

The Arts as a Response to the Costs of War: World War I and Iraq/Afghanistan Wars -- Today

Annotated Bibliography for 2016 NEH Summer Institute on Veterans in Society

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WORLD WAR I

EXHIBITION

World War I and American Art – Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania – November 4, 2016 – April 9, 2017 -- <https://www.pafa.org/WW1>. There will be a catalogue for this exhibition.

World War I and American Art is organized around eight themes: *Prelude: The Threat of War; Hartley and Hassam: Tenuous Neutrality; Debating the War; Mobilization; Modernists and the War; Battlefields; The Wounded and the Healers; and Celebration and Mourning*. Arranged to follow the narrative of the war itself, the exhibition will show how artists chronicled their experiences of the unfolding war as it crept closer to home and then involved them directly as soldiers, relief workers, political dissenters, and official war artists.

ARTISTS

Claggett Wilson – U.S. Marine Corps

Michael Barton, "War Art: Claggett Wilson," *Stand To! The Journal of The Western Front Association*, No. 85, (April/May, 2009): 16-20; available online at the following link, at the bottom of the page – <http://claggettwilson.com/greatwar.html#>

Claggett Wilson was an American artist who recorded his war experiences during the First World War. While a small collection of sketches have survived, it is the 26 watercolor paintings he made in 1919 after the war that most fully capture his experiences. This article chronicles Wilson's military service – he noted that "the Marines made him everything he was" – and links the things that happened to him to the subject matter of the watercolors he produced.

Horace Pippin – U.S. Army

Edward Puchner, "Winning the Peace Over *Mr. Prejudice*," in Audrey Lewis, ed., *Horace Pippin: The Way I See It*, ex. cat. (New York: Brandywine River Museum in association with Scala Arts Publishers, Inc., [2015], pp. 57-71.

As a devout Christian who was also a disabled African-American doughboy, the events of war and racial prejudices experienced by Horace Pippin are compellingly addressed in his WWII era painting, *Mr. Prejudice*, 1943. This exhibition catalogue essay not only analyzes the imagery of the painting, but also provides a detailed history of why each person and element is represented here. It also thematically links the religious undercurrents in *Mr. Prejudice* to the direct relationship between war, evil, equality, and racial prejudice captured in *Holy Mountain II*, painted one year later.

Additional suggested reading:

Celeste-Marie Bernier, *Suffering and Sunset: World War I in the Art and Life of Horace Pippin* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), 552 pages.

For self-made artist and World War I soldier Horace Pippin—who served in the 369th African American infantry—war provided a formative experience that defined his life and work. His transformation of combat service into canvases and autobiographies whose emotive power, psychological depth, and haunting realism showed his view of the world revealed his prowess as a painter and writer. In *Suffering and Sunset*, Celeste-Marie Bernier painstakingly traces Pippin's life story of art as a life story of war. *Suffering and Sunset* illustrates Pippin's status as a groundbreaking African American painter who not only suffered from but also staged many artful resistances to racism in a white-dominated art world.

Horace Pippin Notebooks and Letters – ca. 1920, 1943 – Archives of American Art –

<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/horace-pippin-notebooks-and-letters-8586/more>

The notebooks and letters of Horace Pippin in the Archives of American Art were digitized in 2006. The papers have been scanned in their entirety, and total 114 images.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN WARS – TODAY

EXHIBITION

Tara Leigh Tappert, *Citizen – Soldier – Citizen*, ex. cat. (Michigan City, IN: Lubeznik Center for the Arts), November 2, 2013 – February 9, 2014 – This link takes you to the online catalogue – <http://www.lubeznikcenter.org/pdf/CSC-online-catalogue.pdf>

The genesis of *Citizen – Soldier – Citizen* was a desire to create an exhibition of contemporary artwork by veteran-artists who had mainly served in the American military post 9-11-2001. The exhibition draws upon a nation-wide network of veteran-artists who work in a variety of media – from painting, drawing, photography, and film, to fiber, clay, and wood. The exhibition includes two-dimensional wall art, as well as sculpture, installations, and books. Through the four themes of the exhibition – Record, React, Rehabilitate, and Remember – the artists tackle their military and combat experiences from multiple perspectives. There is political commentary, scenes of witness, storytelling about the death of comrades, brave exposure of traumatic events, elegiac views of war torn landscapes, depictions of the wounds of war, metaphors intended to challenge citizen complacency, and sweet and bittersweet memories.

ARTISTS

The Dirty Canteen

From the Dirty Canteen website – <http://www.dirtycanteen.com/>

The Dirty Canteen - In the military we were issued brand new canteens, but after many training exercises and deployments the canteens became worn, abused and dirty. The Dirty Canteen is a metaphor for our involvements and experiences while in the military. We were soldiers and humanitarians and though we can no longer do so in uniform, we choose to continue this service to others by using the arts. We served in conflicts from Afghanistan, the Gulf War, and Iraq. There are nine members of the Dirty Canteen artist collective. All of which serve(d) honorably in the military and aim to raise awareness about issues veterans face while returning home from conflict. Our stories and work translate into conversations that try to bridge the gap

between military and civilian cultures. This dialog hopes to bring understanding of how war and trauma not only affect members of the military, but our society as a whole. Our mission is not to promote a particular belief but to pose questions about the many difficult and genuine concerns the American community possesses about current and past military engagements. We wish to share our stories, artwork and message of peace and appreciate the opportunities to do so.

A documentary film – *Bonus Time* – chronicles the stories of four of the Dirty Canteen artists – <https://vimeo.com/153866816>

One artist from the Dirty Canteen is highlighted here:

Jesse Albrecht – U.S. Army – Medic

Tara Leigh Tappert, *Citizen – Soldier – Citizen*, ex. cat. (Michigan City, IN: Lubeznik Center for the Arts), November 2, 2013 – February 9, 2014, pp. 11-12 in the online catalogue – <http://www.lubeznikcenter.org/pdf/CSC-online-catalogue.pdf>

and

Tara Leigh Tappert, *Healing Threads / Cathartic Clay: War, Trauma, and Art*, ex. cat. (Salina, KS: Salina Art Center) November 6, 2014 – February 1, 2015, pp. 42-77 in the online catalogue –

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B05TKPLxMruIVzFaSnUyZC1zTXM/view>

Jesse Albrecht uses his art training – he holds a BFA and MFA – to process his experiences as a combat medic in Iraq during the first years of the war. He has found many outlets for artmaking, including Veterans Book Project, Combat Paper Project, Paintallica, and The Dirty Canteen. Albrecht is a professional artist who is focusing his work on military culture, and the traumatic effects of war on those who experience it.

Michael D. Fay – U.S. Marine Corps – Combat Artist

The Joe Bonham Project

Michael D. Fay, “Still in the Fight: A New Reality,” *New York Times*, March 15, 2011 – available online at this link – <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/15/still-in-the-fight-a-new-reality/#more-82860> .

Retired Marine Corps combat artist, and founder of The Joe Bonham Project describes his experiences of portraying military servicemen who have been critically wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Carol Kino, “Portraits of War“, *New York Times*, May 25, 2012 – available online at this link – <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/arts/design/joe-bonham-project-illustrates-the-wounds-of-war.html>

The faces sketched or painted as part of the Joe Bonham Project collection are more than just portraits on paper and canvas. The project, inspired in part by Joe Bonham, the central character in Dalton Trumbo’s hard-hitting 1939 anti-war novel, *Johnny Got His Gun*, was founded in 2011 by Michael D. Fay, a former U.S. Marine Corps combat artist. Fellow artists, many affiliated with the Society of American Illustrators in New York City, also participated in the project. These artists visited military hospitals – such as Walter Reed in Bethesda, Maryland – and produced a

collection of narrative illustrations of faces that tell the poignant stories of wounded service members. The images and the stories capture the uncomfortable realities of the current wars.

Additional suggested reading:

Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun* (New York: L. Stuart [1970, ca. 1959], originally published, 1939, 309 pages.

An immediate bestseller upon its original publication in 1939, Dalton Trumbo's stark, profoundly troubling masterpiece about the horrors of World War I brilliantly crystallized the uncompromising brutality of war and became the most influential protest novel. This work continues to rivet readers with its story of an American youth who survives World War I as an armless, legless, and faceless basket case with his mind intact.