



Cade Tompkins Projects



# Exhibition at Saint Louis Art Museum Explores the Brutality of War

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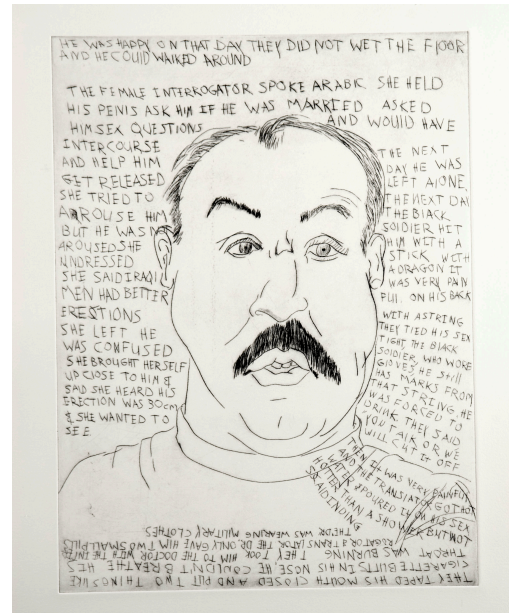
**ST. LOUIS, MO.-** The Saint Louis Art Museum is presenting Impressions of War, an exhibition featuring The Disasters of War, Francisco de Goya's 80-plate contemplation of war and its aftereffects, as well as additional series of prints by three artists whose works equally respond to the darker side of war and its aftermath.

Organized as a counterpart to the upcoming exhibition Conflicts of Interest: Art and War in Modern Japan, Impressions of War shows alternative approaches to the tragedies of war. The free exhibition is on view in galleries 234 and 235 from Aug. 5 through Feb. 12, 2017.

Responding to the French occupation of Spain by Napoleon Bonaparte between 1808 and 1814, The Disasters of War stands as one of the major achievements in the history of European art. Although Goya made the prints between 1810 and 1820, they were not formally published until 1863, more than three decades after his death.

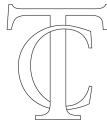
The series broke ground with the intensity of its focus on war's cruelties, yet the prints also shed light on the bravery of the Spanish people on the ground in the face of foreign occupation.

The artist's fearless and personal approach to the topic of war sets it apart from official military imagery celebrating triumphs on the battlefield or the deaths of great generals. Instead, some



Daniel Heyman, *The Amman Portfolio: He Was Happy on That Day* 2006, 27 x 22.5 inches, edition of 30

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plates concentrate on unmentionable brutality between soldiers and civilians as evidenced by the harrowing display in *This is Worse*, while others highlight the heroism of individuals, such as in *Neither do These*, in which women resist sexual attacks from the enemy.

*Impressions of War* also includes print series by three other artists in France, Germany, and the United States from the 17th to the 21st centuries in which the artists respond—as Goya did—on a personal rather than an official level.

Jacques Callot produced the earliest European print series chronicling the “miseries” of the great upheaval—largely sparked by religious conflict—that rocked Europe during the mid-17th century, establishing a tradition that inspired many artists after him. Callot’s petite scenes portray in exceptional detail the deeds and misdeeds of enlisted men and civilians during unstable times.

Max Beckmann’s portfolio *Hell* scrutinizes the bloody political clashes and material hardship that afflicted Berlin in the months following World War I. In *Martyrdom*, for example, Beckmann portrays the murder of the prominent communist leader Rosa Luxemburg, whose lifeless, outstretched body he depicts in the form of a cross.

**Daniel Heyman’s *Amman Portfolio*—the most recent of the four series—responds to the earlier series even as it departs from them. Heyman was invited to witness interviews of Iraqi citizens who had been detained and tortured in the infamous Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, and he produced eight descriptive drypoint portraits with fragments excerpted from the traumatic interviews.**

***Impressions of War* is curated by Elizabeth Wyckoff, curator of prints, drawings, and photographs; Leah Chizek, research assistant; and Ann-Maree Walker, senior research assistant, and Gretchen Wagner, Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Prints, Drawings, and Photographs.**