections: Printed War Art Foundations; American Civil War Era Reporting; Modern Anxieties, New Technologies, and World War I
(WWI); Propaganda, The Soldier, and World War II (WWII); Vietnam War, Neo-Dada, and Anti-War Protest; and Internet Reproducibility, Hidden Histories, and Contemporary Warfare. In each section, historical and art historical background is included to situate the artworks within the scope of their contemporary technologies and art movements. Each work brings something distinct to the history of war imagery, but because of their shared reproducibility, the commentary in each section often connects back to the construction of history through storytelling and the specific freedoms and constraints of the printed medium. Due to an enduring legacy of printed imagery in journalism and publications, reproducible media also retains an inherent connection to news and visual culture, and these connections will be made throughout to contextualize the perspective of the artist’s sentiment. These concepts of visual culture, the news, and art are not so dissimilar, even when they inhabit very different contexts, and this exhibition will explore their similarities and differences and how they contribute to nuanced comprehension of various wars. Since wars are primarily understood through the news of the time, and since artists depicting war are inevitably influenced by the technology through which they receive the news, the connections between them are illuminating spaces for contemplating the power of war imagery as a tool for memory and constructing or reconstructing history.
2. Printed War Art Foundations

Modern news imagery depicting war often sets the tone and scope of public knowledge surrounding a given conflict. Journalistic art prints and, later, photographs and video shape the visual understanding of war and construct a historical narrative across various publications through an increasing number of images. These missives from the warfront shape people’s perception of a war, and artists wishing to respond to the wars they experienced often created printed work that could be reproduced for both monetary and viewership gains. Reproducible war art therefore takes the form of similar media as their news counterparts; by taking on the concept of accessibility and integrity embodied by reproducible media such as prints and photographs, the artist’s message can traverse news-like channels to connect more clearly to journalism and contribute to the overall history of a conflict. Although made earlier than the main chronological parameters of this exhibition, war-related prints by Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and Jacques Callot (1592–1635) help to contextualize the long history of war imagery in reproducible media. In addition, these prints show an enduring proclivity of artists to display the more gruesome and complicated realities of war in order to grapple with these stories that are not readily discussed in public.

Jacques Callot’s The Wheel (Fig. 2.1) is part of the Les Misères et les malheurs de la guerre series of seventeen prints, published initially in 1633 in Paris, which depicts soldiers during the Thirty Years’ War.³ This war was one of the first to be covered by recently established newspapers who received their news through improved postal routes around Europe.⁴ Another type of printed material, broadsheets, previously understood as largely apolitical, became very important printed sites of information of events at the beginning of the war.⁵ This series of prints was made near the end of Callot’s life after a long career of producing etchings of
war-related subject matter that were commissioned by, among others, the Medicis and the Spanish and French royalty. They show off the intricate talents of Callot, who was a pioneer of engraving techniques; he discovered a finer ground for plates and created the échoppe tool for more control over line widths.

This look into soldier-life is fraught with contradictions. In some instances, Callot has addressed the soldiers with sympathy, and in others, he depicts them ravaging the duchy Lorraine and its people with all manner of vile and violent actions. They are served their comeuppance from the peasantry, yet the last two scenes show the soldiers receiving medals for valor from the prince. These contradictions have left art historians pondering his intent, but at any rate, this complex look at soldier and civilian life clearly stems from a desire to depict these realities, however complicated they may be, in the service of immortalizing them. The series is also notable for paying attention to the plights of people who have to live with war and the people who have to enact it. This series was no doubt an influence on Goya, whose impassioned
representations of conflict call out for remembrance and serve as physical reminders about the grim pain of war, no matter which side is winning.

The first forty-seven plates of Francisco Goya’s *Disasters of War* print series are perhaps the most referenced for contemporary war-related art inspiration. The series was made during the Peninsular War, roughly 1810-1820s, which saw Spain allied with Portugal and the United Kingdom against Napoleon during the overlapping Napoleonic wars.¹⁰ Eleanor Sayre, a foundational scholar of Goya, remarks that the actual dates of creation of this series can only be speculated upon because so few prints are dated directly by Goya. She surmises that the initial drawings might have begun as soon as Goya visited his hometown of Zaragoza or on his trek back to Madrid in 1808-09, but she can only confidently ascribe a date to prints that have 1810 written on them.¹¹ Due to the poor selling of *Los Caprichos*,¹² and perhaps an overall reticence to publicly display his disdain for the war, Goya only had initial proofs made while he was still alive. The prints were subsequently published by the Real Academia de nobles artes de San Fernando in 1863, thirty-five years after Goya’s death.¹³ It can be deduced that the two works in this exhibition (Fig. 2.2 and Fig. 2.3) were printed sometime after that initial print in 1863, though it is unclear when as there is no documentation in the catalog entry, just a mention of a restrike.¹⁴

The graphic displays of combat, the affectual captions, and the mythos surrounding the guerrilla-style creation of these prints implicates Goya as a founding father of protest art, whether that was his intent or not. It seems that Goya was especially devoted to making this series, and he clearly went out of his way to make this suite of over seventy prints as evidenced by the scarcity of materials in between wars.¹⁵ Though the series is often viewed as a timeless look at war, Goya did include some direct references to news coverage of the Peninsular War.
The most frequently discussed example is the woman in *Que Valor!* (Fig. 2.2), who has been identified as Agustina de Aragón manning a canon during the 1808 siege of Zaragoza in Aragon Spain, Goya’s hometown. This sensational story was apparently the subject of popular prints of the time, and Goya, perhaps enthralled with this act of civilian heroism, wanted to immortalize this woman’s bravery in a suite of prints already concerned with depicting the civilian side of conflict. The title and caption *Que Valor!* or “what courage!” aids in this interpretation as its straightforward, awed tone suggests a glorification of the subject matter. It is also one of the less graphic depictions and given the story’s connection to Goya’s personal life as a previous citizen of the town, he might have been interested in valorizing figures whose heroism helped save a beloved place.

Figure 2.2: Francisco Goya, *Que Valor!* (What Courage!), plate 7 from “Los Desastres de la Guerra” (The Disasters of War), N.d. (original from c. 1810), Etching, Plate: 5 15/16 x 8 1/8 inches, UWM Art Collection (1972.097.03)
Goya may not have meant to have the captions printed alongside the prints, but they were, and this accidental addition made captions a hallmark of Goya’s work. The words make even more of a connection to art in journalism as word and image are inextricably tied up in the news. This is largely due to contextual necessity, but the fascinating part of Goya’s riff on documentary captions is that they seem to be spoken, coming from a viewer’s perspective. These captions make the scene come to life or at least create an emotional space rather than a purely documentary one. Quippy titles like *Yo lo vi (I saw it)* (Plate 44; Fig. 2.4) elicit a response in the viewer that places them on the same field of vision, as if giving the viewer a camera lens and making them an active participant. This sense of immediacy places the viewer right into the action, something that news of the time would not have been able to achieve.
Callot and Goya’s contributions to reproducible war art stand the test of time. The wars they depict may be different, but the experiences they focus on are very similar, and the human toll of war is starkly envisioned. Their continued influence reminds modern artists and viewers of the cyclical agony of war while also speaking to the very human desire to express pain through artistic avenues.

Figure 2.4: Francisco Goya, Yo lo vi (I saw it), plate 44 from “Los Desastres de la Guerra” (The Disasters of War), 1810 (published 1863), Etching, From Metropolitan Museum of Art Collection, Gift of Mrs. Grafton H. Pyne, 1951
3. American Civil War Era Reporting

This section concerns the news-related prints created from various original sources, such as sketches and photographs, that became a main visual mode of distributing information during the American Civil War (1861-1865). Due to technology limitations, the photographs and sketches that were made were often not seen by the public, and they showed up in the newspaper after being translated into a wood engraving that could be printed. The Harper’s Weekly pages on display show this process of mediation through images and descriptions. They exhibit the desire for accountable journalism with captions that let the reader know who made the image and if it was sketched or photographed at the scene before becoming a woodcut engraving. This adds a sense of credibility, reminding one of Francisco Goya’s evocative captions that suggested an eyewitness account and response. However, many of the woodcut scenes were also idealized or slightly changed from their initial depiction to perpetuate the political and ideological leanings of Harper’s Weekly as Union sympathizers. Retellings of news stories coincided with the images as well, providing potentially biased commentary. The narrativization of the news would also prove problematic to photographers like Alexander Gardner, who wanted to provide a direct document of the event. However embellished some of the stories might have been, the reproducibility of these prints allowed Harper’s to present a viewpoint on the overall consensus of the war itself, and the technological advancements of the telegraph and camera sped up the facilitation process that relayed information about the American Civil War to the public.

Though photography eventually became the most enduring medium of western news, it was not received as the best way to depict war at the start. In the early nineteenth century, the public was accustomed to news events being combined and conveyed in hindsight with artistic depictions that stressed the heroism of American troops despite contradictory realities.
contrast, photographs, specifically daguerreotypes in this case, were too literal in their depictions and they were also not reproducible like lithographs were at the time. They couldn’t be printed in news publications and left no room for grand narratives of victory on the battlefield. Instead, they made all too clear the harshness of war devoid of idealism. This was the sentiment when one of the first photos of war was taken by an unknown photographer during the Mexican War in 1847 titled *General Wool and Staff, Calle Real to South* (Fig. 3.1).\(^2\) It shows a rather dull scene compared to the aforementioned constructed views of heroism. It is purely the image; there is no clear narrative or individuality to the figures cloaked in shadows, making it difficult to derive a precise lesson from the image. Despite initial reticence, photography eventually dominates news imagery thanks to changes in technology that allow for reproducible and printable

Figure 3.1: Unidentified photographer, *General Wool and Staff, Calle Real to South*, daguerreotype (sixth-plate image), c. 1847. Image from Yale Western Americana Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
photographs. This change will also influence how the news is perceived by the public, with a focus on up-to-the-minute reportage that can provide facts with a shorter distance between the event and the dissemination of the news.

*Harper’s Weekly* (1857-1916) was an illustrated publication specializing in national and global news, editorials, essays, and serialized stories. During the American Civil War (1861-65), *Harper’s* supported the Union and abolitionist actions. It was at this time that it gained a reputation as a reputable and distinguished news source by sending war correspondents called “Special Artists” or “Specials” to the front lines to record and relay the most up-to-date information and visuals to the public. These initial sketches, drawings, and photographs, made presumably at the events represented, would be later turned into prints for publication. To keep the immediacy and credibility intact, captions underneath the prints provided context of the initial medium, usually in italics, and sometimes the name or title of the creator. This attention to detail and documentary integrity helped boost readership of the paper during the course of the Civil War.

One thing to note about these prints is a lack of credit given to the printmakers. The main credit line prioritizes the initial image maker, with the print being merely a representation of the original medium. For newspapers, many individuals were tasked with engraving the prints, which were often made based on the work of sketchers and photographers rather than the printmaker himself. An engraver would not have been considered the true creator of the image, although some may have added a signature to their work. This discrepancy in attribution places the focus on the initial creator as the first line of information, highlighting the publication’s desire to appear as up-to-the-minute as possible to attract readership.
Of the four images on display in this exhibition, three were published during the early and middle years of the Civil War, and they showcase elaborate and evocative documentations of the conflict. Two of these prints give “sketched by” credit to James A. Guirl (Fig. 3.2) and Theodore R. Davis (Fig. 3.3), both special artist correspondents, the latter being a notably prolific Civil War sketch artist.26

Figure 3.2: Harp’s Weekly; Images by James A. Guirl, October 5, 1861 pages 633-634: Rebel Prisoners in the Dungeon of the State House at Jefferson City, Missouri AND A Rebel Prowler Shooting a Union Picket Near Jefferson City, Missouri, 1861, Wood engraving, Sheet: 16 1/16 x 10 13/16 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of John A. Brunhart (1994.001.29)
The third print is one of the more well-known Harper’s images made during the war: 

*Sharp Shooter on Picket Duty* by Winslow Homer (Fig. 3.4). Today, Homer is best known for his paintings, but he also dabbled with printmaking to make money and to explore different topics and styles, as we will see with many other artists in this exhibition.27 *Sharp-Shooter* was not only a print, however; the initial image would have likely been a sketch or photograph, but then Homer went on to create a painting of this image (Fig. 3.5) and then the print of it was used to promote the painting itself. The credit reads as “From a painting by W. Homer,”—again a mark of Harper’s credibility and transparency, but also a reminder to the viewer of the mediation process of bringing an image to the newsprint.
Figure 3.4: Harper’s Weekly; Winslow Homer, *Sharp Shooter on Picket Duty*, 1862, Etching, Sheet: 10 7/8 x 16 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Emile H. Mathis II (2012.002.1560)

Figure 3.5: Winslow Homer, *Sharpshooter*, 1862/63, Oil on canvas, 12 1/4 x 16 1/2 in. From Private Collection.

The fourth print (Fig. 3.6) includes a depiction of a battle during the Ten Years’ War in Cuba in 1869 at the top, four years after the end of the Civil War. It is an example of a more
detached scene of war, one that is in direct contrast to the visceral immediacy of the Civil War images. The viewer vantage point is from a far distance, almost an omniscient point of view, and the scene feels much more monumental than the smaller, intimate scenes of war that can be found during the Civil War years. The mark of credibility is still stamped in the caption, however, as it identifies an unnamed Cuban Staff Officer as the sketcher of the scene.

Figure 3.6: Harper’s Weekly; Images by Cuban Staff Officer, April 10, 1869 pages 233 & 234; The Cuban Revolution, 1869, Wood engraving, Sheet: 15 7/8 x 10 1/2 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of John A. Brunhart (1993.012.18)
In terms of compositional characteristics, all of the Civil War-specific scenes on display in the exhibition are relatively close cropped, even the more expansive scene sketched by Theodore R. Davis of a valley where Union soldiers are capturing Confederate rifles, creating a very intimate look at the soldiers in the midst of war. They are given unique faces to distinguish them in their uniforms, and this specificity affords the Union soldiers a more nuanced look. The credit lines mention that the print was made from a photo, adding an immediacy to the image’s context. The inherent credibility of news imagery has its origins in these kinds of prints and the captions that assure the viewer of authenticity, something that is likewise intimated in Goya’s *Disasters of War* series.

However, despite all signs of credible documentation, there are some curious aspects to these prints that betray strict reality. One aspect is the layering of representations. Most of these images come from a sketch or photo. The artist, amateur or otherwise, would have sketched the scene according to a very particular vantage point and would have likely attempted to freeze a specific moment, but inevitably they had to rely on memory past a certain instant. The photographer also has to make particular choices for cropping and vantage point, keeping in mind that the cameras in use would have needed stationary objects to photograph properly and without a blurring effect. These artistic choices and limitations inevitably lead to an initial image that is already divorced from strict documentation. Then, the next representation would be taken from the initial image and made into a print, with the printmakers having to make decisions about what details go into the final printed scene. In the case of the Homer print, it was also based off a painting, adding another level of artistic representation. These layers move the viewer further and further away from the lived reality of the event and allow for additional artistic choices to be made that complicate the documentarian nature of the image.28
This liberty of representation is made even more evident through analysis of the scenes themselves. Some images, such as stationary buildings or relatively sedate depictions of soldiers standing and waiting for orders, are very likely to have been witnessed by the special art correspondents, both sketchers and photographers alike. But in some of the more exciting images, like the Confederate soldier sneaking up to shoot a Union picket, the realities seem far too tenuous to have been adequately viewed by a reporting artist. It seems fantastical that a correspondent would have come upon a Confederate sneaking up on the Union soldiers from the other side and managed to stay hidden long enough to depict the scene entirely as it really was. And in fact, many sketchers were likely sketching from information they had been given by word of mouth, but the caption always provided that delicious sense of immediacy. Readers of these papers probably already surmised that some of these images were impossible and therefore not absolutely documentary but given that these images were all the public had regarding national and international events, their credibility and immediacy came from the knowledge of correspondents on the frontline making these images.

Another concept to remember when viewing these images is the point of view of the image and publication, which is often a source of bias. The images on view show various scenes of both Confederate and Union soldiers. They depict the trials and tribulations of both sides, although there is rarely an instance of a Union soldier being in the wrong or losing outright, likely due to Harper’s allegiance to the Union cause.

In the Theodore R. Davis image, for instance, the Union soldiers are victorious in their capture of Confederate rifles. They hoist rifles above their heads in a triumphant pan across the valley, taking in the extent and scope of the capture. The fact that the image is a full-page spread
is also telling about the publication’s readiness to honor this event where the Union soldiers have come out on top.

In the James A. Guirl images, the top is a depiction of Confederate prisoners, and they are seen laying on the ground, sitting, imploring the guards, and the scene is in general chaotic but not uniformly negative against the prisoners except to display the reality of them being taken prisoner. Some of the prisoners pointing and talking to the guards seem to be somewhat antagonistic, but it is altogether a straightforward prison scene meant to highlight this slight against the Confederacy.

The bottom image on this page shows a Confederate soldier shooting a Union soldier. The printmaker placed the Confederate soldier in the foreground, with the Union soldier in the background, at the moment that the bullet has hit the Union soldier. The vantage point is not exactly the same as that of the Confederate soldier, although he is closest to the viewer. From this angle we can see that he shot at almost point-blank range, hiding out and ensuring no fair fight. The Union soldier gracefully begins to fall, one hand above him as he looks to the sky one last time, his hat in the middle of falling to the ground. The scene is relatively neutral about the event, although there is some implicit cowardice on the part of the Confederate soldier. The caption identifies the Confederate soldier as a “Rebel Prowler,” which adds another negative connotation to the scene. In contrast to the full-page print previously mentioned, this being a smaller print not only speaks to a desire to steer away from depicting Confederate triumphs, but it also downplays any potential weakness of the Union and instead affirms confederate soldiers as cowardly and violent to the audience.

This section moves to the 20th century and the years just prior to and during World War I. During this time, Kathe Kollwitz imagined the peasant’s revolt of the 16th century in a series of prints, and her haunting final image Battlefield of a mother bending down to her deceased son in a sea of bodies is on view here. The image recalls the prints and photos of the Crimean War and the American Civil War and eerily foreshadows WWI and Kollwitz’ own eventual grief at losing her son during the war. The Arthur Segal print is part of a series on anti-war woodblock prints. Though he didn’t work with woodblocks for very long, his graphic and bold imagery shows his skill with balancing between light and dark. Theodore Steinlen’s Le Boyau in shows how variations in printing and ink imbue the work with different connotations. The print is also more in line with the Harper’s images, a testament to Steinlen’s commercial magazine illustration background and the enduring legacy of prints featured in news publications. Georges Rouault’s illustration concerns hypocrisy of generals who value the strategy of war over the human consequences. He is depicted with a crooked neck looking above others and towards heaven but refusing and unable to see the ramifications of his actions. This print is part of a semi-moralizing series that combines anti-war sentiment with the artist’s religious convictions. All these prints before, during, and after WWI display the implications of the printed medium and the anxiety over modern warfare.

Whereas in the previous section photos were not being shown to the masses via news and magazines, this section’s works are born from a time when those photos have been reproduced in different media for a decade or so. The photomechanical process to convert the photo image to the printing medium without creating an engraving was invented concurrently in Germany, the United States, and France by Georg Meisenbach, Frederic Ives, and Charles-Guillaume Petit and
Stanislas Krakow, respectively. This opened up a world of imagery and shaped the viewing public’s perception of the power of photographs and their ability to provide information in a quicker response time to an event.

Käthe Kollwitz (1867-1945) grappled with war in many mediums, most notably large-scale war memorials in bronze and prints produced as series. She is perhaps best known for her innovative techniques in printmaking (woodcuts, etchings, lithographs), and she created atmospheric prints concerned with the inevitability of tragedy in conflicts and wars using these varied techniques. As Henriette Kets De Vries says, “Kollwitz strove to find the humanity within the brutal events that unfolded from one war to the next,” and Kollwitz reflects this humanity and endless toil through stark depictions of people’s emotions that force the viewer to behold graphic violence, pain, and agony. Her 1901-1908 Peasants’ War series, initiated by her reading of a book on the subject, displays these depths of human suffering in grotesque and abstract ways that are naturalistic but almost too grounded in reality. The prints are detailed and intricate in such a dirty, clotted way that they transcend naturalism and seem to evoke not only physical realities on the basis of sight but also smell, taste, and touch. They are imbued with an exhausted grime that could not be achieved through photography alone.

A display of a mother’s darkening grief is the central image of Schlachtfield (Battlefield) (Fig. 4.1), the last print of the Peasants’ War cycle series. The image is of a mother reaching down to her fallen son amidst a sea of unidentifiable bodies strewn about after the revolt. Though this aftermath comes from an uprising rather than a traditional battle, the staging of the figures and the overall extent of the casualties would remind viewers of photography from past wars, especially from Crimea and the American Civil War. Even further back, Linda C. Hults likens the image to battlefield scenes in Disasters of War, further underscoring the influence of Goya’s
legacy on war imagery. The universality of this image as an archetype of war imagery makes it upsettingly timeless as a continual inevitability, and the fact that this print was initially made just before World War I adds a layer of prophecy and underscores the endless cycle of war and strife. It is a tolling bell at the end of a series that refuses to shy away from the atrocity of injustice and war.

![Figure 4.1: Käthe Kollwitz, Schlachtfeld (Battlefield), 1910 reprint (originals made ca. 1901-1908), Aquatint and Drypoint, Plate: 16 1/8 x 20 3/4 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Emile H. Mathis II (2012.002.1175)](image)

This print is one of the few in this exhibition that showcases a woman as the main entry point to the artwork and to war. Her grief is heavy and all encompassing, and though the soldier below her, her son, is illuminated, she is the focus, and it is by her touch in the shine of her lamplight that he is rendered in this glow. Women take on many roles in this series, including
instigator of revolution, harbinger of death, and angel of death, exemplified in the mother figure. There are also women who have been sexually brutalized, and they are granted some layer of respect by being shrouded in shadows, unable to be gawked at as an extension of perpetuated cruelty. Although these prints are certainly reimaginingings rather than documentation of an event, Kollwitz’s choice to place women prominently in various visual roles allows for a unique vantage point, one that serves to tell emotional stories centered around women that contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gendered experiences of war.

Arthur Segal (Romanian; 1875-1944) is perhaps best known as an expressionist painter and a member of the artist groups Die Brücke and Der Blaue Reiter. He also experimented with woodcuts from 1910-1919, though he did not exhibit them in his lifetime. This brief output of woodcut prints is striking—graphic in their stark black and white contrast as they grapple with various themes, including war, more directly than most of his paintings. The work on view (Fig. 4.2) was printed in 1974, but the original woodblock was made in 1915, in the middle of World War I. Segal moved his family from Berlin to neutral Switzerland at this time to escape enlistment. This war affected Segal profoundly as an artist and he used woodcuts to impart his anti-war sentiments. In his own words, “[t]he 1914 war threw me out of the traditional ways I had been used to. Art lost its halo.” The physicality and brute force necessary to create a woodcut by gouging into wood suggests a desire to reenact the violence being depicted in his anti-war prints. The chunky distinction between the incised portion and the raised wood that is left behind, a necessity due to woodcut tools and the density of wood, allows for a very marked contrast that holds an intense presence in the prints.

This woodcut (Fig. 4.2) depicts a battle, with a casualty happening in real time. The smallness of the print in the expanse of white and the abstracted figures beckons the viewer
forward to make sense of the scene, one with no glamour or triumph, just similar figures enacting violence on each other. Though Segal depicts scenes of bloodshed and battle in black and white, it is interesting to note that the main contrast is between the figures and the world around them, rather than a marked difference between opposing forces—they are all identical pawns used as fodder in the war machine, whose bodies have become mere practical extensions of the weapons they wield. The background gives nothing away, and it is only in the blank absence of the paper that any of the figures can be understood apart from each other. Balance and contrast as defined in nature is a driving force behind the layout of Segal’s prints, and he does this to make sense of the senseless; “when everything is confused and chaotic, meditation on the eternal laws of nature, seen from the optic point of view, is my salvation.” 37 By rendering war down to bare shapes, Segal is able to home in on the unavoidable violence of war, reminding the viewer that no matter the righteousness of the victor, war is a continual producer of human death.
The simplicity of the figures’ rendering makes the scene visually timeless as well, a succinct snapshot of the violent core of war as it occurs throughout time and place.

Theophile Steinlen (Swiss, later French; 1859-1923) was a prolific artist with anarchist leanings who sought to use his art to uplift the downtrodden social classes. In addition to cabaret posters and illustrations, he frequently made prints for French publications such as *Gil Blas illustré*, *Chambard socialiste*, and *La Feuille*, including satirical political cartoons. He recognized the necessity for the public, particularly those with very little money or power, to have access to and view printed materials, and therefore saw his illustrations and printed work as “a tool of resistance against oppression.” Reproducible printmaking for Steinlen, then, was integral to upholding his morals and convictions as a person and an artist. As an illustrator for news-related publications, he was able to apply his creative hand to imbue news and editorials with an evocative view of events and social discourse.

Steinlen’s focus shifted tangentially during World War I as he started depicting soldiers experiencing the harsh realities of war. He did not usually represent bloodshed, opting instead to show soldiers at rest or neutrally walking together. The French were not the only subjects—one print shows Serbian soldiers and civilian refugees retreating to the mountains (Fig. 4.3). Steinlen has depicted the mass of people in a close cropping that brings the focus to two weary soldiers in the foreground, one with a friendly hand on the other’s shoulder. The image is stylized but humanized through the display of brotherly love and the steadfast resolve in the refugee’s faces. This is not a triumphant image or a mocking one, but instead a snapshot in print of one of many neglected stories of human suffering during war.

Some images concerned the civilian experience more specifically and conveyed darkly bitter satire, as in the case of *Glory (La gloire)*, a condemnation of the nationalistic war.
sentiment featuring women mourning a man in a casket draped with the French flag (Fig. 4.4). The coffin has been draped unceremoniously in a wrinkled flag and dying brown ferns, making the title quite ironically sad. The women look solemnly downwards, some blotting their faces with handkerchiefs, but their solemnity is not overly emotional—they look more exhausted than heartbroken, insinuating that this isn’t the most recent funeral they have attended. This print tells a story of hopelessness and righteous bitterness at the casualties of war, and it does so through a visual of mourners, reminding the viewer of archetypal mourning images but providing a counterpoint divorced from straightforward patriotism.

Figure 4.3: Théophile Alexandre Steinlen (French [born Switzerland], 1859–1923), *Journée Serbe. 25 Juin.*, 1916, Lithograph, From the Library of Congress.
The print shown in this exhibition (Fig. 4.5), repeated three times with slight variation, fits into the timeline of Steinlen’s output of war imagery that sought to highlight and humanize those affected by the Great War rather than glorify the war as purely heroic. These three experiments showing three different impressions with varying levels of ink depict soldiers in a difficult to define environment, although the close cropping suggests a trench. Each pulled print is slightly lighter or darker than the one before, with the darkest and most balanced image in the middle. In contrast to the lighter applications, this middle print’s ink muddles the soldiers faces, casting many shadows and suggesting that night is encroaching. This gives the image a sense of foreboding and imparts real danger to the viewer. In the last print, dark crosshatchings over the top of the image suggests it was rejected by the printer, as these marks do not show up in the other two prints. The first print seems to have a spotlight on the top half, with all of the soldier’s helmeted heads clearly illuminated but their legs becoming obscured in a fuzz of small
crosshatchings. These details provide a sense of reverence rather than foreboding, giving the soldiers a visual lift and a focus on their individual selves.

Figure 4.5: Theophile Steinlen, *Le Boyau*, ca. 1917, Drypoint, Sheet: 10 7/8 x 7 3/8 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Emile H. Mathis II (2012.002.0820a-c)

Georges Rouault (French; 1871-1958) was a painter and printmaker whose connection to war seems to have begun at birth; he is dramatically said to have been born in a cellar in the Parisian suburb Belleville while shells rained down from French troops above during the Siege of Paris, a battle in the Franco-Prussian War. Rouault began his Misereres et Guerre series during WWI with the intention of creating 100 plates, but he only ever managed to get to 58 before the last printing of the series in 1948. The prints were later accompanied by short descriptions, merging word, history, memory, and visual representation into each work. The series also has a moralizing bent, as Rouault included symbols of Christianity to evoke his own faith alongside his condemnation of war.
This print (Fig. 4.6) comes from the Guerre portion of the series. The title, *The more noble the heart, the less stiff the neck*, conveys the teachable intent of Rouault through a saying that imparts some information about how the viewer should understand the subject, whose neck is very stiff. The soldier character has a strange, steeply-angled neck, indicating that there is something unnatural about him. The dark, thick lines sitting next to brighter modeling and an atmospheric background creates an eerie contrast that gives the viewer a sense of unease even before reading the title. He seems to be both in shadow and in a spotlight with a misty background that places him within an unclear space. He is identified as a “Prussian warlord” whose misguided military focus kept him from recognizing the suffering around him: “The stiff neck holds the face and the eyes permanently away from human reality, permanently turned to a heaven of one’s own choosing.”42 The sniff neck seems to refer to misplaced pride and is a warning to those so caught up in strategy that they neglect the humanity of the people affected.
Figure 4.6: Georges Rouault. *The more noble the heart, the less stiff the neck*, from *Miserere*, 1926, Etching, Plate: 23 x 16 5/8 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Mr. Leonard Scheller (1972.136.02)
5. Propaganda, The Soldier, and World War II (WWII)

George Grosz (German; 1893-1959) is a well-known Berlin Dadaist, whose biting satirical caricatures spanning both World Wars highlighted hypocrisy and the grotesque reality of warfare. In addition to being a veteran of WWI, Grosz also made some prints for news publications, and his cartoon work was remarked upon by Hannah Arendt as “not satire so much as realistic reportage.” In *The End of a Perfect Day, Barracks Interior* (Fig. 5.1), Grosz uses his cartoon-like sensibilities to lampoon the soldiers of the Sturmabteilung (SA), which was a paramilitary wing of the Nazi Party. The print on display from the UWM Art Collection has no date attached to it, but other prints of this same work show up in multiple accredited museum collections and are all noted as being from 1939. This date would place this print after Grosz’ emigration to the United States in 1933 and yet it is not stylistically very similar to his later
work; however, the subject would have been just as relevant in the 1920s as in the 1930s during the lead up to World War II. At any rate, this image displays Grosz’ ability to use visceral and distorted caricature to impart a satirical attack on the subject.

Elements of humor and wry derision permeate the print. The image is intensely detailed and there are many figures cramped together, attempting to perform various chores and conduct personal grooming. The lines that make up the figures and objects in this small room are visually inconsistent, with some body parts darkly outlined and others only composed of a couple faint lines. This creates a rippling effect between the figures and suggests the physical space of fleshy bodies all crammed together. Ruddy shadows suggest both depth in the soldiers’ legs and rears and an overall griminess. The dirty and somewhat lewd shading imbue the print with an uncouth sensibility, one that is grotesque in its shamelessness. Overall, this is not a flattering image, and the hanging knives and other weapons that litter the scene let the viewer know that the ‘perfect day’ for these soldiers is one filled with violence. Through this imagery, Grosz is attempting to stylistically imply a corrupt and disgusting inherent character of these Nazis, something that can’t be readily understood through a photograph or idealized, naturalistic print. Dadaist motions are also present and follow along with this artistic reportage; as Timothy O. Benson states, “the avant-garde felt compelled to respond to the atmosphere of the wide-spread social and political disruption caused by the war and to make the social use of text a fundamental concern of their art.” The printed medium in art carries with it connotations of access and proliferation of the news, and though this is just a print, the social aspect of the imagery is still very much a part of the overall understanding and impact of the work.
Reproducible war effort posters made during World War II, such as *The Battle Begins With Your Job*, (Fig. 5.2) were meant to spur soldiers on and imbue them with a sense of pride in their work for the betterment of the country. These reproducible images were not only seen by soldiers, of course; they were also consumed by the public, and they perpetuated the indelible image of the gallant soldier fighting for his country. Posters like these were usually commissioned by the Office of War Information, a U.S. government agency created specifically during WWII to churn out various messages of patriotism through propaganda imbedded in everyday life. Messages ranged from paranoia about the enemy listening and asking people to be on constant alert to guilt-tripping images of wounded soldiers and pleas for civilian cooperation with rationing. The sacrificial hero archetype of soldiers, even when wounded, downplayed what bravery on the battlefield actually looked like and concealed the struggle of veterans coming to terms with the war after it was over. These representations of soldiers and the nationalistic propaganda on display were so ubiquitous that expressions of anti-war sentiment
were frequently read as anti-American. Attempts to depict the grim realities of soldier life were frowned upon and seen as ‘un-patriotic’ even in the many cases that veteran artists sought to depict their reality during the war.

Figure 5.3: Alexander Liberman, *United We Win*, 1943, Printed Poster with photograph, H-27.875 W-22 inches, UWM Art Collection (1987.052)

*United We Win* (Fig. 5.3) is a unique glimpse into propaganda concerning race and the military. This simple poster features a looming United States flag at the top and two soldiers, one an African American man and the other a white American man, who are working together on some machinery. “United We Win” is emblazoned in capital letters across the bottom, providing a succinct plea for unification. However, this sentiment reads as disingenuous given that during
World War II, segregation was a reality that all soldiers lived with, both at home and in the military. Many of the African American soldiers who joined up were pushing for what was considered a Double V Victory: an end to segregation at home alongside an end to fascism abroad. There was clear hypocrisy in the United States fighting to end oppression for some when a portion of their own population continued to be subjugated through segregation and Jim Crow laws, and the Double V Victory movement highlighted this issue to apply pressure on the government. The end of World War II did not result in a Double v Victory, however, as the abolition of segregation did not occur until the 1960s. This poster then serves to posture as a unifying force, not to entertain the idea of real change but to dissuade any justified push for equity and equality that might be perceived as undermining the war effort.

Propaganda posters are certainly accessible in that they were meant to be seen by as many people as possible. Their reproducibility means they can impart their concepts through inundation, and their directness grants them a level of authority. They were created to attract the viewer in an artistic way; the way figures are depicted, the way colors are employed, and the way that images are juxtaposed against each other insinuate stylistic choices made to catch the eye. In terms of constructing public consciousness, these posters were part of an effort to engender patriotism in the United States citizens and unify the public to one cause, likely to varying levels of actualized success. Propaganda is engineered to steer public opinion and suppress critique through unification, but as evidenced by other works in this exhibition, many artists sought to ignore the type of patriotism they represented in favor of displaying difficult consequences and intense emotions from the trauma of war.
6. Neo-Dada, Anti-War Protest, and the Vietnam War

Arman (French; 1928-2005) was an artist greatly influenced by Dada as seen in his accumulations comprised of multiples of one object that evoke Marcel Duchamp’s ready-mades. His heyday and artistic sensibilities overlapped with the rise of Pop Art in Britain and America, although he was more aligned with Nouveau Réalisme, a European offshoot of Pop Art with artists who were often concerned with objects combined into art. These three-dimensional accumulation sculptures are visually repetitious, and their presence is somewhat overwhelming as the viewer is tasked with making sense of the individual objects comprising the whole. One of these works is *Boom! Boom!* from 1960 (Fig. 6.1), a display of identical, gunmetal gray guns behind plexiglass. The print on display (Fig. 6.2) is similarly titled *Boom-Boom*, but it is not directly related to the accumulation.

![Figure 6.1: Arman, Boom! Boom!, 1960, Plastic water pistols in plexiglass case, 8 1/4 x 23 1/4 x 4 1/2” (21 x 59 x 11.2 cm), From Museum of Modern Art Collection, Gift of Philip Johnson](image)

Arman’s trademark penchant for repetition is clearly visible in this print. With its barrage of abstracted depictions of guns, *Boom-Boom* evokes a saturation of images that can be overwhelming and disorienting. It asks the viewer to look twice and ponder about the inundation of symbols of violence. Though this work is a reproduced print, no two are exactly the same. Arman drew each gun on the initial silkscreen using a stencil and then added more hand-
stenciled guns on top of each individual print, making marks with pencil along the way. These additions distance the work from a purely printed context, but their visual repetition unites them all as a set.

Guns are used in this print as static symbols of bloodshed, full of violent possibility but not being used to this end just yet. They are both threatening in their numbers and innocuous in the abstracted and uncontextualized blank space they inhabit. However, their almost dull redundancy evokes desensitization from an ever-spinning news cycle devoted to reporting on conflict. The bright red and beige guns add some visual interest, but they too seem to be part of the mass. Though this print doesn’t provide a specific viewpoint on a war of the time, it does visually convey a perceived exhaustion from the various news sources (newspaper, radio, television, etc.) of the time and their inundation of weaponry and conflict.

Robert Rauschenberg’s (1925-2008) print titled Poster for Peace (Fig. 6.3) includes instructions for the potential owner or viewer to paste in various headlines sourced from the most
recent newspaper of the viewer’s time. One set of instructions tells the viewer to “cut the word ‘peace’ from any front-page headline and Glue it in to this space RR” which has the added commentary of “cut it out and give a party and paste in.” There is a playful quality to these presumably rhetorical requests even as the work is a genuine plea for the antithesis to war, and the purposefully unfinished look mirrors the work to be done in pursuit of peace. It becomes clear that peace cannot be easily examined without the contrast to war itself. The detached way one would take a headline or the word “peace” out of the context of its original source reveals the difficulty in imagining a world where the news would only speak of peace and cease to report on conflict. Peace is subsequently hard to maintain. People speak of moments of peace, but too often conflict creeps back in, and this stasis between peace and no peace brings up the questions: can there be any conflict with peace? Is peace a continual decision or is it given? Because it brings up such complicated questions in such an off-hand, sardonic way, there is a world-weariness to this piece that problematizes the viewer’s relationship to the news cycle and creates a site for contemplation based on futility.

Rauschenberg’s connection to Dada is visually evident through this collage of images, and the anxiety of modern warfare also ties this work to the satirical bent of Dadaists, many of whom had direct experiences of the technological horrors of World War I, including George Grosz. The work coincides chronologically with the war in Vietnam, a war defined by TV news coverage and the influx of the image stream. Though it lacks the repetition of Arman’s work, the screen-printed images of various subjects, including an apropos newspaper and a dead bird, suggest the dizzying array of images able to be viewed seemingly at random on television sets. There is something uniquely Dada-like about the assorted offerings of TV that are nonsensical when placed side by side out of their channel-flipping context, which Poster for Peace evokes.
However, Rauschenberg seems to be genuine in his plea for peace, and the images he chooses don’t seem quite so random. The skull, dead bird, and flame produce a refracted still-life relating to war, and the newspaper screen printed in above where another assortment of newsprint might go reads as extremely self-referential. These elements combine to produce an uneasy visual code that invites the viewer to consider a world without war that is tied to their current news cycle at the time of viewing.
Stanley William Hayter (1901-1988) was a legenof printmaking who pioneered various techniques of engraving and gravure. This print contains some of his earlier innovations in spatiality and abstraction including obscuring the image through repetition. The repetitions create visual ripples that duplicate certain shapes, much like in Arman’s *Boom-Boom*. *V, Echoes of War* (Fig. 6.4), a print made for the poem *Death of Hektor* written by Brian Coffey, may initially seem like a confused mass of multiple lines and circles in a seemingly nonsensical pattern. However, by looking closer, you can pick out a helmet, some weaponry, a shield, and figures which have been duplicated multiple times and echoed in surrounding lines. This visual cacophony evokes reverberations of war throughout history, an integral part to understanding this examination of *The Iliad* and war both from classical antiquity up through the modern era.
The poem itself is not a straightforward retelling of *The Iliad*; instead, Coffey focuses on Achilles’ murder of Hektor and the extreme culture of war, highlighting the blunt cruelty of Achilles instead of lauding him as the hero. He highlights Homer’s perceived compassion for Hektor, insinuated by Homer’s inclusion of the emotional scene between Hektor and his family. In the scene, his wife, Andromache, is carrying their son in her arms and expresses to Hektor that she is terrified of him leaving to fight. Coffey likens her to “any woman victim of any war robbed of her world” and ends the poem with this image of her and the emotional toll of those who are left behind in wars. Andromache serves as an enduring symbol of women and mothers affected by war, a symbol utilized so much for shorthand about the consequences of war that it works almost like an archetype, one that Käthe Kollwitz is also evoking previously in *Battlefield*.

Much of *Death of Hektor* is devoted to discussing history and Homer’s decisions when writing the story. Coffey waxes awhile in the first half of the poem about the recollections and scars of *The Iliad*, remarking on the power and longevity of storytelling:

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Talk we do of years in times ten to the power nine
so long so long is making a stage for stories
to rise like a million year whale from squid-filled deep
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Hayter’s prints, and specifically *V, Echoes of War*, combine with the poet’s words to visually render the ripple effects of art and stories about war. The reverberations, indicated through the repetition of shapes, suggest that the impact of wars in the past continue to be relevant to the present-day and that these stories of war and conflict endure because they, tragically, repeat.
7. Internet Reproducibility, Hidden Histories, and Contemporary Warfare

This final section contains prints and artists’ books made during the 2000s through the 2010s. Every work on display comes from UWM Special Collections, which is well-known for its collection of artists’ books, thanks to the curation of Head of Special Collections, Max Yela.

This time period sees an intense boom in image circulation of the news via the internet. Rapid changes in technology enhance the public’s ability to receive and access news and information from around the world at a moment’s notice. The internet also gives artists access to a wide array of images and digital tools to aid in the construction of their work. With increased connections and methods of creating, artistic endeavors are able to pointedly critique, aim for greater inclusion, and innovatively tell neglected stories in new and wide-reaching ways.

The artist book as a medium has been around for decades, most prominently beginning in the 1960s. Joseph Cornell was a book artist who compiled his works like physical assemblages of various media, which not only connects to the previously discussed artist Arman but also will be the case for *On the Same Day* by Petra Press. This work was created by a former student for a book arts class, carrying on the legacy of University of Wisconsin-Madison teacher and fellow book artist Claire Van Vliet who opened a maker’s space to print books made by college students during her time at the university. Artist books have often utilized various methods of creation, creatively printing and assembling the books from an assortment of mixed media and sources, and the examples in this section also run the gamut of style, form, and composition.

*On the Same Day* (Fig. 7.1) is a small book comprised mainly of digitally scanned newspaper text pasted onto semi-translucent Cansom vellum paper, according to the colophon, which is an added note that gives publication and printing information.
For artists’ books, it is also where the series number is displayed alongside medium details. The colophon also mentions that it was made on November 3rd, 2004 to be exact. The thin paper not only allows the artist, Petra Press, to layer the words and therefore layer meaning, but it also allows the viewer to experience the words on various planes, creating a saturation of text and images that evokes the news cycle. This creates an abstracted experience, and the book’s message is in many ways contingent upon the reader’s experience flipping through and interacting with the book like they would when skimming through a newspaper and attempting to glean understanding from it.

Various repeated words pop out more often than others, like “listen,” “scared,” “chaos,” and “trapped,” and they frame the more specific headlines like “27 Civilians Die in New Attacks” and “Soldier pleads guilty in prison abuse.” The repeated words act almost as commentary on the other headlines, but they are also an interesting case study on the language
being used in news at the time in 2004. The references to Abu Ghraib suggest the book is responding to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the War on Terror. The cover image of former president George W. Bush sets up this focus from the very beginning, therefore situating it in a specific time rather than alluding to the concept of war journalism. The title “On the Same Day” suggests that these were headlines taken from American newspapers that were printed at the very same time, but this adherence to a singular date is not confirmed by the colophon or the content, even as it mentions the book was created on November 3rd.

Some of the juxtapositions through various layers of paper tell little stories of their own, as in the case of the page where one can see “Relentless” “Suicide bomber” “Attacks” pasted in order from top to bottom. “Military” is also seen in the middle of these words, but it is more obscured than the others, as if to suggest the ever-present U.S. military involvement. On the opposite page, the words “Uncertainty” “Chaos” “Terror Grows” creates a commentary, allowing personal anguish to creep into the largely impassable headlines. The book ends with the most coherent and linear statement, pasted over multiple pages using burgundy-highlighted headlines: “We can’t take…4 more years…of this…Chaos.” This ending statement confirms the book’s intent: to display the cacophony of war-related reporting by isolating the ubiquitous language of the Iraq War, overwhelming the viewer with the almost never-ending pain that ongoing wars produce.

The broadsides in the War is Trauma portfolio (Fig. 7.2) grapple with soldier experiences, both during and after deployment. The prints were a collaboration between thirty Justseeds Artists’ Cooperative members and Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), which was borne out of a public poster project titled “Operation Recovery.”
This project aimed to educate the public on taboo or difficult subjects related to soldier experiences, such as Military Sexual Trauma (MST), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), racism, and homophobia. In the initial iteration, the prints were pasted up in public, sometimes covering advertisements, to put a focus on these difficult and rarely discussed topics. The project also sought veteran healing, both in body and mind, and to relay anti-war and anti-militarism sentiments from soldiers, veterans, and allied artists.60

The public nature of the initial project, making visible real stories and struggles of soldiers heretofore relegated to hushed discussions, serves as a counterpoint to the legacy of propaganda posters by attempting to appeal to human empathy through storytelling. Whereas WWII propaganda posters might have played upon the public’s emotions through fear and guilt from disingenuous generalizations, the posters in “Operation Recovery” appeal through their vulnerability, and they give a voice to the individual rather than the generalized concept of ‘the
soldier.’ This allows for discussions about realities that don’t fit into an idealized narrative or that problematize easy categorization.

The Objects for Deployment artists’ books (Fig. 7.3) began as another artist and veteran collaboration, only this time the veterans were able to make personalized books related to their experiences with war. The books range in size, subject matter, and content, with some being mostly pictures, others being recreations of a diary, and others still being novel-like recollections of in the service. There is one book on display that was not a collaboration with a veteran and the artist but rather between the artist and a survivor of a bomb explosion, who lost both her legs. This civilian story shows another side to the Afghanistan war (the wars discussed range from Vietnam to Afghanistan), and another glimpse at soldier/civilian relations. All the books have potentially upsetting or triggering subject matter, so please review the content warnings before proceeding.

Steve Honda was a photo-journalist during the Iraq War, and When I First Arrived in Baghdad offers a glimpse into his work (Fig. 7.4). This artists’ book is comprised of some of his photographs from his time in Baghdad, with the cover and back cover featuring some of these images that have been etch-printed onto metal sheets. The rest of the book’s images are silkscreen-printed on thick paper in black and white. Included with the images are Honda’s own words, discussing his experiences being a war photographer. His personal words relay an added layer of documentation to the images, letting the viewer know the context and the inner workings of the photographer’s mind. This creates a grounded sense to the photos, rather than sensationalizing death and pain.
Figure 7.3: Various Contributors, Monica Haller (copyeditor and overseeing artist), *Objects for Deployment, Veterans Book Project*, 2011, Artists’ Books, Variable dimensions, Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries (see list in Exhibition Checklist for information on the 11 books featured in the exhibition).

Figure 7.4: Stan Honda and Fred Hagstrom, *When I First Arrived in Baghdad*, 2012, Artist Book, UWM Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries.

Hearing from a correspondent in this way reminds one of the Harper’s Weekly special artists, who likely also had a lot of introspection on the job. Honda speaks plainly about his experiences, including being the only still photographer of Uday and Qusay Hussein’s bodies.
He says that he was never in any attacks, though he sometimes photographed house searches in the night, and that he was not restricted by the military in his subject-matter. These admissions are on the left page of each two-page spread, placed directly on top of a close-up shot from the full image that is shown on the right page. The image is the main story, but Honda’s reflections are also a part of the overall history, even though that information is not readily understood just by viewing the photo. His words therefore become a part of each image, rather than being a simple caption, and help to create an enhanced artwork that chronicles multiple stories at once.

*Paradise Lost* by Fred Hagstrom (Fig. 7.5) illustrates the complications and consequences surrounding the evacuation of Bikini islanders due to bomb drills set off nearby during World War II. The book uses photographs from the news to construct a narrative of this neglected aspect of the war. Hagstrom weaves together personal anecdotes from soldiers affected by the radiation and stories of the islanders who can never go back to their homes due to the radiation alongside stylized abstractions of the co-opted images.

Hagstrom has chosen to obscure many of the photos by warping them and concealing parts or placing ripples of concentric circles on top of images to evoke the spread of a detonated bomb and segment the image underneath. This warping and fuzzy abstraction seems to evoke the invisible but deadly radiation, deforming cells and lungs to create cancer and death. The concealment on many pages makes the viewer wish for a clearer picture that they can never reach. For the Bikini islanders, their home has been concealed from them due to US involvement, and their story has not featured very prominently in historical accounts of WWII, making the concealment through print found in this book a real mark of loss and being forgotten that can now be told through this artistic output.
Delving into this experience both from the soldier and native islander perspectives insinuates that Hagstrom is making this book to speak to the senseless war-related tragedies for soldiers and civilians alike. However, the stories are not equally told—whereas the soldier aspect is covered by firsthand accounts, the Bikini islanders have no quoted text to accompany their harrowing experience of losing their home. The images are also not clearly sourced. The presumption is that these are directly images from the Bikini atoll of the island and its people, but that may not be the case. This lack of agency for the islanders might have been a result of the author’s inability to source specific interviews, due in some part to the fact that this is a relatively neglected story in the United States, but it is worthy to note. Books like these may be instructive for telling a story, but when they don’t incorporate the people who have experienced the story into the making of it, the full reality is still obscured.
Many of the artists’ books and prints on display are being used for the purpose of reconstructing history and inserting lost histories into a general knowledge of a historical subject. A work like *Paradise Lost* might not be a perfect example of how to take ownership of a lived experience, but it does tell that story on multiple levels and speak to multiple senses of sight and touch to relate to the viewer’s humanity through visceral storytelling. The visual abstractions speak to the difficulty of uncovering these stories and purposefully force the viewer to contend with the fact that there are many stories like this one that have not been properly told.
Exhibition Checklist


2. Francisco Goya, *Que Valor! (What Courage!)*, plate 7 from “Los Desastres de la Guerra” (*The Disasters of War*), N.d. (original from c. 1810), Etching, Plate: 5 15/16 x 8 1/8 inches, UWM Art Collection (1972.097.03)

3. Francisco Goya, *Escapan entre las llamas (They Escape Through the Flames)*, plate 41 from “Los Desastres de la Guerra” (*The Disasters of War*), N.d. (original from c. 1810), Etching, Plate: 6 1/4 x 9 5/16 inches, UWM Art Collection (1972.097.01)


9. Arthur Segal, *Untitled (Anti-War)*, 1972 reprint (originally made in 1915), Woodcut, Sheet: 15 3/8 x 23 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben and Lesta Wunsch though the Martin S. Ackerman Foundation (1981.034.28)


11. Georges Rouault, *The more noble the heart, the less stiff the neck*, from *Miserere*, 1926, Etching, Plate: 23 x 16 5/8 inches, UWM Art Collection, Gift of Mr. Leonard Scheller (1972.136.02)


19. Just Seeds Artists’ Cooperative, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and Booklyn Artists Alliance, *War is Trauma*, 2011, Prints, Various dimensions, Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries

20 a-k. Various Contributors, Monica Haller (copyeditor and overseeing artist), *Objects for Deployment, Veterans Book Project*, 2011, Artists’ Books, Variable dimensions, Special Collections, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries

There are 11 of these books in the exhibition to peruse:

a. *Drew Francis Cameron*; Special Collections DS79.766.C36x A3 2010

b. *Ted Engelmann*; Special Collections DS559.5 .E455x 2011


d. *Nathan Lewis*; Special Collections DS79.766.L49x A3 2010

e. *Juliet Madsen*; Special Collections DS79.766.M33x A3 2011

f. *Phil Mason*; Special Collections DS559.5 .M369x 2011

g. *Nancy and Riley Sharbonno*; Special Collections DS79.766.S528x A3 2010
h. *Phillip Studer*; Special Collections DS371.413 .S77x 2010

i. *W.A. Ehren Tool*; Special Collections DS79.744.A78x T66 2010

j. *Isaac Torres*; Special Collections DS79.766.T67x A3 2011

k. *Chante Wolf*; Special Collections DS79.74 .W65x 2010


Images of Installed Exhibition
Bibliography


Endnotes


2 Conclusions about medium-related impacts stemming from modernity are proposed and explored in The Medium is the Massage (1967) by Marshall McLuhan. Mechanical reproducibility devaluing the unique status of art is proposed by and explored in Walter Benjamin’s “Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” (1935).


5 Pettegree, 212.

6 Goldfarb, 15.
7 Goldfarb, 13.
8 Goldfarb, 13-36.
9 Goldfarb, 15.


12 Los Caprichos are a series set by Goya published in 1799 to little acclaim at the time. They were only sold in a perfume and liquor store and only 27 sets out of 300 printed were sold. See Giovanni Garcia-Fenech, “Goya’s Los Caprichos: A magnificent failure,” Artstor, September 29, 2014, https://www.artstor.org/2014/09/29/goyas-los-caprichos-a-magnificent-failure/.


16 See also Sayre (1974); Wilson-Bareau (1981); and Janis A. Tomlinson, Graphic Evolutions: The Print Series of Francisco Goya (1989).


19 Crimean War (1853-1856) photographs also had a role in shaping American and European understanding of war through the news, but the Civil War had a larger effect on American news since it was fought there. For more information about Crimean War photography, see Vicki Goldberg, “When the Shooting Started - A Century and a Half Ago, Britain’s Roger Fenton Pioneered the Art of War Photography (Crimean War),” Smithsonian 35, no. 7 (2004): 23–24. And Yakup Bektas “THE CRIMEAN WAR AS A TECHNOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE,” Notes and records of the Royal Society of London 71, no. 3 (2017): 233–262.


22 Sandweiss, 20.


25 Snodgrass, 302-303.


31 Kets de Vries, 14.


34 “Arthur Segal: Woodcuts,” University Museum of Contemporary Art (University of Massachusetts Amherst), accessed January 21, 2022, https://fac.umass.edu/UMCA/Online/default.asp?BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::permalink=ArthurSegal&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::context_id=.

35 Nathanson, (page 7).
36 Arthur Segal in Nathanson, (page 5).
37 Arthur Segal in Nathanson, (page 5).


41 Getlein, Introduction.
42 Getlein, 127.


to name a couple. A former UWM Art History MA student, Hannah Rillie, made an Art Talk video for the UWM Art History and Emile H. Mathis Gallery YouTube channel where she talks about this artwork and made a similar observation about the date. She also touches on the drypoint technique and the varying ink density in similar pulls of this print, as well as Grosz’ later works and his political affiliations through Dada. See Hannah Rillie, “Hannah Rillie, George Grosz's "End of a Perfect Day," recorded Art Talk, video, 5:47, January 30, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEZ51mhjD8Y&ab_channel=UWMArtHistoryandEmileH.MathisGallery.


56 Brian Coffey, Death of Hektor / Poem by Brian Coffey; Engravings by Stanley William Hayter (Guildford, Surrey: Circle Press, 1979), 23. (This is the book included with the print of V, Echoes of War that is in the exhibition)
57 Coffey, 13.

59 Bright, 94.

60 “War is Trauma,” Justseeds Artists’ Cooperative, accessed December 2, 2021, https://justseeds.org/portfolio/war-is-trauma-portfolio/