

April 6, 1999

WAR ZONES

Organized by Presentation House Gallery.
Curated by Karen Henry and Karen Love

April 17-September 26, 1999

War Zones presents photo- and media-based art work concerned with situations of conflict in the late Twentieth Century. The works, by an international selection of contemporary artists, are divided into three sections: *Siting Conflict*, *Present Tense*, and *Bearing Witness*. The project begins in April and spans the summer and into September, and involves a number of venues and collaborators including Pacific Cinémathèque, Artspeak Gallery, Access Gallery, The Contemporary Art Gallery, The Vancouver Art Gallery and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms.

Contemporary artists interact with the context of war by creating images and objects which encourage memory and reflection, memorialize and criticize, mark sites and physical traces in order to evoke their implications for the past and for the future. The art works are fragments, artifacts, representing one position within the diverse range of experience. The exhibition is not a comprehensive survey of the history of war, nor does it address the politics of any one conflict in depth, but as a whole it provides a context for reflecting on what French theorist Paul Virilio has called the "merciless" century, and on implications for the future.

WAR ZONES BILLBOARDS

Edward Poitras - May
Jamelie Hassan - June
John & Yoko - July

The *War Zones* exhibition will extend into the public domain with three consecutive billboard images installed on Georgia Street near the Ford Centre and the Vancouver Public Library. These billboards are meant to stimulate awareness about situations related to conflict historically and currently. Edward Poitras identifies the territorial claims of the British and early efforts to annihilate First Nations peoples as the root of ongoing conflict over self-determination and land claims in North America. Jamelie Hassan's billboard *Linkage* (1993), originally shown in Saskatoon, represents the conflict in Iraq as something effecting more than the power relations of the moment. She refers to Iraq as the Biblical cradle of civilization and attempts to reconnect the sterility of the media representation of that conflict with the environmental and cultural consequences. Lastly, John and Yoko's *War Is Over!* (1969) encapsulates the spirit of the peace movement in the 70s. The two stars consciously used their media access in this project and others, including the famous bed-in in Montreal, to contribute to the anti-war campaign. This slogan identified the role of the individual conscience and the desire for peaceful co-existence at the heart of the peace movement. A postcard of *War Is Over!* will also be distributed.

ARTISTS' BIOS

EDWARD POITRAS lives and works in Regina, Saskatchewan. He studied at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College and Manitou College in Quebec. He has produced a number of solo exhibitions and exhibited throughout Canada and abroad. His work represented Canada in the *Venice Biennale*, 1995.

When we were British, 1999, billboard project - MAY

JAMELIE HASSAN is an artist and activist from London, Ontario. She studied art in Rome, Beirut and Baghdad. Her work addresses cultural politics and issues of identity and displacement, and has been exhibited widely in Canada and internationally.

Linkage, 1993, billboard project - JUNE

JOHN AND YOKO. John Lennon (deceased) was a songwriter, musician and member of the famous Beatles band. Yoko Ono is an artist who was active in the Fluxus movement in New York, created many texts and performances, and continues to make art and music. These two influential cultural figures used their media fame to present anti-war performances and actions in the 1960s-70s. Yoko Ono lives in New York.

War is Over!, 1969, postcard and billboard projects - JULY

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May 1, 1999

WAR ZONES

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War Zones - Present Tense

Jochen Gerz and John Scott
At the Contemporary Art Gallery, 555 Hamilton Street (681-2700)
Mona Hatoum and Nancy Paterson
At Artspeak Gallery, 233 Carrall Street (688-0051)

May 15 - June 26

Opening Reception at both galleries: Friday, May 14, 8pm

Johan Grimonprez
At Access Gallery, 206 Carrall Street (689-2907)

June 5 - July 3

Opening Reception: Friday, June 4, 8pm

Present Tense explores images of conflict involving spectacle, gender relations, terrorism and apocalyptic visions. John Scott's gritty "most evil vehicle" expresses a relentless mechanized warfare which encompasses past, present, future, fiction and reality. In contrast, Jochen Gerz' work attests to the human spirit, utilizing ironic confluences of history and the every day. Mona Hatoum and Nancy Paterson both picture women in relation to war and media. Hatoum's billboard project *Over My Dead Body* (1988) expresses both a towering strength of conviction and an ironic vulnerability in relations between men and women, civilian and soldier. Paterson's installation *The Machine in the Garden* (1993) - a technological one-armed bandit - incorporates images of war, talking heads, and children's programs whirring together in a game of chance, each as relevant and powerful as the next. Opening in early June, Johan Grimonprez' *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* provides an ironic context for the gripping visual and soundscapes of hijacking incidents in the last 40 years.

WAR ZONES PUBLIC PROGRAMS

For May (see other releases for subsequent events)

Panel Discussion: *War, Capital and Media*

Sunday, May 16 at 2 pm

At the Vancouver Art Gallery, in Room 403. Free admission.

(see reverse)

NANCY PATERSON is an artist who teaches at the Ontario College of Art. She will speak about her work in relation to gender, technology and the media. ZDENKA BADOVINAC is Director of the Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana, Slovenia, where she has been active in creating links with the cultural community in Sarajevo. THOMAS KEENAN teaches in the Department of Comparative Literature at the State University of New York, Binghamton. He is the author of *Fables of Responsibility* (Stanford U.P., 1997), and is currently at work on *Live Feed*, a book about the coincidence of real-time media, trans-border humanitarianism, and conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and Central Africa. JOHN SCOTT lives and works in Toronto. The mechanisms of war and mass destruction are a common subject in his practice. The panel will be moderated by PETER BUITENHUIS, Professor of English at Simon Fraser University Continuing Studies. He is lecturing and publishing on the subject of writers and propaganda during WWII.

Film Series

Pacific Cinematheque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver (688-8202). 7:15 & 9:30 pm programs.
Co-presented by PHG, PC and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (See PC program for details)

War Zones II - May 6

Alexander Nevsky, 1938. Director: Sergei Eisenstein. (107 min.)

Smothering Dreams, 1981. Director: Dan Reeves. (22 min.)

Blockade, 1993. Director: Nettie Wild. (90 min.)

Nothing to be Written Here, 1996 Director: Wendy Oberlander (47 min.)

War Zones III - May 13

La Jetee, 1962. Director: Chris Marker (30 min.)

The Iraq Campaign 1991: A Television History in Colour, 1991. Dir: Phil Patris (19 min.)

Lessons of Darkness, 1992. Director: Werner Herzog. (50 min.)

Starship Troopers, 1997. Director: Paul Verhoeven. (127 min.)

War Zones IV - May 20

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame, 1996. Director: Srdan Dragojevic (125 min.)

Planet Sarajevo, 1994. Director: Sahin Sisic (29 min.)

Prime Time in the Camps, 1993. Director: Chris Marker (28 min.)

Billboard Project: Month of June

At the corner of West Georgia and Homer Streets - Jamelie Hassan, *Linkage*, 1993.

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May 25, 1999

WAR ZONES

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War Zones - Bearing Witness

Eugenio Dittborn, Roy Kiyooka, Nam June Paik,
Barbara Steinman, Hiromi Tsuchida, Gu Xiong

June 5 - July 18, 1999

At Presentation House Gallery

333 Chesterfield Avenue, North Vancouver (986-1351),

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 5, 2pm

Dominique Blain

At the Vancouver Art Gallery: Ground floor and Rotunda

July 14 - September 16, 1999

Opening Reception and Artists Talk: Thursday, July 15, 7:30pm

The work in *Bearing Witness* reflects on wars and revolutions and the scars they have left in the human psyche. WWII plays a major role in this exhibit, with its immensely powerful reverberations throughout the second half of the Twentieth Century. These works contain traces of the emotional and cultural angst of past conflicts from WWII through the iconic confrontation between democracy and communism in Tiananmen Square. The works of Paik, Kiyooka, Tsuchida and Steinman all reference the cataclysmic events of WWII and the need to witness in order to remember. Eugenio Dittborn is a Chilean artist whose work takes the form of air-mail letters - documents of communication sent from the margins of the art world into the centre and which often represent those who disappeared in the trauma of recent history in Chile. The demise of the Soviet Union signaled the defeat of communism in the west (so-called) and the loss of the focus on one major adversary to be replaced by a complex political arena of diverse interests and powers. The conflict between students and tanks at Tiananmen Square in China represented by Gu Xiong's installation is a powerful image because it represents the dream of individual freedom within the social construct which can still inspire the revolutionary spirit. Dominique Blain's piece *Inner Sanctum* (1994-5) at the Vancouver Art Gallery addresses the perpetuation of violence and stands as a chilling reminder of the indoctrination of children into political orthodoxy.

WAR ZONES PUBLIC PROGRAMS

For June/July (see other releases for previous WZ events)

Panel Discussion: *Witnessing War*

Sunday, June 6 at 2pm

At the Vancouver Art Gallery in Room 403. Free admission.

JOHAN GRIMONPREZ is a Belgian artist who has studied and worked in Ghent, New York and Berlin. His piece *dial H-I-S-T-O-R-Y* is an image archive of airplane hijackings and was shown at Documenta X in Germany. BARBARA STEINMAN lives and works in Montreal and uses video, installations, sculpture and photography to address social injustices and communication. GU XIONG was born and educated in China and came to Canada in 1989. He will speak about his Tiananmen Square piece in relation to his experiences in China and in Canada. KAREN HENRY has worked as a curator in Vancouver since 1982. She is co-curator of *War Zones* and will present research on performance in relation to war. The panel will be moderated by JOHN O'BRIAN, author, editor and professor of Art History at the University of British Columbia.

Artist's Talk: Hiromi Tsuchida

At Presentation House Gallery

Thursday, June 10, at 7:30pm

(In Japanese and English) Free admission.

Artist's Talk: Dominique Blain

At the Vancouver Art Gallery

Thursday, July 15, at 7:30pm,

followed by the opening reception.

Billboard Project: Month of July

At the corner of West Georgia and Homer Streets

John & Yoko, *War is Over!*, 1969

A catalogue for the exhibition *War Zones* will be produced in the coming year, with essays by Zdenka Badovenac, Karen Henry, Thomas Keenan and Sue Malvern.

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War Zones - Siting Conflict

Barbara Alper, Willie Doherty, Alfredo Jaar,
Allan Harding MacKay, Martha Rosler

April 17- May 30 at Presentation House Gallery

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 17, 2pm

The work in *Siting Conflict* is defined by its relationship to place. These sites are presented to the viewer largely as landscapes inhabited by danger, destruction and human tragedy. The works represent conflicts in Northern Ireland, Rwanda, Somalia, Vietnam and Iraq. Television is included here as a contemporary "site" through which we experience war as referred to in Barbara Alper's piece on the Gulf War. The televisual aesthetic as used by artists is an inevitable reference to this space of power and representation of commercial television. Video works by Allan Harding MacKay and Willie Doherty are included in *Siting Conflict*. Doherty uses video extensively in his work to contrast the sensationalization of television imagery with the subjective experience of an individual living in the context of the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland. MacKay was an official war artist in Somalia, commissioned by the Canadian military to represent his experience there. Alfredo Jaar is also an observer. In a recent project he visited Rwanda, taking hundreds of photographs. The work which resulted from this experience deliberately attests to the limits of the ability of photographs to represent this situation. Rosler's collage work - *Bringing the War Home: House Beautiful* - dates from the Vietnam War era and juxtaposes scenes of the war with the security and comfort of North American households.

WAR ZONES PUBLIC PROGRAMS

For April and May (see other releases for subsequent events)

Artist's Talk: Willie Doherty

Thursday, April 15, 12:15pm

At Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Granville Island. Free admission.

Panel Discussion:

In the Field: Representing Conflict

Sunday, April 18 at 2 pm

At the Vancouver Art Gallery in Room 403. Free admission.

WILLIE DOHERTY is a photo- and media-based artist from Northern Ireland. ALLAN HARDING MACKAY was commissioned by the Canadian Armed Forces Civilian Artist Program to document the humanitarian aid mission in Somalia. SUE MALVERN is a Professor at the Department of History of Art, University of Reading, England. She has written on artists' work in relation to war from WWI to the present. NETTIE WILD is a filmmaker from Vancouver who has produced documentaries related to situations of armed conflict. The panel will address the dilemmas of representing conflict. The panel will be moderated by JERRY ZASLOVE, Director of the Institute for the Humanities at Simon Fraser University.

Film Series

Pacific Cinématèque, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver (688-8202)

Co-presented by PHG, PC and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms

War Zones I

April 29, 7:15 and 9:30pm (see PC program for details)

Night and Fog, 1955. Director: Alain Resnais. (30 min.)

Hiroshima Mon Amour, 1959. Director: Alain Resnais. (90 min.)

Dr. Strangelove, 1963. Director: Stanley Kubrick. (94 min.)

Billboard Project - Month of May

Corner of West Georgia and Homer Streets

Edward Poitras, *When we were British*, 1999

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