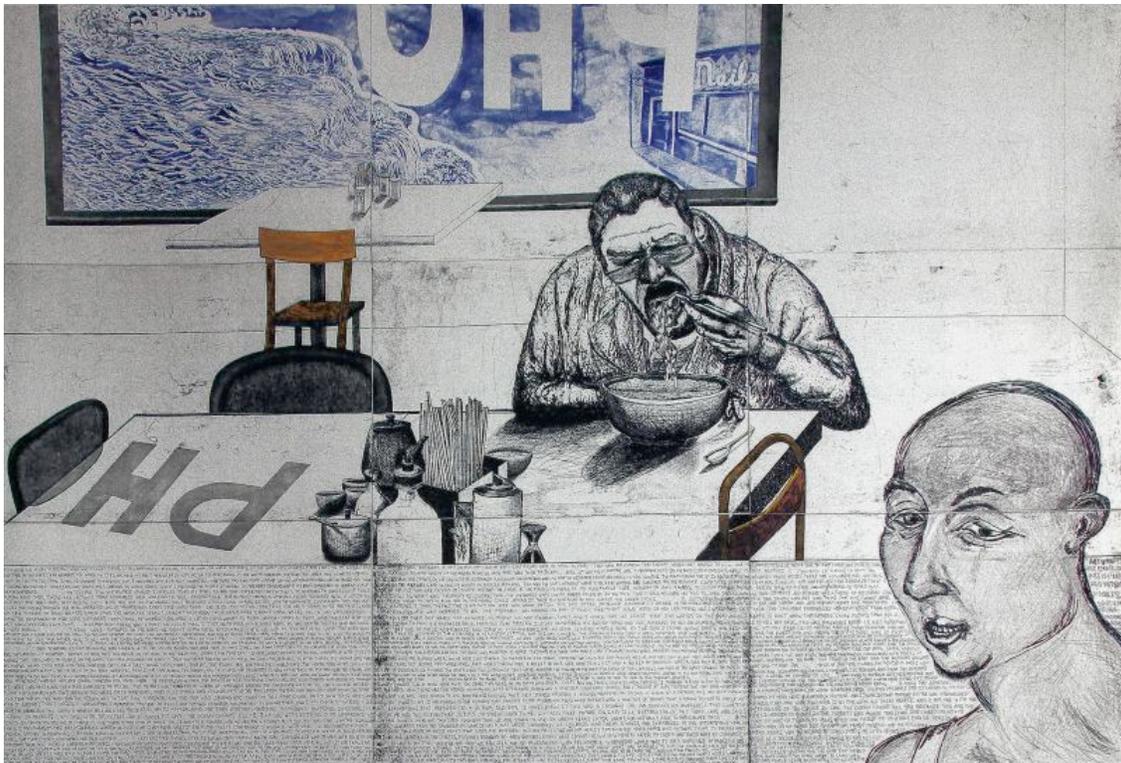


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VALLEY NEWS

Art Notes: Artist Takes a Sharp Look At a Troubled World



Fall: Artist Eats Pho, an etching and aquatint with monotype on paper, by Daniel Heyman.

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To say that a lot of the art in the Upper Valley is bloodless is not to denigrate it, not entirely. It's just that much of the locally made art on view at any given time is subtle, and concerned more with craft than with subject matter. Strife and conflict seldom break the calm surfaces of gallery walls.

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Contrast that with the work of Daniel Heyman, a small selection of which is on view in the Jaffe-Friede Gallery at Dartmouth's Hopkins Center for the Arts for a few more days. The show is titled "Attention," and Heyman, a 1985 Dartmouth graduate and current artist-in-residence, has trained a sharp eye on the world. Some of his work has the force of news without the artificial decorum of mainstream journalism.

The best example of this in the Hop's show is *When Photographers are Blinded, Eagles' Wings are Clipped*, a massive suite of etchings on plywood panels. A figure of a blindfolded photographer stands to the side while eagles, their wings anything but clipped, dive at a house of cards that symbolizes the American misadventure in Iraq. The writhing, wounded figures draw a line back to Goya's *Disasters of War*, while the printing on plywood brings the work fully up to date. The wood grain recalls the makeshift walls of the Iraqi Green Zone, and lend Heyman's prints the impromptu grit of street art.

Heyman's best-known work originated in a trip he took to Istanbul with an American lawyer who was representing hundreds of Iraqi detainees in American courts. Heyman interviewed and made portraits of Iraqis who had been held at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, people who often never learned why they had been picked up by coalition troops.

None of that work is on display in Hanover, but the show does include a work that's similar in style and scope. I spent a long time looking at *Fall: Artist Eats Pho*, a 2011 etching and aquatint with monotype. The artist figure is seated at a table, wolfing down noodles. Below is what looks like a transcribed interview with Hung Nguyen, who relates his harrowing story of fleeing Vietnam in a boat with his aunt's family.

Nguyen describes his aunt telling him why she selected him from among his five siblings: "She said you are the eldest son and you are one of the twins, and so just in case we die at sea your mother will still have the other one."

In his uncommonly thoughtful statements about his work, Heyman takes pains to point out that he is not a journalist, but his decision to ground his work in the words and faces of real suffering fills it with immediacy and pathos. Heyman, who lives in Philadelphia, puts that decision front and center on his website: "The choice of subjects is the most important moment an artist has for expressing himself," he writes, "it's the moment when he says, 'This is what I'm about.'"

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