

Large print guide
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Blavatnik Art, Film and Photography Galleries



Exploring the Galleries

These galleries can be explored in any order.

They start chronologically. Later, you will encounter artworks, films and photographs arranged by theme. Throughout the galleries, the term 'visual practitioners' is used to group artists, filmmakers and photographers.

Included here are works that show scenes of death, injury, violence and human suffering. Images about the horrors of war can create understanding where words fail.

The lines on the floor are designed to protect the works on display - please do not cross them.

Explore the Blavatnik Art, Film and Photography Galleries with Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app. Hear from IWM curators as they discuss the works on display and share more stories from our vast collection.



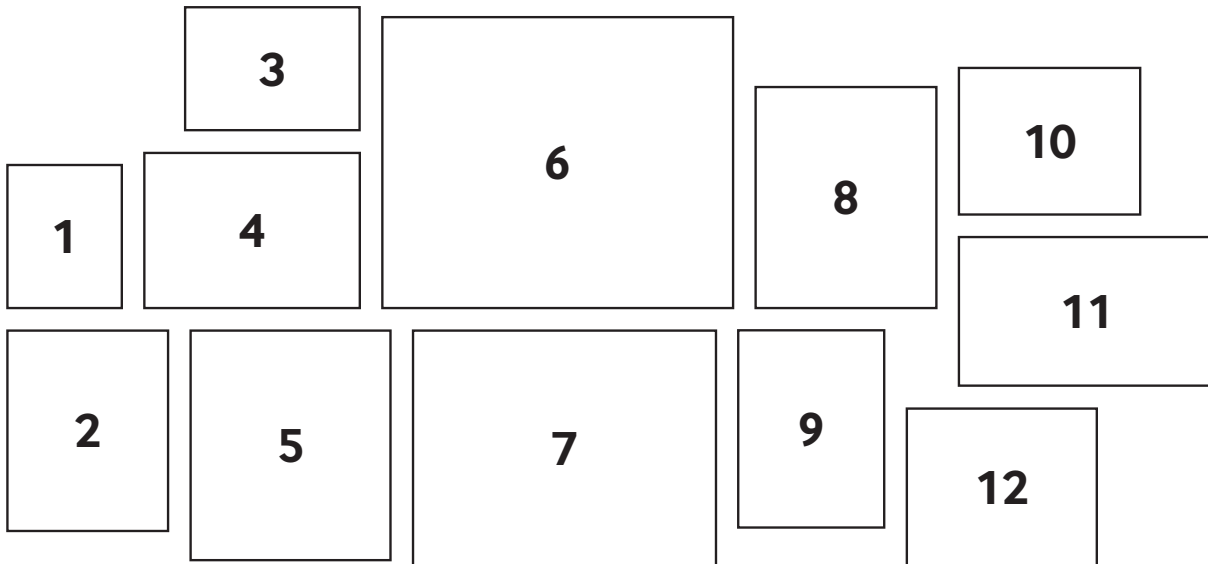
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Introduction

The works of art, film and photography brought together here emerge from human conflict.

Collected since IWM's inception in 1917, the works reflect social, cultural and political changes across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and the individual perspectives of their makers. They provide a vivid account of modern war.

These galleries explore the experiences and innovations of artists, filmmakers and photographers. They reveal visual practitioners to be powerful narrators who shape how we think and feel about conflict.



- 1. Unknown photographer**, A wounded French soldier being taken ashore at Dover, 26–29 May 1940
Exhibition print from glass copy negative, HU 1156
- 2. Sonia Lawson**, Men disguised as Clods, 1984
Oil on canvas, Art 16015
- 3. David Gentleman**, No More Lies, 2004
Exhibition print, PST 8812
- 4. Evelyn Dunbar**, Land Army Girls Going to Bed, 1943
Oil on canvas, ART LD 3351
- 5. John Lavery**, Armistice Day, November 11th, 1918, Grosvenor Place, London, 1918.
Oil on canvas, ART 17948
Purchased with Art Fund and National Heritage Memorial Fund support

- 6. Paul Seawright, Mounds, 2002**
Exhibition print, cibachrome print on paper,
ART 16793
- 7. John Nash, 'Over The Top': 1st Artists' Rifles at Marcoing, 30th December 1917, 1918**
Oil on canvas. ART 1656
- 8. Ethel Gabain, Sandbag Filling, Islington Borough Council, 1941** Oil on canvas, ART LD 1443
- 9. Joan Miro, Aidez l'Espagne, 1937**
Hand-coloured stencil and inscription on paper
Facsimile ART 15319
- 10. Frank Hurley, The Battle of Passchendaele, 1917**
Exhibition print from glass copy negative,
E(AUS) 1233
- 11. Peter Jackson, WingNut Films, They Shall Not Grow Old, 2018** Born digital, colourised with sound
MGH 7029
Commissioned by 14–18 NOW and IWM in association with the BBC
- 11. Unknown filmmaker, Pathé Pictorial, Memories of Albert & Beyond and Ypres – The Immortal, 1920**
35mm hand-stencilled colour silent film, MGH 2082
- 12. Leonora Green, Lest We Forget, 1945**
Oil on canvas, ART 16345

Walter Sickert, Tipperary, 1914

Oil on canvas

ART 17980

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson,

French Troops Resting, 1916

Oil on canvas

ART 5219

John Warwick Brooke, Night work at Rombly,

August 1918

Exhibition print from 5x4 inch glass plate negative

Q 6971

Unknown official photographer, Royal Navy

Airship Z.3, 1916–18

Exhibition print from 5x4 inch glass plate negative

Q 18263

Christopher Pilkington, Shelled post office in

Ypres, 1914

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative

Q 57274

Max Wipperling, German artillery crew, probably
in the Vosges Mountains, c.1914–18

Exhibition print from gelatin silver print on fibre-based paper, HU 140274

© The rights holder

Jill Craigie, Two Cities, Out of Chaos, 1944

35mm black and white film with sound

MGH 3634

Laura Knight, Ruby Loftus Screwing a Breech-ring, 1943

Oil on canvas,

ART LD 2850

Lieutenant William George Vanderson, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Men of the Fourth Indian Division with a captured German flag at Sidi Omar, North Africa, 1941

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative, E 6940

Leslie Cole, Company Quartermaster-Sergeant Van Omoheusen of the ATS, Ceylon, 1945

Oil on canvas,

ART LD 5688

Cecil Beaton, The London Blitz, 1940

Exhibition print from gelatin silver print on fibre-based paper, HU 112276

Unknown press photographer, Daily Sketch, Bomb damage, London, 1941

Exhibition print from gelatin silver print on fibre-based paper, HU 131472

W T Lockyear, Buildings burning in Manchester after a German night raid, 23 December 1940

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative, H 6324

Paul Nash, Battle of Germany, 1944

Oil on canvas, ART LD 4526

Ian McLaren, No - CND, 1967

Exhibition print, PST 2569

Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam (CALCAV), Dear Mom and Dad, Your Silence is Killing Me, 1970

Exhibition print, PST 2525

Personality Posters and James Montgomery Flagg (after), I Want You for US Army, 1972

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 2524

Unknown American official photographer, The mushroom cloud over Nagasaki, 1945

Exhibition print from large format film base negative, MH 2629

John Keane, Kuwait photographs, 1991

Exhibition prints from C-type prints, GLF 131 / GLF 239

Ori Gersht, Vital Signs, 1999

Exhibition print from digital C-type print on aluminium, ART 16818 3

John Timberlake, 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, New York, 11 September 2001

Exhibition print from 35mm film base negative, 2014-08-02/1/27

© John Timberlake

Suzanne Plunkett, People covered in dust and debris, New York, 11 September 2001

Exhibition prints from born digital colour photographs, DC 124023 / DC 123993

© AP Archive

Stop the War Coalition, End the Torture, 2004

Exhibition print, PST 8807

Practise and Process

(Wall images clockwise)

Filmmaker Rosie Newman using her cine camera,
1939–1945

HU 65393

US Army cameraman at Al Jaber base, Kuwait, 1998

© Jacques Langevin/Sygma/Sygma via Getty Images

Photographer Sergeant Harris in the rubble of a
German building, 1939–1945

BU 8356

Gulf War cameraman Sergeant Miles snatches a
meal, 1990–1991

GLF 1399

Mrs Albert Broom displays her work, Knightsbridge,
1916

HU 51891

Wrens training as photography assistants, Fife, 1942

A 7119

Official cameraman Ariel Varges in a trench, Salonika,
1915–1918

Q 779545

Photographer in Bangkok during the military coup,
1981

© Roland NEVEU/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images

Official photographer Paul Haley covering the
Falklands, 1982
FKD 312

Photojournalist Suzanne Plunkett in New York after
9/11, 2001
DC 124420

Photographer employed by the British government
to cover activities in India, c.1930s
HU 88580

Air Mechanic Cecil Haliday demonstrates a C Type
aerial camera, 1914–1918
Q 33850

Aerial photographs of Malaya fitted into a mosaic, 1945
A 30770

RAF airman carrying an aerial camera in France,
1939–1945
C 128

US Army photographer in a military helicopter over
Iraq, 2011
© Scott Peterson / Getty Images

IWM photographer Richard Ash at Camp Bastion,
Afghanistan, 2013
DC 2568

Red Cross artist Betty Bar paints a van, 1915–1918
Q 83712

AFPU cameramen in Italy, 1943, with visible
censor mark
TR 1397

A woman captures a soldier's return from the
Falklands, 1982
FKD 2911

Coporal Pierce mural painting at a WAAF training
centre, c.1943
CH 8533

TV cameraman records BBC journalist Alastair
Leithead in Helmand, Afghanistan, 2006
HTF-2006-006-029

War artist Ethel Gabain paints a bomb site, London,
c.1940–1941
HU 131662

Cameraman Sergeant Goddard in the ruins of Caen,
1944
B 6804

TV crew interviews American soldiers in Vietnam,
1967

© Tim Page/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images

War artist Martin Hardie sketches by the River Piave,
Italy, 1917–1918

Q 26185

US Army photographer Sergeant Adams with British
troops in Kuwait, 2003

OP-TELIC 03-010-13-034

(Showcase)

Sergeant Richard Gee, Army Film and Photographic Unit shoulder flash and DeVry standard cine camera, 1926–1945

Textile, metal, glass and leather

INS 6215 / PHO 303

Filmmaker

Richard Gee covered the British Army's 1944–1945 advance from Normandy through the Netherlands into Germany.

Object

The American-made DeVry was the cine camera most widely used by the AFPU. It had three interchangeable lenses, was clockwork driven, hand-cranked and held 100ft of film – 67 seconds running time. Completely manual, exposure and focus were based on judgement.

Context

Referred to as the 'lunchbox' or 'sardine tin', the DeVry was inferior to the US-issued Eyemo, and the German Arriflex, which was battery powered and took 400ft of film. Sergeant Ian Grant pointed out that it 'made a bloody good helmet.'

(Showcase)

Paul Eedle, Material relating to time in Iraq, c.2003

Sony mini-DV camera, hotel card, Iraqi exit card, notebook, Iraqi press pass, wristwatch, handwritten sheet of expenses

PHO 457.1 / Documents.27593 / EPH 11861

Filmmaker

Paul Eedle reported on the invasion of Iraq between January and April 2003. He was staying at the nearby Palestine Hotel when Saddam Hussein's statue in Firdos Square was toppled. He recorded the event using this camera.

Object

A wristwatch given to Eedle, lists of expenses including fixer fees, a visa and press pass, show the importance of engaging with local people and customs when working in a war zone.

Context

Eedle founded *Out There News* in 1996. Aware of the 'irrevocable shift of power ... to individuals', he welcomed email and video contributions from non-journalists.

(Showcase)

Sergeant W Lawrie, Army Film and Photographic
Unit Secret Caption Sheet, 17 April 1945

Print on paper

Facsimile REG/FILM/01/02/015

Filmmaker

Bill Lawrie was one of two cameramen to spend ten days filming at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp after its liberation.

Object

All AFPU filming had to be documented on what was commonly referred to as a 'dope sheet'. This recorded key details required to interpret the scenes filmed – date, location, military unit, name of cameraman, technical information – followed by a shot-by-shot description of the action. Dope sheets were written or typed-up at the end of the day based on notes made in the field.

Context

This dope sheet is typical of those written at Belsen. It moves beyond practical details into testimony of Lawrie's visit to the camp.

(Showcase)

Sergeant L W J Harris, Army Film and Photographic Unit film slate, 1943–1945

Wooden blackboard

EPH 10978

Filmmaker

Among Sergeant Harris' stories shot with the AFPU are the Battle for Caen, refugees in Normandy, and scenes in Paris after its liberation.

Image

Every AFPU cameraman had a personalised blackboard and a supply of chalk to 'slate' the essential details of each filming session. The information enabled the processed film to be identified, used and edited without the cameraman present.

Context

The opening film sequences of slates held up by other AFPU members provide a powerful sense of place to the viewer.

(Showcase)

Ronald Searle, Slouch hat, sketchbook and pencil box, c.1941–44, Cloth, leather, paper, wood, lead and pigments

UNI 8201 / ART 15747 157 / EPH 11503

Gift of the artist, 1984

Artist

Ronald Searle was captured in Singapore in 1942, held in Changi prison and then sent to work on the Thailand-Burma 'Death' railway.

Object

Searle secretly sketched grim camp life, evading guards by hiding drawings under the beds of dying friends. He sold some for cigarettes, which he then exchanged for pencils and paper. He brought around 300 sketches back to Britain.

Context

Conditions in Changi were brutal and Searle experienced bouts of tropical disease. He was unwaveringly committed to documenting what he saw, describing drawing as a 'mental life belt'.

(Showcase)

Edward Ardizzone, War diary, 1943–1945

Ink on bound paper, one of three volumes

ARCH 20/003

Artist

Edward Ardizzone was one of the longest serving artists commissioned by the government's War Artists Advisory Committee during the Second World War.

Object

Ardizzone travelled widely documenting his experiences in drawings and diaries.

Context

He followed Allied forces fighting in Europe and North Africa, periodically sending drawings home. In 1943 the Committee dedicated an entire National Gallery wall to Ardizzone's drawings. By May 1945, they had collected almost 400 of his works.

(Showcase)

John Nash, Paintbrushes and holder, c.1918

Wood, metal and fibre brushes, painted iron box

EPH 9007 / EPH 9008

Artist

John Nash saw active service on the Western Front before being commissioned as a war artist in 1918. He described his war paintings as the 'result of actual vivid experience'.

Object

On the front line, Nash jotted down ideas which he later worked up in paint. He consulted photographs at the Ministry of Information to accurately represent details such as barbed wire.

Context

Nash later recalled the physical and emotional toll of service, and his pride at 'having managed to endure it and have come out alive and sane'.

(Showcase)

Trio Sarajevo, Olympic Games Sarajevo 1994, The Wall - Pink Floyd, Happy New Year, 1993–94

Print on card

ART EPHEM 00187 8 / ART EPHEM 00187 10 / ART EPHEM 00187 24

Artist

Founded in 1985, design studio Trio Sarajevo comprises three practitioners: Bojan and Dalida Hadžihalilović and Lela Mulabegović Hatt.

Object

Influenced by punk and pop art, Trio made satirical, anti-war posters and postcards. They subverted imagery and text, including well-known logos and slogans, often to include 'Sarajevo'.

Context

When war broke out in 1992 the three artists chose to stay in their besieged city. Materials were scarce, but they used their design practice to demonstrate a shared global culture: 'the visual provocation was the holy grail'.

(Showcase)

Goerz Anschütz, Folding camera and plate holders,
c.1900 and 5x4 inch glass negative, 1917

Wood, metal, glass and leather

PHO 298.1 / PHO 298.2 / PHO 298.6 / BOX

607-813-12LB-51bP-1917

Photographer

First World War photographers used lightweight, portable cameras like this one to secure photographs of the shell-pocked landscapes and dynamic situations of war.

Object

Hand-held folding plate cameras were more practical for war photography than their predecessors. However, the glass plate negatives they produced were heavy and fragile, so they were still challenging to use in the field.

Context

This German make of camera, introduced in 1890, was widely used by British photographers during the First World War. It was such an efficient model that its official use continued into the Second World War.

(Showcase)

Joseph Haywood Magee, Leica IIIa 35mm camera,
1935, Press Pass and License, c.1939–1949, *Picture
Post*, June 1943

Metal, glass and plastic, paper

PHO 118 / Facsimile Documents.18028 / PROP 2154

Photographer

Joseph Haywood Magee was a photographer for *Picture Post*, a popular magazine covering art, society and current affairs. He was despatched to cover the Second World War in the UK and abroad.

Object

Haywood Magee required multiple forms of identification to establish clearance to work. The Leica camera was German, but its quality and portability made it desirable for British photographers.

Context

Experienced correspondents fed news about the war's progress to a nation hungry for information, but they had to submit to tight regulation and censorship.

(Showcase)

Jon Ball, Olympus OM-10 35mm camera and zoom lens, c.1979–1987

Polycarbonate, steel and glass

PHO 454.1 / PHO 454.2 / PHO 454.11

Photographer

This camera was purchased by Jon Ball in anticipation of a trip to New York in 2001. While there, he used it to photograph the September 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

Object

Ball photographed smoke rising from the twin towers and nearby streets covered by dust from the falling buildings.

Context

After he returned from New York, Ball found that the camera served as a painful reminder of the attack. He never used it again.

Power of the Image

Power of the Image

The critical, personal and emotional responses of artists, filmmakers and photographers have power. Made to rally support, condemn or bear witness, they fundamentally shape how we think about conflict.

But images made in conflict can be challenging, contradictory, even divisive. We might trust them or question their authenticity. Today, the ease and speed of image-making has made more perspectives visible, further complicating our sense of truth, of right and wrong.

What visual practitioners include in their work – and what they leave out - can dramatically alter how we remember conflict.

Propaganda and Protest

In posters, paintings, newsreels and newspapers, the propaganda work of artists, filmmakers and photographers has been critical in informing the public and generating popular support for war.

Balancing truth and drama, some visual practitioners have staged or enhanced scenes for maximum impact. Others have been censored for wittingly or unwittingly revealing uncomfortable or sensitive information.

More recently, some artists have adopted the confrontational slogans, symbols and images of official propaganda to promote political ideologies and anti-war campaigns.

kennardphillipps, Photo Op, 2007

Photolithograph on paper

ART 17541

Artist

Working collaboratively as kennardphillipps, artists Peter Kennard and Cat Phillipps use digital collage to campaign against war and capitalism. Their work is regularly used on protest marches.

Image

This digital collage places former Prime Minister Tony Blair in front of a burning landscape. Comparing the manipulation of photographs by hand and the use of digital technology, Kennard said, 'the strange and devastatingly effective quality of the ... portrait of Tony Blair is that it really does meld into a luridly believable scene.'

Context

Photo Op was produced in response to the UK Government's decision to go to war in Iraq in 2003 despite widespread public protest – the biggest ever seen in the UK.

Anti-war posters

Artist

F H K Henrion worked for the Ministry of Information during the Second World War, producing posters about gas attacks, food production and sexually transmitted infections. Peter Kennard is a British artist who first became involved in anti-Vietnam War activism while studying. Both artists produced work in support of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

Image

Henrion and Kennard both used the radical visual language of photomontage and collage. Kennard said, 'through photomontage I'm trying to turn my outrage into image.'

Context

In the 1950s, Britain became the third nuclear power after the US and the Soviet Union. In 1958 CND was launched in response, attracting public figures, designers and intellectuals. It aimed to mobilise British public opinion in high-profile rallies and marches, in which posters and banners played an important role.

Frédéric Henri Kay Henrion, Stop Nuclear Suicide, 1963

Lithograph print on paper

Facsimile PST 3896

© The rights holder

Peter Kennard, Could you stomach this?, 1983

Photolithograph on paper

PST 9148

Film and satire

Filmmaker

Allied propagandists re-edited Leni Riefenstahl's notorious film of the 1934 Nazi party rally, *The Triumph of the Will*, to subvert its original message.

Object

In *Germany Calling*, sequences are recut to a popular tune to mock the spectacle of parades in Nuremberg. *These are the Men* is more serious, with the poet Dylan Thomas rewording the frenzied speeches of Nazi leaders to reveal their failures and insecurities.

Context

In response to queries in Parliament, Minister for Information Brendan Bracken, argued that ridicule was effective propaganda. He noted, 'British troops who have seen it enjoyed it thoroughly.'

Charles A Ridley, Spectator, *Germany Calling*/
Lambeth Walk, 1941

35mm black and white film with sound

NGB 832

Alan Osbiton and Dylan Thomas, Strand, *These are the Men*, 1943

35mm black and white film with sound

COI 230

(Showcase)

Various press photographers, Censored photographs, 1941–1944

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper

HU 131428 / HU 131491 / HU 131492 / HU 140555 –
HU 140561

Photographer

During the Second World War, all British press photographs were examined at the Ministry of Information Press and Censorship Bureau. Some had to be altered, others were barred from publication.

Image

Images and text that revealed information considered sensitive or secret, such as locations of Britain's defences or the movements of public figures, were marked for editing.

Context

The control of information was a crucial part of the war. The government had to find a balance between keeping the public informed and protecting military secrets.

Spanish Civil War posters

Artist

During the Spanish Civil War, propaganda artists created images of power and strength to rally support on both sides of the right-wing Nationalist and left-wing Republican divide.

Object

Socialist symbols, and idealised depictions of peasants and workers, featured heavily in posters in Spain and beyond. Shocking images, such as this photograph of a dead child, were used to motivate people to resist Nationalist forces.

Context

Leaders of the radical left-wing trade union Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (CNT) held senior government positions during the Spanish Civil War. In some cities they managed most government functions. These posters reflect a revolutionary, do-it-yourself political culture. Thousands of non-Spanish radicals travelled to Spain to join the fight against the fascist Right.

Arturo Ballester, CNT! Llor A Los Heroes!
[CNT! Hail to the Heroes!], 1936–1937

Lithograph print on paper
Facsimile PST 8048, © The rights holder

V Petit Alandi, Defiende La Pequeña Propiedad
[Republican Left. Defend small private property.
Death penalty to the thief], c.1937

Lithograph print on paper
Facsimile PST 8510, © The rights holder

Attributed to Augusto, Madrid, the “military” practice
of the rebels. If you will tolerate this, your children will
be next, c.1937

Lithograph print on paper
Facsimile PST 8661, © The rights holder

John Armstrong, Pro Patria [For Country], 1938

Tempera on plywood

ART 16547

*Purchased with Art Fund and National Heritage
Memorial Fund support*

Artist

During the Spanish Civil War, artist John Armstrong painted many works opposing General Franco's fascist regime. In 1938, Armstrong visited Rome, where he saw posters bearing Mussolini's political slogan 'Pro Patria' posted across the city.

Image

Armstrong creates an eerie landscape following terrible devastation. Shattered classical statuary and damaged buildings stand in for a wider devastated civilization. A single figure, naked and vulnerable, haunts the wreckage.

Context

In 1937, General Franco approved the bombing of the Spanish town of Guernica. Many civilians were killed and the event provoked widespread horror. A report in *The Manchester Guardian* described, 'a chaos of charred beams, twisted girders ... and ... forlorn groups of inhabitants wandering in search of missing relatives'.

William Orpen, Dead Germans in a Trench, 1918

Oil on canvas

ART 2955

Gift of the artist, 1918

Artist

William Orpen first visited the Somme battlefield in 1917. Well-connected and driven by a chauffeur, he moved about freely.

Image

By this time, the Somme was a vast graveyard. Orpen later recalled the mud 'baked white and pure'. Below a bright blue sky, he used green to indicate the rotting flesh of the dead soldiers.

Context

Orpen's representation of dead enemy bodies concerned the military censor Arthur Lee, who banned the painting. It was exhibited in May 1918 after the decision was overturned.

Various filmmakers, Depictions of British war dead, 1918 and 1941

35mm black and white silent film

IWM 180 / IWM 415 / ADM 490

Filmmaker

Conventionally, official British films have not shown British or Allied dead. Exceptions have been military funerals or graves marked with crosses.

Image

Avoiding direct identification and despite the threat of censorship, cameramen sometimes specifically filmed the dead for historical record, as in *German Offensive* and *Mass Burial*. Other scenes were captured by chance, as in the HMS *Barham* footage, not released for four years after the event.

Context

In 1941, HMS *Barham* was torpedoed in the Mediterranean by a German submarine and sank within five minutes. 862 crew members were killed.

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, Paths of Glory, 1917

Oil on canvas

IWM ART 518

Artist

A radical young artist, C R W Nevinson volunteered as an ambulance driver at the outbreak of war.

Abandoning the abstract lines and shapes of modernism, he painted in an increasingly realistic manner to capture his experiences tending the wounded.

Image

In Nevinson's painting, the bloated corpses of British soldiers lie face down in the mud. The title comes from a Thomas Gray poem - 'The paths of glory lead but to the grave' - describing the futile waste of war.

Context

The censor banned this painting three months before a 1918 exhibition of the Nevinson's work. He included it anyway, adding a strip of paper emblazoned with the word 'censored'.

Staging and and manipulation

Filmmaker

To portray the realities of war, some filmmakers incorporated theatre and imagination into their work.

Object

The staged 'over the top' sequences in *Battle of the Somme* and this altered photograph of the Western Front are not eye-witness documents.

Context

It was impossible to record close-quarter action at the Somme. Staging was used for scenes cameramen could not reach. The Ministry of Information also oversaw film and photographic manipulation techniques, including super-enlargement and colourising, to enhance the 'humanly vivid, arresting' qualities of the film record.

Lieutenants Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell,
British Topical Committee for War Films, 'The Attack'
from *Battle of the Somme*, 1916

35mm black and white silent film

IWM 191/03

Unknown official filmmaker, Topical Film Company,
The Pictorial News, 'World's Largest Photograph',

28 February 1918

35mm black and white silent film

NTB 340-01

(Showcase)

Sergeant Geoff Loughlin, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Mortar fire, Salerno, 1944

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative
NA 13639

Photographer

AFPU personnel including Geoff Loughlin were sent to cover the Second World War in North Africa and Italy. They were a mixture of filmmakers and photographers.

Image

This action shot of an anti-tank gun crew apparently shows them coming under mortar fire at Salerno, Italy. But these soldiers are not really engaged in combat – the explosion was faked for the photograph.

Context

Photographs of the front line were trusted as authentic. They were not composed to deceive audiences back at home – instead dramatic reconstructions satisfied public demand for images of the action.

(Showcase)

Captain William Ivor Castle, Over the top, 1916

Exhibition print from 5x4 inch cellulose acetate copy
negative

CO 874

Photographer

An established pre-war press photographer, William Ivor Castle was sent by the Canadian Expeditionary Force to photograph the Western Front.

Image

What appears to be a dramatic photograph of troops going 'over the top' during the Battle of the Somme was in fact taken on a training exercise. This image was presented as an authentic battle scene.

Context

From 1916 propaganda operations increasingly relied on professional photographers sent to the Western Front. The heat of battle was too dangerous to be recorded safely, so some staged scenes to recreate its look and feel.

(Showcase)

Ernest Brooks, Cape Helles grave, 1915

Exhibition print from half-plate glass negative

Q 13378

Photographer

Ernest Brooks was one of the most prolific British official photographers of the First World War. He became best known for images of silhouetted soldiers.

Image

Originally described as a British soldier visiting the grave of a comrade at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, it later emerged that this was a faked scene. The grave is unlikely to be real, and the soldier posed at Brooks' request.

Context

When it was first collected by IWM, this photograph was presented alongside genuine images of mourning.

(Showcase)

Francis James Mortimer

Photographer

Francis James Mortimer was interested in pushing scientific and artistic boundaries and used editing and enhancement techniques across his work.

Image

The Relief Boat is a composite of 10 different photographs. Widely circulated in newspapers at the time *The Gate of Goodbye* shows war-bound soldiers bidding farewell to their loved ones at Victoria Station and is made up of 20 images.

Context

The Gate of Goodbye became Mortimer's great artistic contribution to the war. People at the time were not aware that it had been artificially composed.

Francis James Mortimer, The Relief Boat, 1908

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper with watercolour retouching

HU 83641

The Evening News Publishing, 11 November 1929

Newspaper cutting

PAP 41

Witness and evidence

Artists, filmmakers and photographers in conflict carry a burden of responsibility. Their responses to violent social upheaval shape opinion, reveal truth and can even inform the pursuit of justice.

Visual practitioners have recorded or reflected atrocities, abuses and crimes committed in conflict. Their work provides an important if incomplete view of some of the most horrific episodes of modern history.

Visual responses to war are pieces of evidence. In extreme situations where victims' voices have gone unheard or excluded, visual arts provide a vital means of bearing witness.

Mary Kessell, Notes from Belsen Camp, 1945

Sanguine crayon on paper

ART LD 5747 e / f

Artist

Mary Kessell visited the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in August 1945. She was one of only three British female official war artists selected to work abroad during the Second World War.

Image

These sketches may relate to a sick child Kessell met there: 'its mother so wanted it to live – they were fighting to keep it alive.' Kessell focussed on women and children, depicting them usually without any surroundings or background.

Context

Kessell visited Bergen-Belsen four months after liberation. The original camp buildings had been evacuated and destroyed. Surviving prisoners had been transferred to a displaced persons camp in former barracks nearby.

Doris Zinkeisen, Belsen: April 1945, 1945

Oil on canvas

ART LD 5467

Artist

During the Second World War, artist Doris Zinkeisen worked as a nurse helping Blitz casualties. Travelling with the Red Cross, she was the first artist to enter the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp shortly after liberation.

Image

Zinkeisen used muted colours for this stark work. Writing home, she described hard-hitting scenes: 'The shock of Belsen was never to be forgotten ... the ghastly smell of Typhus. The simply ghastly sight of skeleton bodies just flung out of the huts.'

Context

On 15 April 1945 British soldiers entered Bergen-Belsen to find a scene of absolute horror. Thousands of corpses lay unburied. Around 60,000 starving and sick people were packed into the camp's barracks.

Edith Birkin, Roll Call – Belsen, 1944, 1990

Acrylic on board

ART 17440

Gift of the artist, 2008

Artist

In 1941, Edith Birkin and her family were sent from Prague to the Łódź ghetto in Nazi-occupied Poland. Her parents died within a year. She was deported to Auschwitz in 1944, and later sent to Bergen-Belsen. She was among the survivors at liberation in 1945.

Image

Later in life, Birkin put her 'visions on canvas ... I wanted to show what it felt like to be a human being in the starved, emaciated, strange looking body, forever being separated from loved ones.'

Context

The Nazis enforced a brutal regime in concentration camps. During roll call, prisoners were forced to stand for hours in all weathers as guards completed a head count.

Edith Birkin

1927–2018

Edith Birkin was an expressionist artist, teacher and writer born into a Jewish family in Prague. She was a survivor of the Holocaust.

Birkin began painting in the 1970s after settling in London. At first, her colourful works depicted 'just ordinary things' but she soon began a series of works focussed on her memories of the Holocaust.

Birkin's works draw on the 'loneliness or isolation experienced by so many' in the concentration camps and afterwards. Following liberation and her return to Prague, Birkin checked 'lists of people ... every day hoping somebody would come back ... I was alone in the world ... I was seventeen.'

Film as evidence

Filmmaker

At sites of Nazi crimes such as Hadamar, cameramen forensically documented brutality and murder. They also filmed war crimes investigators at work showing justice being done.

Object

Footage of the camps was very distressing, so film newsreels were heavily censored before public release. This did not apply at the Bergen-Belsen trial of Nazi guards, where footage – most previously unseen – was screened as evidence.

Context

Crime scene photography was well established, but this was the first use of film as evidence in a war crimes trial – and it was considered less likely to be dismissed as fake. Moving image proved powerful in communicating the case of the Allied prosecutors and promoting their de-Nazification programme.

Unknown filmmaker, US Office of War Information, Overseas Branch, Atrocities Found in German Camps, 'Hadamar', 1945

35mm black and white film with sound

COI 3

Unknown filmmaker, Gaumont British News, No.
1181, Horror in Our Time, 30 April 1945
35mm black and white film with sound
RMY 144

Photography and Nazi crimes

Photographers

Official photographers, embedded with Allied forces during the Second World War, bore witness to the fall of Nazi Germany.

Object

German civilians were forced to view terrible proof of Nazi crimes. Their reactions were in turn witnessed and recorded by the photographers.

Context

When Allied forces entered Germany in 1945, they were seen by many Germans as invaders. By forcing civilians to confront Nazi criminality, the occupying forces were justifying their presence as well as punishing those who had turned a blind eye.

Sergeant Harry Oakes, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Bergen-Belsen Concentration camp, 1945

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative
BU 4247

United States Army Signal Corps photographer,
Exhumation of the bodies of murdered Soviet
citizens in Suttrop (Warstein), 1945

Exhibition print from gelatin silver print on fibre-based
paper

EA 65392

Alfred McCroy Pearce

Photographer

Alfred Pearce was attached to the War Crimes Investigation Team in North-West Europe in 1945. It was his job to photograph evidence of war crimes after the Second World War.

Object

Here, Pearce captured war crimes photographers at work documenting what may be the remains of an American airman murdered by German soldiers after his aircraft crashed near Bramsche in Germany.

Context

After the Second World War tens of thousands of war crimes trials were held in Europe. Gathering evidence to prosecute these cases was a large-scale international effort.

Sergeant Alfred McCroy Pearce, War Crimes
Investigation photographs, possibly Bramsche,
1945–1946

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper
HU 140552 – HU 140554

Unknown photographer, Portrait of Alfred McCroy
Pearce, c.1945

Gelatin silver print on fibre-based paper
HU 140565

Albert Adams, Iraq – Abu Ghraib / Iraq – Abu Ghraib / What... and when?, 2006

Charcoal on paper

ART 17573 – ART 17575

Artist

Albert Adams was born in Johannesburg and later moved to Britain. As a person of African and Indian heritage, he drew on his experience of racial segregation in South Africa, exploring themes of imprisonment and oppression in his work.

Image

These drawings respond to photographs of the torture and abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison during the Iraq War. Adams draws prisoners in stress positions, with their heads hooded and arms tied. In one, a strange, ape-like creature sits atop a pile of bodies.

Context

The figure of the ape appears throughout Adams' work. Perpetrators are transformed into nightmarish creatures, rendered inhuman by their cruelty.

Mohammed Sami, Abu Ghraib, 2022

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

ART 18045

*Purchased with the support of the Garcia Family
Foundation*

Artist

Mohammed Sami was born in Baghdad, Iraq and lives in London. Sami's work draws on Iraq's recent history of conflict but avoids literal representations of war and violence.

Image

In Sami's paintings, everyday objects invoke individual and collective histories. Here, the shape and shadow of a pair of trousers resembles the figure of Ali Shallal al-Qaisi, an Iraqi man detained at Abu Ghraib prison between 2003 and 2004.

Context

Abu Ghraib was a detention centre used by the US Army during the Iraq War. Photographs taken at the prison revealed the abuse and torture of prisoners by US personnel. A photograph of al-Qaisi, hooded and with his arms outstretched, became one of the defining images of the conflict.

Mohammed Sami

b.1984

Mohammed Sami studied drawing and painting before emigrating to Sweden in 2007. Since 2017 he has lived in London.

Sami's paintings explore the way memory can be triggered by everyday objects and environments. Domestic interiors become threatening and ordinary objects are imbued with new, and sometimes sinister, meaning.

Sami draws on his experience of conflict but does not directly depict it. 'My work is against any explicit trauma,' he says, 'I want to make people look at it in a different way.'

Image makers and authority

We no longer rely solely on official artists, filmmakers and photographers sent to conflict zones to capture what is happening in war. Eye-witness citizens, journalists of all kinds and soldiers documenting their own experiences add to a long and complex history of image-making.

Easily accessible on our smartphones, an ever-expanding number of conflict images expose us to new ideas and take us beyond a controlled, official perspective on conflict. The speed at which images are produced and shared means they still have the power to shape ideas, generate support or opposition – and even skew the picture of war.

Giles Penfound, Operation Telic: British Forces in Iraq, 2003

Exhibition prints from born digital photographs
OP-TELIC 03-010-37-095 / 091 / 075 and OP-TELIC
03-010-32-293

© Crown copyright

Photographer

Giles Penfound has worked as a combat photographer for the British Army in a range of conflicts, including the Bosnian War and the Iraq War.

Image

These photographs document the army's advance into Basra, Iraq. The contrast between the armed soldiers and unarmed Iraqi civilians is stark. International journalists, all wearing protective clothing, are escorted by the army.

Context

Combat photographers are employed directly by the military so have greater access than the press. Some journalists are attached to military units, in a practice known as 'embedding'.

Various filmmakers, Official and unofficial footage of British military activity in Iraq and Afghanistan, 2003–2012

Born digital film

© Crown copyright MIP 4-176 / BFV 1152 / BFM 38 ©
The rights holder MGH 6955-1 / MGH 6922-5 / MGH 6990-7

Filmmaker

The military seek to control the flow of information from conflict zones, but unofficial and press perspectives still emerge.

Image

Films by the Combat Camera Team provide an official record of events. Soldiers' headcam footage situates the viewer on the ground. Tour videos made by serving soldiers offer an entirely different perspective on military life, as high-octane and action-packed. Set to exciting soundtracks, they can be humorous, irreverent, crude or act as memorials to lost comrades.

Context

Digital formats have made it easier for soldiers to share images, disrupting official narratives. The military has sought to limit this activity by restricting the use of cameras and phones.

Various military filmmakers, Normandy

Landings, 1944

35mm and 9.5mm black and white silent and sound film

A70 31-1 – A70 31-3 / A70 29 1-2 / A70 36-1 / MGH 4559 / WOY 482

Filmmaker

Allied filming of D-Day was meticulously planned. Cameramen accompanied every force and automatic cameras were fitted in landing craft.

Image

Sergeant George Laws, the first army cameraman ashore, received a glowing report from headquarters at Pinewood: 'an outstanding example of frontline camerawork ... The beach scenes are most dramatic with tremendous atmosphere.'

Context

Cameramen shared the dangers of the troops at Normandy. Sergeants Desmond O'Neill and Billy Greenhalgh were wounded filming the landings and Norman Clague was killed a week later.

Giles Price, Royal Marine Operations in northern Iraq and Kurdistan, 1991

Exhibition print from C-type print

HU 103921 – HU 103924 © Giles Price

Photographer

These photographs were taken by Giles Price during his service as a Royal Marine. Price has since become a professional photographer.

Image

In the early 1990s, Price was deployed on various operations in the Middle East. Here, his comrades pose for the camera at Begova camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Price himself is pictured standing on a hillside.

Context

Personal photographs provide an insight into everyday life in the army. Often relaxed and humorous, these are private accounts of individual soldiers' experiences.

(Showcase)

Elsie Knocker, Personal photograph album, Western Front, 1914–1918

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper

8001-11/3

Photographer

Nurse Elsie Knocker (later Baroness T'Serclaes) travelled to Belgium to aid wounded soldiers with her friend Mairi Chisholm. They were called 'the Angels of Pervyse' after they set up a field hospital in the town.

Image

Knocker kept mementoes of her First World War experiences. This photograph album records the difficult working conditions and wounded men she treated. She also kept photographs of lighter moments, detailing how she and her companions relaxed when they could.

Context

Women played an important role in gruelling and dangerous frontline medical work. Over 100,000 British women volunteered as nursing staff during the war.

(Showcase)

Unknown photographer, Album from
Mesopotamia, 1914–1918

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper

8401-08

Photographer

This album was compiled and annotated on active service. Soldiers were deployed all over the world during the First World War. For many it was their first and only trip abroad.

Image

These photographs were taken in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq, Kuwait and parts of Iran, Syria and Turkey). They contain scenes of local people and landscapes new and strange to the soldier photographer.

Context

Carefully compiled albums acted as mementoes and provide some of the most personal visual records of the war. Cheaper, more portable equipment in the early twentieth century meant that people could photograph their experiences of overseas service.

Propaganda posters

Artist

During and after the First World War, combatant nations used propaganda posters to encourage certain behaviours or ideas.

Image

These posters borrowed graphic design from advertising, with bold colours, fonts and imagery employed to rouse support for the war. As in the anti-German posters, they often reduced the enemy to brutish forms, with the home nation contrastingly symbolised as women and children.

Context

These posters from Australia, Germany, and America testify to the propaganda poster as a global method of state-sponsored mass communication.

Paul Elsas, In Eurer Hand Liegt Deutschlands Zukunft! [Germany's Future Lies in Your Hands!], 1919

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 7717

H R Hopps, Destroy This Mad Brute - Enlist Now, 1917

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 0243

© The rights holder

Unknown artist, Don't Falter - Go and Meet the Hun Menace, c.1914–1918

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 12248

Theo Matejko, Hände Weg vom Ruhrgebiet! [Hands off the Ruhr!], 1923

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 5987

Ludwig Hohlwein, Volksspende für die Deutschen Kriegs und Zivil Gefangenen [People's Fund for German Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees], 1918

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 2746

© The rights holder

F Strothmann, Beat Back the Hun, 1918

Lithograph on paper, Facsimile PST 0235

Mind and Body

Mind and Body

The trauma and toll of the First World War changed forever the way the human body is seen and recorded. It accelerated new kinds of medicine - and new kinds of art.

Young artists, filmmakers and photographers who saw active service searched for a way to reveal the experiences of war 'as it is'. They broke new artistic ground in laying bare the damage that shell splinters, shrapnel, bullets and poison gas could inflict upon vulnerable bodies.

Those visual practitioners that followed them have continued to find their own visual languages, to represent the visible and invisible impacts of war on human beings.

Medicine and care

Artists, filmmakers and photographers have played a critical role in documenting and visualising physical damage, injury and medical care in conflict.

As soldiers and non-combatant eyewitnesses, they have provided a close-up view of injury, triage and treatment. Visual practitioners serving as medical volunteers and ambulance drivers have also made use of their privileged viewpoint.

Some artists have addressed the violence and disorientation of the battlefield. More intimate moments between patient and medic, or between sitter and visual practitioner are also presented in this space.

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson, The Doctor, 1916

Oil on canvas

ART 725

Artist

At outbreak of war, 21-year-old artist C R W Nevinson volunteered with the Friends Ambulance Unit, founded to provide medical care to frontline troops. He later returned to France as an official war artist.

Image

Nevinson worked at the repurposed slaughterhouse shown in this painting: 'Gradually the shed was cleansed, disinfected and made habitable, and by working all night we managed to dress most of the patients' wounds.'

Context

In the early years of the First World War, casualties were evacuated to makeshift hospitals. As the war progressed, the medical services adapted to deal with the enormous influx of wounded and dying soldiers.

Ethel Léontine Gabain, A Bunyan-Stannard First Aid Envelope for Protection against Infection in Burns, c.1943

Oil on panel
ART LD 3849

Artist

In April 1940, Ethel Gabain was commissioned by the War Artists Advisory Committee to record women's voluntary services and the evacuation of children.

Image

Interested in medical innovation, Gabain captured four moments of a burn treatment issued to aircrew. A pilot, gunner and navigator continue their manual work while using new burn 'envelopes' over their injured hands.

Context

In 1940 Bunyan and Stannard reported the successful treatment of an infected burn using a coated silk 'envelope'. Through vents, wounds were irrigated with electrolytic sodium hypochlorite three times a day during active service.

Harold Sandys Williamson, Human Sacrifice: In an operating theatre, 1918

Watercolour on paper

ART 1471

Artist

Newly trained artist Harold Sandys Williamson was wounded during service on the Western Front. He undertook orderly duties while recovering.

Image

The clean, ordered composition of a bright sky, large windows and well-organised medics reflects Williamson's experience of the operating theatre. An orderly administers anaesthesia as a gloved surgeon prepares to make the first cut.

Context

Experience of the Western Front accelerated developments in medicine including new techniques in the treatment of infection, resuscitation and blood transfusion. Fully-trained military anaesthetists replaced orderlies from 1917.

Olive Mudie-Cooke, In an Ambulance: a VAD lighting a cigarette for a patient, 1919

Watercolour on paper

ART 3051

Artist

Olive Mudie-Cooke worked from 1916 as an ambulance driver in France, Belgium and Italy. The newly-formed IWM purchased and commissioned other works from her.

Image

Mudie-Cooke served with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry and the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD). She captured what she saw around her: broken bodies, blasted trees and stalled tanks. She also documented the valuable bedside care provided by VADs in the war effort, as here.

Context

At first, civilian VADs were restricted to canteen roles on the home front but were moved into hospital and overseas service as the war progressed.

John Wood, ARP in Jamaica, 1941

Oil on canvas

ART LD 3150

Artist

This painting by English artist John Wood was acquired by the government as part of the 'Native-Born Colonial Artists' scheme, set up to record war activities in Britain's colonies. Through the scheme, work was collected from artists in Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Jamaica. It promoted the notion of a united British Empire.

Image

The painting depicts volunteer nurses receiving training in Jamaica. St John's Ambulance commander Dr Hoerman stands in the background. Wood described the painting as 'one of the best bits of work I have done in Jamaica ... portraying a sincere effort of Jamaica's womenfolk.'

Context

Though the War Artists Advisory Committee were keen to accurately reflect local styles and activities, they were still biased towards European artistic conventions. Most of the works acquired were not exhibited at the time.

Stanley Spencer, Travoys Arriving with Wounded at a Dressing-Station at Smol, Macedonia, September 1916, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 2268

Artist

Aged 24, artist Stanley Spencer was stationed with an ambulance unit on the Salonika front. The wounded, he wrote, 'passed ... in a never-ending stream'.

Image

Painted in 1919, this scene shows casualties drawn on sledges, or travoys, towards a central dressing station in an old, converted church. Spencer gave it a feeling of veneration to 'show God in the bare "real" things, in a limber wagon, in ravines, in fouling mule lines'.

Context

The government had initially requested work on the theme of 'a religious service at the front'. Spencer said of this work, 'I meant it not a scene of horror but a scene of redemption.'

Steve McQueen, Queen and Country, 2006

Wood, perspex, paper and metal

ART 17290

Commissioned by IWM and Presented by Art Fund

Artist

Steve McQueen is a British artist and filmmaker who in 2003 was commissioned as an official war artist. Against a deteriorating security situation, he spent six very restricted days in Basra, Iraq.

Image

McQueen created this interactive work in response to the deaths of British service personnel. These drawers contain sheets of replica postage stamps, each one bearing an image of a serviceman or servicewoman who died in Iraq. Each bereaved family was invited to collaborate in the making of the work.

Context

McQueen's hope that these images would be issued, circulated and used as official stamps – to 'enter the lifeblood of the country' – was not realised.

Steve McQueen

b.1969

Throughout his career, Steve McQueen has explored themes of violence, physicality and power. In the 1990s, he became known for his work in art film, leading to a Turner Prize win in 1999. He has since worked across art and cinema.

McQueen's Iraq War commission memorialises British men and women who died in the conflict. It includes people who died in action, but also those who died in accidents or by suicide. For McQueen, this was of vital importance. 'I'm pointing out that these people are all victims, too,' he said, 'They're all part of this war.'

John Singer Sargent, Gassed, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 1460

Artist

Aged 62, American painter John Singer Sargent was commissioned to produce a large work on the theme of 'Anglo-American cooperation'. Sargent travelled to France in July 1918, and at first struggled to find his subject.

Image

Mustard gas caused severe blistering and burns to the skin and eyes. The painting explores its damaging impact and routine nature – a football match goes on regardless.

Context

Artist and surgeon Henry Tonks described Sargent's reaction to a gas attack they witnessed together: 'cases kept coming in ... evidently suffering a great deal ... Sargent was very struck by the scene and immediately made a lot of notes.'

David Cotterrell, Gateway II, 2007

C-type print on aluminium

ART 17871

*Presented by the Contemporary Art Society,
2017–2018*

Artist

In 2007, David Cotterrell was commissioned to travel to Helmand Province, Afghanistan, to observe the work of the medical teams at Camp Bastion, a British Army base.

Image

In these photographs, wounded soldiers are moved onto the plane home. Strapped to stretchers, the men appear small and vulnerable in the cavernous space of the aircraft.

Context

When Cotterrell visited Afghanistan, the number of British casualties was rising. Injured soldiers received emergency care at Camp Bastion before being airlifted out for further treatment and rehabilitation. Many were sedated or semi-conscious and could remember little, if anything, of their journey.

Various filmmakers, Casualty and evacuation, 1916–1944

35mm and 16mm black and white silent film

IWM 133 / IWM 116 / IWM 409 / IWM 162-02 / MGH 5085 / JFU 126

Filmmaker

The care of casualties was a regular topic for official film propagandists in both world wars, whose films were shown in cinemas to British audiences. Graphic films of battlefield medicine were also shot by amateur cameramen serving as military medics.

Image

The filmmakers provide a candid perspective on the realities of evacuating and treating battle casualties. The endurance of the wounded, comradeship and admiration for medics are recurring themes.

Context

These films provided a sobering account of the impact of war for audiences at home. But they were helpful in reassuring anxious audiences that their loved ones were cared for.

Douglas Fox-Pitt, Indian Army Wounded in Hospital in the Dome, Brighton, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 323

Artist

In 1914, Brighton's Royal Pavilion was converted into a hospital for wounded Indian soldiers. Artist Douglas Fox-Pitt painted the scene inside the Dome, formerly the palace stables.

Image

Built for King George IV, the Pavilion was lavishly decorated in a style that emulated Chinese and South Asian design. But this was a European fantasy, created by designers who had never visited Asia. Here, the soldiers seem small in their beds, overwhelmed by the ornate ceiling.

Context

The patients included Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. Provisions were made for prayer and differing dietary needs. But patients were discouraged from mixing with the locals and their movements were restricted.

John Hodgson Lobley, The Queen's Hospital for Facial Injuries, Frognal, Sidcup: The toy-maker's shop, 1918

Oil on canvas

ART 3756, *Gift of the British Red Cross Society and Order of St John of Jerusalem, 1919*

Artist

Facial injuries were widespread in the First World War, but they were rarely depicted outside medical circles. John Hodgson Lobley was one of few war artists to explore the subject. He painted scenes at the Queen's Hospital, the first facility dedicated to treating facial wounds.

Image

Though the men are visibly injured, bandages obscure their wounds and the image is not graphic. Instead, Lobley focusses on their quiet concentration.

Context

Occupational therapy was integral to rehabilitation. Activities including sewing were intended to give patients a sense of purpose and to pass the time between treatments.

Norah Neilson-Gray, The Scottish Women's Hospital, Abbaye at Royaumont, 1920

Oil on canvas

ART 3090

Artist

Norah Neilson-Gray was a Scottish artist and member of the Glasgow School of painters. In the First World War she joined the Scottish Women's Hospital (SWH) and was sent to France.

Image

This painting commemorates the work of the SWH and its Chief Surgeon, Dr Frances Ivens. Neilson-Gray depicts Ivens at the end of a patient's bed during her rounds.

Context

The SWH was established by Dr Elsie Inglis in 1914. Although the government was initially reluctant to have male soldiers treated by female doctors, the SWH eventually ran 14 medical units and treated thousands of patients.

Alfred Reginald Thomson, A Saline Bath - RAF Hospital, 1943

Oil on canvas

ART LD 3629

Artist

Alfred Reginald Thomson became an artist for the Air Ministry in 1942. He created several paintings on medical subjects including surgery and rehabilitation.

Image

Thomson's painting documents medical practice at the time and reveals the vulnerability of the body in conflict. The airman appears fragile as he lowers himself into the water, submerging the bright red burns on his legs.

Context

Saline baths were a common treatment for burns in the Second World War. Although the salt water cleansed wounds and promoted healing, it was a painful procedure.

Photographing rehabilitation

Photographer

In both world wars the British government commissioned photographers to capture soldiers' treatment and rehabilitation. These images were used to reassure the public that the wounded were being cared for.

Image

Specialist hospitals were set up to deal with a huge influx of troops requiring prostheses after the First World War. On these sites, workshops for artificial limb production provided employment and training opportunities for rehabilitating soldiers.

Context

Over 41,000 British soldiers lost limbs during the First World War. Prostheses were provided to help with reintegration into society. Nevertheless, many men were unable to work or find work.

Ministry of Information, Official photographs of rehabilitation services, 1914–1945

Exhibition prints from medium format film base
negative and
half-plate glass negatives

D 17829 / Q 33689 / Q 33690

Horace Nicholls, Facial reconstruction, c.1918
Exhibition prints from quarter-plate glass negatives
Q 30459 / Q 30460

Sergeant William Best, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Soldiers being treated for Shell Shock, 21 May 1945

35mm black and white silent film

AYY 732/27

Filmmaker

Sergeant William Best was attached to the Army Film and Photographic Unit and covered campaigns in North Africa and Europe.

Image

This film records treatment of British soldiers after the Battle of Monte Cassino. Because of the stigma attached to psychiatric injury, the film was designated 'FOR MEDICAL RECORDS ONLY'. It is the only film of an Exhaustion Centre.

Context

The British Army was slow to acknowledge the psychiatric casualties of the Second World War. But as cases grew, Exhaustion Centres were set up close to the front. They typically provided two to five days of treatment involving sedation and rest, and an interview with a psychiatrist before return to duties.

Everyday and extraordinary

During the world wars, artists, filmmakers and photographers working on the home front added humour and intimacy to their slice-of-life depictions of the everyday grind of conflict.

Some turned their gaze on the social, cultural and industrial changes ushered in by war, including for women.

Those who were employed officially were aware that their work needed to serve the interests of the government. Some artists, photographers and filmmakers nonetheless found ways to be critical and progressive in style or content.

Britain relied heavily on overseas soldiers and workers, but their experiences and voices are marginalised in the visual record.

Anna Airy, A Shell Forge at a National Projectile Factory, Hackney Marshes, London, 1918

Oil on canvas

ART 4032

Artist

Anna Airy was one of the first commissioned female war artists. Documenting the munitions industry, she visited factories in England and Scotland during the First World War.

Image

Airy described painting this scene as her 'most taxing job'. The red-hot metal of the shells cooled rapidly, changing colour in minutes, and the heat dried her paints. She wrote, 'I've never felt such heat! The floor got "black hot". I burnt a pair of shoes right off my feet!'

Context

It was unusual for a female artist to receive a commission of this nature. The factory was a male-dominated space, and women war artists were typically asked to record women's war work.

Tim Hetherington, War Blind series, 1999–2004

Exhibition prints from 35mm film base negatives

DC 63670 / DC 63660 / DC 63657

Photographer

Photojournalist Tim Hetherington documented conflicts across the world. Aiming to depict 'real people in real situations', he explored life in times of crisis.

Image

Hetherington made a series of portraits of blind and partially sighted people in Sierra Leone. These images engage directly with the idea of vision. Light and shadow contrast sharply and one man covers an eye as he looks straight to camera.

Context

The civil war in Sierra Leone left many people with serious injuries. Some were blinded through torture. Others lost their sight due to injury or through untreated medical conditions.

Cecil Beaton, Official war photographs of Asia and Africa, 1942–1944

Exhibition prints from medium format film base
negatives

CBM 1850 / IB 709 / IB 1873 / IB 281

Photographer

Cecil Beaton was a society and fashion photographer. During the Second World War he was assigned to the Ministry of Information on the recommendation of Queen Elizabeth (the future Queen Mother). He produced around 7,000 war photographs.

Image

Beaton was sent to North Africa, India and China and made portraits of soldiers, nurses and civilians that he met.

Context

The Second World War was a global conflict, and Britain relied heavily on its Empire. Beaton's orders were to demonstrate strength and unity to serve as propaganda for audiences at home and overseas.

Painting daily life

Artist

Evelyn Dunbar was the only woman officially employed full-time to record the events of the Second World War. Still a student when war began, Michael Ford joined the Home Guard.

Image

These paintings deal with the persistence of normality despite the war. Dunbar's good-humoured scene depicts a long queue. Propaganda posters and anti-tank defences litter the high street in Ford's hometown of Overton.

Context

To pay for the war, the government raised taxes. It also introduced rationing. Shortages became part of daily life. Campaigns including 'War Weapons Weekly' encouraged people to put their savings into War Bonds.

Evelyn Dunbar, The Queue at the Fish Shop, 1944

Oil on canvas

ART LD 3987

Michael Ford, War Weapons Week in a Country Town, 1941

Oil on canvas

ART LD 1291

Various amateur filmmakers, Wartime experiences on the home front, 1940–1943

Standard 8mm colour and 16mm black and white/
colour silent film

MGH 4684 / MGH 4901 / MGH 3757

Filmmaker

Amateur filmmakers documented the impact of wartime measures, providing a personal perspective on the national story. These detailed accounts were often compiled over time, like a diary.

Image

Geoffrey Hugo's humorous account shows a family building a bomb shelter, and war seems a world away in Ernest Brewin's film of his friends celebrating the beauty of the autumn. Headmaster Arthur Hulme recorded the impact of war on a school day.

Context

Nowhere in Britain was untouched. Even the Hugo family, 16 miles from London, and evacuee schoolchildren in rural Cheshire were threatened by bombing. Gardening took on a grim urgency as Britons were urged to grow vegetables and help farmers gather in the harvest.

Ministry of Information, Official Home Front photographs, 1939–45

Exhibition prints from 35mm Kodachrome slides

TR 913 / TR 1152 / TR 2323 / TR 2587 / TR 1944

Photographer

During the Second World War, not all official photographers travelled overseas. They also recorded life on the home front under the shadow of war.

Image

The Ministry of Information had limited access to US-supplied colour film stock. It had to be used sparingly alongside black and white.

Context

The upheaval of war changed the home front. Women were recruited into work once reserved for men, including forestry and timber preparation. Workers from across the Empire came to Britain to support the Allied war effort.

The war effort on film

Filmmaker

British official filmmaking recruited many international talents. New Zealand experimental filmmaker Len Lye directed *Work Party*; exiled German-Jewish composer Ernst Meyer wrote its score. Jamaican writer and activist Una Marson presented *West Indies Calling*.

Image

These filmmakers brought new energy and political frankness to propaganda topics. *Work Party* showed the long hours and poor housing endured by female workers. *West Indies Calling* asserted a new relationship with Britain beyond imperialism.

Context

There were two million women in wartime industries by 1944. Thousands of people from the Caribbean travelled to Britain for the war effort. Many more were prevented because of racial discrimination.

Len Lye, Realist Film Unit, *Work Party*, 1942

35mm black and white film with sound

COI 947

John Page, Paul Rotha Productions, West Indies
Calling, 1943

35mm black and white film with sound

CCE 211

Olive Edis, Women's Services in France, 1919

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper

Q 8049 / Q 8046 / Q 7972

Photographer

Olive Edis was a ground-breaking photographer. She was commissioned by IWM to document women's services in France and Belgium during the First World War.

Image

Making use of natural light sources, Edis photographed the activities of women behind the front lines, mainly those in nursing and auxiliary roles.

Context

Edis was one of only a handful of female visual practitioners asked to work in an official capacity. Women were usually restricted from travelling overseas. She took great pride in her war work: 'I felt so much pleasure that I was asked to do it.'

Olive Edis

1876–1955

Olive Edis was a pioneering photographer. She created a lasting record of female participation in the First World War at the request of the IWM's Women's Work Committee.

The commission to record women's services operating in France and Belgium was delayed until March 1919, by which time many women had left. Committee Chair Lady Norman had concerns that, 'we are losing many valuable records which we shall never ... obtain again.'

Edis travelled with various cameras and dozens of glass plates. The prints displayed here are gelatin silver though Edis preferred to create sepia platinotypes. The wartime scarcity of platinum probably changed her practice.

Leslie Cole, Malta Convoy: Basutos Deal with Overflow Mail on the Causeway, the Palace, Valletta, 1943

Oil on canvas

ART LD 3254

Artist

Leslie Cole became an official war artist in 1942 and was sent to locations across the world. Cole's first posting was to the embattled island of Malta, then a British colony and vital to supply routes.

Image

Cole's painting suggests a hive of activity. The men form a swirling mass, their arms outstretched to hand parcels to each other.

Context

Throughout the war, Britain relied on the resources of its Empire. These soldiers are probably from Lesotho, then the British colony of Basutoland. Lesotho sent 20,000 men to serve with the British Army.

Picturing working life

Artist

Official artists were appointed to record the Second World War home front. Vivian Pitchforth made characterful studies of factory work and Ruskin Spear explored life for Londoners.

Image

With dirt smeared over their hands and faces, Pitchforth's men bite into sandwiches, talk and drink. In Spear's image, a young woman sleeps on her commute home.

Context

Millions of men and women were employed in war work. Hours were long and conditions sometimes dangerous. Many factories operated around the clock, only halting production for maintenance.

Vivian Pitchforth, Snack Time in a Factory, 1941

Oil on panel

ART LD 1486

Ruskin Spear, Scene in an Underground Train, 1943:

Workers returning from night shift, 1943

Oil on panel

ART LD 2798

(Showcase)

Official photographer, Recruitment photographs, India, 1942

Exhibition prints from various print and negative formats
IND 1251 / IND 1252 / IND 1492 / IND 1249 / IND 1254

Photographer

In 1942 photographers working on behalf of the British and Indian governments produced work for press and propaganda. The images were reproduced to reinforce colonial attitudes.

Image

These photographs show Indian civilians being examined and, in some cases, marked during the recruitment process. Their 'suitability', including fitness and weight, was assessed for military service.

Context

The Indian Army expanded to over 2.5 million personnel during the Second World War. Conditions in India, including famine, drove people to enlist. India's huge role in the war strengthened demands for independence, achieved in 1947.

Anticipation and anxiety

During the Second World War, the British government was keen to show resilience on the home front. Artists, filmmakers and photographers depicted steadfast workers and people sheltering underground, to demonstrate togetherness and courage in the face of war.

Some visual practitioners experimented with surreal shapes, movement and colour to try and capture the stress of living under unrelenting Blitz bombardment.

Animalistic or geological forms and faceless humanoids populate the works of artists trying to make sense of the hardship, fear and mundanity of wartime civilian experience. Others explored the strange underground world of sleeping city-dwellers.

Bill Brandt, Shelter photographs, London, 1940

Gelatin silver print on fibre-based paper, HU 672

Exhibition prints from medium format film base
negatives

D 1567 / D 1573 / D 1509 / D 1516 / D 1511

Photographer

By 1940, Bill Brandt was well-known for his studies of ordinary people and London at night. The Ministry of Information employed him to photograph civilians sheltering from the Blitz.

Image

Londoners went underground to take cover from German air raids. They sheltered, prayed and slept in Tube stations, church crypts and deep cellars.

Context

In autumn 1940 Germany launched a relentless 57-day bombing campaign focussed on London. Brandt photographed the new, subterranean world, describing the 'long alley of intermingled bodies, with the hot, smelly air'.

Bill Brandt

1904 –1983

Photographer Bill Brandt was born in Germany. He lived in Vienna and Paris before making England his home in 1934. He later disowned his German heritage.

Brandt was excited by the 'extreme social contrast' of the 1930s. For popular picture magazines, he captured extremes in British society: large wealthy households and windowless poverty.

In November 1940 Brandt visited London's public shelters. Using his Automatic Rolliflex camera, playing with light sources, and manipulating his images in his darkroom, Brandt created photographs that were published, exhibited and sent to President Roosevelt to illustrate conditions in London.

Brandt's work is an intimate insight into the hardships of life under aerial bombardment.

Henry Moore, Shelter drawings, 1941

Watercolour, conté, wax crayon, pastel, chalk, pencil, pen and ink on paper

ART 17977 / ART 17978

Accepted in lieu of inheritance tax by HM Government from the estate of Tan Jiew Cheng and allocated to the Imperial War Museum, 2020

Artist

One night in autumn 1940, artist Henry Moore took cover from an air raid in Belsize Park station. Fascinated by 'the sight of people camping out deep underground', he made a series of drawings. First exhibited in 1941, they brought him unprecedented recognition.

Image

Some people thought Moore's figures were bleak and impersonal, while others recognised a noble quality in them. Moore was one of the artists to show that modern art could develop in the context of war.

Context

Before the bombing raids had begun, people were encouraged to build their own shelters if they had access to gardens. About 150,000 Londoners took shelter in public Underground stations and tunnels each night.

Expressing wartime anxieties

Artist

During the Second World War, some artists used abstract styles to express anxieties, and reflect a strange and foreboding world.

Image

Eileen Agar imagines an ancient battleship creature and Keith Vaughan depicts Blitz London as a shadowland. Duncan Oppenheim's slumped air raid wardens evoke the monotony of being on call. In Julian Trevelyan's painting, faces become machine-like shapes.

Context

Later, Trevelyan questioned whether Surrealism - championing the irrational and subconscious - had any place in this strange new reality. He reflected that it, 'became absurd ... when high explosives could do it so much better.'

Eileen Agar, Untitled, 1940

Gouache on board

ART 17748

Duncan Oppenheim, The Terrible Boredom of Waiting for Action, c.1940

Oil on canvas

ART 16541, *Gift of the artist, 1995*

Keith Vaughan, *Echo of the Bombardment*, 1942

Watercolour on paper

ART 17439, *Purchased with Art Fund support*

Julian Trevelyan, *Premonitions of the Blitz*, 1940

Oil on canvas

ART 15756

Photographers on the front line

Photographer

Photographers and filmmakers on the front lines risked their own lives to record and share some of the most extreme moments of the war.

Image

In the lulls between fighting, photographers captured moments of rest, quiet anxiety and anticipation.

Context

Leaving relative safety to go on the attack led to intense psychological pressure. One First World War soldier, Clifford Lane, recalled, 'Every time I went over the top – I should say almost every time – somebody went insane'.

Sergeant Dennis M Smith, Army Film and Photographic Unit, Arnhem, 1944

Exhibition print from medium format film base negative
BU 1103

John Warwick Brooke, Menin Ridge, 1917

Exhibition print from 5x4 inch glass plate negative
Q 5965

Lieutenants Geoffrey Malins and John McDowell,
British Topical Committee for War Films, Battle of the
Somme, 1916

Exhibition print from film still

IWM FLM 1672

Feliks Topolski, A Music Hall in Plymouth, 1940

Wash on paper

ART LD 723

Artist

Feliks Topolski was born in Poland and emigrated to England in 1935. From 1940 he was employed as an official war artist, creating drawings of scenes both at home and abroad.

Image

Though there is a glimpse of the performance underway, Topolski's focus is the crowd in the stalls. Women, soldiers and sailors clamour to see the stage, and lights illuminate the auditorium above them.

Context

Topolski made this drawing during the Blitz. Just months later, he was seriously wounded whilst sketching an air raid in London.

(Showcase)

Bill Brandt and Henry Moore, *Lilliput*, December 1942

Ink on paper

PROP 2136

Artist

Artist Henry Moore and photographer Bill Brandt worked for the Ministry of Information during the Second World War. They reached a national audience through magazines and newspapers.

Image

A special issue of *Lilliput* focussing on the experience of air raids placed Moore and Brandt side by side. The artistic encounter propelled both to further acclaim. Their strange, claustrophobic images made a huge impact on the collective memory of the Blitz.

Context

Lilliput was a popular, light-hearted monthly publication of images and stories. Before television was widely available, it brought visual arts to the public.

(Showcase)

Beatrice Viola Fergusson, Snapshots sketchbook,
1939

Ink and pencil on paper

ART 17868

Artist

This sketchbook was kept by Beatrice Fergusson, a young woman living in Britain in the late 1930s. Fergusson, who briefly studied at the Slade School of Art, served with the Mechanised Transport Corps and Women's Transport Service.

Image

Created under the threat of the Second World War, the sketchbook is humorous and unsettling. Caricatures of political figures sit alongside short poems and fantastical creatures.

Context

Fergusson's sketchbook reflects the darkening mood in Britain as the war approached. On the final page a skeleton Adolf Hitler is captioned, 'I AM MONARCH OF ALL I SLAY.'

Perspectives and Frontiers

Perspectives and Frontiers

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists, filmmakers and photographers have grappled with how to represent ever-changing landscapes and contested spaces of conflict – and how to map them.

In the First World War, a generation of visual practitioners was drawn to landscapes obliterated by shellfire, to the subterranean world of trench warfare and to the new battlefield in the sky. Horrified and awed, they pushed artistic boundaries to get closer to the all-consuming physical and mental carnage of war.

The resulting works have forever changed the way visual practitioners engage with conflict.

War on the ground

Artists, filmmakers and photographers in the First World War were confronted with a new and unrecognisable world.

They were both awed and appalled by the new weaponry that dominated the battlefield and broke with artistic tradition to convey their new feelings. They experimented with fragmented shapes, colour and line in their visualisations of modern, industrial violence and of the shattered landscapes around them.

Artists have continued to break new ground in the representation of the physical and psychological landscapes and impacts of conflict.

Royal Engineers photographer, Western Front panorama, 1914–1918

Exhibition prints from gelatin silver prints on fibre-based
paper

Q 48142 – Q 48153

Photographer

Military photographers actively assisted operations. At great risk, with heads above the parapet, they captured detailed visual information about the battlefield.

Image

Once developed in mobile darkrooms, the photographic prints were assembled into panoramas that could be studied and annotated. This panorama shows an area near Bapaume, in the Somme region. Landmarks and the German front line have been labelled.

Context

IWM holds several hundred of these panoramic landscapes, which were taken by both sides to plan troop movements and identify targets. This process was more precise than using hand-drawn maps.

Maurice Antony, Postcards of Ypres, 1914–1915

Collotype postcards

HU 140566 – HU 140568

Photographer

Maurice Antony was a Belgian commercial photographer known for his scenes of ordinary life.

Image

Antony captured the devastation of Ypres, Belgium during the First World War, photographing many locations he had once documented in peacetime. His images were mass produced as postcards and sold as mementoes.

Context

Ypres was the location of some of the fiercest fighting of the war, seized by the Germans and then the British. Its famous medieval centre was reduced to rubble. After the war the city was reconstructed as a symbol of Belgian national pride and renewal.

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson

Artist

Before the war, C R W Nevinson was the leading British advocate of Futurism, an artistic movement that sought to express the speed and power of modern technology.

Image

His early war works were deeply inspired by mechanised warfare. In these geometric works, the human body is aligned with the force and momentum of the machine.

Context

In 1917, Nevinson was commissioned for the Ministry of Information's print series *The Great War: Britain's Efforts and Ideals*. Bringing together the work of 18 artists, the series illustrated British innovations in technology and industry.

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson,

Making the Engine, 1917

Lithograph on paper

ART 691

Christopher Richard Wynne Nevinson,

Marching Men, 1916

Pastel on paper

ART 5218

Gift of Fulham Borough Council, 1961

David Bomberg, Sappers at Work: Canadian
Tunnelling Company, R14, St Eloi, 1918–1919
Charcoal on paper
ART 2708, *Gift of Sir Muirhead Bone, 1919*

Artist

David Bomberg was a leading figure of London's artistic avant-garde. Initially excited by the new machine age, his outlook changed with the First World War. Enlisting as an engineer, or 'sapper', he witnessed first-hand the unprecedented violence and destruction of the conflict.

Image

This drawing evokes the confined space of a tunnel. The men's bodies seem to merge with the sharp geometry of their surroundings, as though subsumed by their work.

Context

With the advent of trench warfare, a subterranean battleground emerged. Engineers built tunnels to place explosives under enemy positions.

Percy Wyndham Lewis, A Battery Shelled, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 2747

Artist

Percy Wyndham Lewis was a British painter, activist and leader of the Vorticists, who formed in London in 1914. They used sharp lines and fragmented shapes to express the energy of the machine-led modern world.

Image

This painting, based on Lewis' experience as a gunner in the First World War, suggests the dehumanisation of modern warfare. The infantrymen are small and stripped of identifiable features. The officers look on indifferently, unconcerned by what is happening around them.

Context

As a gunner, Lewis felt detached from battle. 'A gunner does not fight,' he wrote, 'He merely shells and is shelled ... The gunner rarely, if ever, sees the enemy'.

Paul Nash, The Menin Road, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 2242

Artist

Painter Paul Nash served with the army in the First World War and later became an official war artist. In 1919 the Ministry of Information commissioned him to create a canvas on the grand scale of Renaissance painting.

Image

The size of this work evokes art of the past, but it is resolutely modernist, with strong lines and flat planes of colour.

Context

This painting depicts an area known as 'Tower Hamlets' in Belgium. Later, Nash described the region as 'perhaps the most dreaded and disastrous locality of any area in any of the theatres of War'.

William Roberts, The Gas Chamber, 1918

Ink, watercolour and pencil on paper

ART 1166

Artist

British artist William Roberts served as a gunner during the First World War. Influenced by Cubist artists, he used simple shapes and strong lines in his images of the conflict.

Image

In this drawing, Roberts depicts soldiers during a practice gas attack. With their faces obscured by gas masks and limbs arranged stiffly, the men are made almost robotic.

Context

Gas drills were part of Roberts' training. He recalled: 'Wearing our gas-masks, we had to pass through a narrow ... trench or dug-out blanketed at both ends and filled with poison gas.'

**Haydn Reynolds Mackey, Near Hell-fire Corner,
Menin Road, Ypres, 1918–19**

Oil on panel

ART 3794

Artist

Haydn Reynolds Mackey was commissioned by the Royal Army Medical Corps as an official artist in the First World War.

Image

In this desolate, mutilated landscape, blasted trees come to represent the human cost of war.

Context

The painting shows the notorious Hellfire Corner on the Menin Road, which ran between Ypres and the front line. Exposed and kept under constant observation by German artillery, it was one of the most dangerous places on the Western Front, where the 'tide of motor ambulances ebbed and flowed so regularly'.

Rita Donagh, Shadow of the Six Counties, 1981

Pencil, ink, crayon, watercolour and gouache on card

ART 15526

Artist

Rita Donagh has used the visual language of maps to examine the shifting geographical and political divisions of the Troubles.

Image

Here, a map of Ireland is overlaid with the shadow of the six counties of Northern Ireland and the distinctive 'H' shape of a cell block at the Maze prison, formerly known as Long Kesh.

Context

Built by the British government to house Republican and Loyalist prisoners, the Maze prison became a defining site of the Troubles. It was marked by violent protests, escape attempts and hunger strikes.

John Nash, Oppy Wood, 1917: Evening, 1918

Oil on canvas

ART 2243

Artist

John Nash was the younger brother of fellow war artist and soldier Paul Nash. Although he had no formal training, his war paintings are among the most defining images of the First World War.

Image

Here, Nash lays bare the devastation wrought upon the landscape. Trenches have been dug into the earth and the trees are broken and bare. Despite this, the bright blue sky strikes a note of optimism.

Context

Nash was a passionate observer of the natural world. When the war was over, he was relieved to return to what he described as his 'normal outlook, towards nature, landscape'.

Angus Boulton, From the series A Soviet Legacy,
1998–2002

Fuji C-type prints

ART 16803 2 / ART 16803 13 / ART 16803 15 / ART
16803 16

Artist

Angus Boulton is a British artist working predominantly in photography and film. Between 1999 and 2009, he photographed military bases in the formerly communist German Democratic Republic.

Image

Boulton's images document the end of an era in Europe. Abandoned buildings are falling slowly into disrepair. Peeling murals and faded flags suggest not only the decline of the physical space, but of the ideology it represents.

Context

Boulton began this series a decade after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, but the physical traces of communism remained. Military bases like these were left deserted. Many still stand derelict today.

Angus Boulton

b.1964

Angus Boulton was born in York. His 'aftermath' photography captures traces of historical conflict including the Cold War. He often excludes humans from his images, rather tracing their impacts through 'items of clothing, instructional signage and murals ... alongside everyday detritus'.

He photographed abandoned Soviet military bases in Germany during the upheaval of reunification. Employing both documentary and highly imaginative styles, Boulton revealed an 'ever-present dead atmosphere'.

Boulton undertook lengthy research prior to visiting former Soviet spaces. Many of his images resulted from single visits to sites marked for demolition.

Emily Jacir, Reem and Riyad from the series *Where We Come From*, 2001–2003

Laserprint on paper and aluminium, ART 17643

Presented by Art Fund and the Esmée Fairbairn

Foundation to IWM and Wolverhampton Art Gallery

Artist

Emily Jacir is a Palestinian artist and filmmaker. Born in Bethlehem, she now lives between Palestine and the United States.

Image

In 2001, Jacir approached Palestinians living in exile with a question: 'If I could do anything for you, anywhere in Palestine, what would it be?' This work documents two answers, and her attempts to fulfil them.

Context

Jacir's work probes the bureaucratic and physical boundaries experienced by displaced people. Her US passport permitted her to visit areas inaccessible to other Palestinians.

Jonathan Olley, Castles of Ulster, 1998–2000

Exhibition prints from digital photographs from Polaroid

Type 55 prints

HU 101531 / HU 101535 / HU 101525

© Jonathan Olley

Photographer

Jonathan Olley worked as a photojournalist in the 1980s and 1990s, visiting Bosnia, Kosovo and other places scarred by war.

Image

Olley photographed fortified police stations, army bases and watch towers in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. These strange sites appear in stark contrast to residential surroundings but were a familiar sight for locals at the time.

Context

By the late 1970s semi-permanent steel and concrete fortifications and observation posts were commonplace in Northern Ireland to prevent attacks on British soldiers.

Willie Doherty, Unapproved Road 2, 1995

Cibachrome on aluminium

ART 16591

Artist

Willie Doherty was born and raised in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland. The city was the site of violent events during the Troubles, including Bloody Sunday in 1972.

Image

At first glance, this country road seems mundane. But the makeshift blockade indicates that this is a border road. The cement blocks sit askew, perhaps forced aside, suggesting an earlier impact.

Context

'Unapproved road' was the term used by the British government for small roads that crossed the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland. In the early 1970s, Britain began closing these roads to seal the border.

British official photographers, Soldiers in Belfast, 1977–1978

Exhibition prints from gelatin silver prints on resin-coated paper

MH 30556 / MH 30550 © Crown Copyright

Photographer

The British military sent official photographers to document the conflict in Northern Ireland, effectively a civil war within the UK.

Image

In these photographs, British soldiers patrol neighbourhoods in Belfast during the late 1970s. Borders, community division and life against a backdrop of violence define the images of the conflict.

Context

The UK deployed troops to Northern Ireland in August 1969 in the face of deadly riots and protests against the actions of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. They remained there until 2007.

Various official filmmakers, Modern weapons and technologies, 1916–1917

35 mm black and white silent film

IWM 276 / IWM 259 / IWM 510

Filmmaker

Britain's wartime government produced nearly 1,000 films during the First World War, developing the new medium to record battles, train soldiers and recruit civilians.

Image

These dynamic films focus on modern war in their depictions of poison gas, and weapon and shell production. One reviewer described the *Destruction of a Blockhouse* as taking the viewer 'right to the Front ... with the vividness of a personal visit'.

Context

Official films bolstered support for war and minimised the hazards of working in armaments factories. An explosion in July 1918 partially destroyed the Chilwell works shown in *A Day in the Life of a Munitions Worker*, killing 134 people and injuring a further 250.

Diana Matar, From the series Evidence, 2012

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper and giclée ink on watercolour paper

ART 18022 / ART 18024 / ART 18026 / ART 18027

Presented by the Contemporary Art Society, 2021–22

Artist

In 2012, artist Diana Matar travelled to Libya to investigate the disappearance of her father-in law, Jaballa Matar. A prominent critic of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, Jaballa was kidnapped by the authorities in 1990.

Image

Matar's works document sites of conflict and disappearance in Libya. Some relate to events during the anti-Gaddafi uprising in 2011, others to acts of state violence enacted by the Gaddafi government.

Context

Under Gaddafi's rule, political opponents in Libya were regularly detained or 'disappeared'. Jaballa is believed to have been murdered in a massacre at Tripoli's Abu Salim prison in 1996.

Anthony Davies, From the series Wasteland, 1986

Linocut on Japanese tissue

ART 16383 1

Artist

In the 1980s Anthony Davies moved to Northern Ireland, where he taught printmaking at the University of Ulster. During this time, he created several series of prints exploring the Troubles.

Image

In *Wasteland*, Davies depicts ordinary streets transformed by conflict. Though everyday life continues, this is a city marked by violence. The images are dark and densely populated, evoking a dangerous and confusing atmosphere.

Context

For Davies, it was vital to base his work on direct experience. He said, 'it was a matter of personal integrity to witness at first-hand what was actually happening in the province.'

Unknown British official filmmaker, Ministry of Defence, 40 and 42 Royal Marine Commando in Belfast, August 1972

16mm colour film with sound

MIL 341

Filmmaker

This is a rare example of official film showing military operations in Northern Ireland. It was made in 1972, the most violent year of the Troubles, and was probably not intended to be shown outside the security forces.

Image

The film shows the impact of fighting on the Falls Road area of Belfast, and on the Marines.

Context

Ten days previously the Marines had taken part in Operation 'Motorman', an overnight offensive to clear no-go areas established by paramilitary groups. Involving 30,000 troops, it was the largest British infantry deployment since the Second World War.

(Showcase)

**Unknown photographers, Glasgow and Sheffield
Munitions Factory presentation albums, 1915–1916**

Gelatin silver prints on fibre-based paper

2014-11-04/4 / 2014-11-04/14

Photographer

As commercial photography grew in the early twentieth century, many employers hired photographers to commemorate factories and their workforces.

Image

A series of albums were made to mark the rapid construction of wartime munitions factories across Britain. Photographs documented these cavernous spaces as they gradually filled with machinery and were finally populated with workers.

Context

The National Projectile Factories were a group of shell-making establishments built across the UK during the First World War. The Allies fired roughly five million tons of artillery shells throughout the war.

War in the air

The advent of aerial technology in the First World War brought a new dimension to conflict – and a new way of seeing. Aircraft were first used to direct artillery fire, and for spotting and photographing targets. By the Second World War, bomber fleets could destroy cities hundreds of kilometres away.

Some artists, photographers and filmmakers were captivated by aircraft, parachutes, clouds and light. Other visual practitioners depicted the devastating effect of aerial warfare on the world below.

Artists dealing with recent conflict have used some of the same language to explore the fear of living under unseen threats from the sky.

**Various filmmakers, Air raids in London,
Manchester and Hamburg, 1940–1943**

35mm black and white silent film

AYY 57 / AYY 78 / HOY 26

Filmmaker

In Britain and Germany, military cameramen and fire service personnel recorded the experience and aftermath of air raids. Newsreels did not show the dead, stressing instead the strength of defences and civilian morale.

Image

Filming in a documentary style, these cameramen compiled similar views, shooting long takes and exploratory angles of smoking panoramas and gutted churches.

Context

These films demonstrate the escalation of aerial bombing in the Second World War: the Sloane Square bomb killed 30 and injured 50, and 163 died and 250 firemen were hospitalised in the Blitz in 1940–1941. Tens of thousands of people perished over one night as the Hamburg firestorm engulfed 22km², most poisoned by carbon monoxide.

Hans Brunswig

1908–2004

Captain Brunswig was the Chief Engineer at the Berliner Tor fire station during Allied air raids on Hamburg in the Second World War.

Using a 16mm camera borrowed from the stores and his own 8mm camera, Brunswig captured the resulting firestorm: 'there had never been anything like this before'.

He possessed a permit to assess and document the damage and his uniform gave him access to the war zone. But Brunswig stated that he filmed in a private capacity. With no obligation to screen his footage, he secured a candid and rarely seen record of the devastating impact of the RAF raid.

John Piper, Shelter experiments, near Woburn,
Bedfordshire, 1943

Watercolour and gouache on paper

ART LD 3859

Artist

John Piper was at the forefront of the Neo-Romantic art movement, which combined abstraction with more traditional modes of painting. During the Second World War, Piper explored the effects of the Blitz on Britain's cities and landscapes.

Image

Piper gave this scene a mystical quality. The structures are lit by vivid yellow sun. Arranged in a circle, they could be a prehistoric monument in the landscape.

Context

From the destruction of cities to the construction of new shelters, aerial bombardment transformed the built environment. This painting probably depicts 'Field 99', a military site used to test air raid shelters.

Eric Kennington, Parachutes, 1941

Pastel on paper

ART LD 1259

Artist

In 1940, the War Artists Advisory Committee employed Eric Kennington as a full-time, salaried artist. He worked for the Air Ministry, mostly painting portraits of personnel.

Image

This dreamlike work shows a night-time drop. The loose strokes of the falling paratrooper and the parachutes on the ground suggest speed and motion.

Context

The Parachute Regiment was formed in 1940. Kennington spent time with the regiment at RAF Ridgeway in 1941 where, despite being over-age at 52, he practised a jump. Parachutes were also used to drop weapons, supplies and food.

Katongole, War in the Desert: King's African Rifles in action, c.1941

Gouache on cardboard

ART LD 2740

Artist

Katongole was one of a group of artists who submitted work to the British government's 'native-born Colonial Artists' scheme, designed to encourage the 'depicting of any activity in connection with the Colony's war effort'. IWM acquired a number of these works, but very little information was recorded about the artists or the subjects.

Image

Katongole's painting shows a battle in the desert. As planes swoop overhead, vehicles burn below.

Context

The King's African Rifles was a regiment of the British Army made up of soldiers from across Britain's colonies in East Africa. During the Second World War they fought in Madagascar and Burma as well as in colonial territories. The regiment drew from Kenya, Uganda, British Somaliland (now Somaliland), Nyasaland (now Malawi) and Tanganyika (now Tanzania).

Sydney Carline, Flying Over the Desert at Sunset, Mesopotamia, 1919

Oil on canvas

ART 4623, *Gift of Mrs Sydney Carline and Mr Richard Carline, 1929*

Artist

During the First World War, artist Sydney Carline served as a pilot. He was later commissioned by IWM to record his, 'impressions of the Empire's activities in the air'.

Image

Aviation offered unprecedented opportunities to chart the landscape. But the romance and thrill of flight also captured artists' imaginations. In this painting the world appears calm and almost idyllic, the canvas filled with the light of the setting sun.

Context

Drawing mid-flight was challenging. The aircraft were small and vibrated. Sometimes, Carline had to draw and pilot at the same time.

Edward Burra, Blue Baby: Blitz Over Britain, 1941

Watercolour and gouache on board

ART 16500

*Purchased with Art Fund and National Heritage
Memorial Fund support*

Artist

Edward Burra is best known for his surreal and sometimes grotesque depictions of urban life in the interwar years. Inspired by jazz and cinema, in the 1930s his work became darker, reflecting the grim political mood in Europe.

Image

In this nightmarish imagining of the Blitz, Burra paints a monstrous creature gliding over the land. Below, people cower amongst ruined buildings.

Context

Burra spent much of the war in Rye, East Sussex. Though small, Rye was home to one of the south coast's vital radar stations, which were subject to fierce bombing by the Luftwaffe.

Eric Ravilious

Artist

Eric Ravilious became an official war artist in 1939. Captivated by flight, he requested a posting with the RAF, saying, 'I do very much enjoy drawing these queer flying machines.'

Image

Aviation was a technically challenging subject: 'everything is fluid and shifting and I work in feverish haste and then dislike the result.' Ravilious places the viewer on the runway as aircraft soar overhead, or up close to a biplane in the airfield.

Context

Ravilious was the first British war artist to die on active service when his aircraft disappeared off the coast of Iceland in September 1942.

Eric Ravilious, Runway Perspective, 1942

Watercolour on paper

ART LD 2123

Eric Ravilious, De-Icing Aircraft, 1942

Watercolour on paper

ART LD 1856

Walid Siti, War Series VI, 1987

Drypoint etching on paper

ART 16457

Artist

Walid Siti was born in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. In 1984, as the persecution of Kurdish people escalated in Iraq, Siti claimed asylum in Britain.

Image

This apocalyptic scene is populated with strange beasts, suggesting the horror and dehumanisation of war. High above the clouds, a plane appears as a sinister, birdlike presence.

Context

This is one of a series of prints Siti created in response to the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War. Living in London, he felt powerless hearing news of atrocities and chemical weapon attacks in his homeland.

Mahwish Chishty, By the Moonlight, 2013

Paper, gouache and photo transfer on plywood

ART 17865

Artist

Mahwish Chishty was born in Pakistan and now lives in America. In 2011 she began a series of paintings responding to the prevalence of armed drones in Pakistan.

Image

Here, Chishty fills the distinctive shape of a Reaper drone with the colours and patterns of Pakistani folk art. Chishty says, 'Many of the deadliest animals in the world are brightly coloured like these painted drones. The question comes to mind: is this a warning or an invitation?'

Context

Since 2004, hundreds of drone strikes have been carried out in the region of Pakistan bordering Afghanistan.

Mahwish Chishty

b.1980

Mahwish Chishty was born in Lahore, Pakistan. She combines new media and conceptual work with painting practice to explore border-related conflict and belonging, particularly in the context of US-Pakistan relations.

In 2011, Chishty began experimenting with found drone images, reimagining them using folk art and craft practices to create the 'juxtaposition of terror with the representation of cultural beauty'.

Chishty's use of vibrant, eye-catching patterns and motifs challenges the perceived invisibility of drones. Photo transfers evoke the community spaces and practices that have been transformed by the ubiquitous - though unseen - threat of drones in contemporary conflict.

Navine Dossos, The Messenger and the Message
(Recto and Verso), 2015

Gouache on board

ART 17901, *Presented by Art Fund*

Artist

Navine Dossos creates intricate, geometric patterns which reference Islamic design. Her work investigates the circulation of information online and the role of social media in conflict.

Image

Here, concentric layers each carry a different image or symbol. The logos for Twitter and Kik, a secure messaging platform, are layered with the cross-swords insignia of the counter-ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve. A globe-like form represents the geolocation of the site where ISIS beheaded American journalist James Foley.

Context

ISIS has made expert use of social media to further its cause. The group has exploited social media platforms for propaganda and recruitment.

Various filmmakers, Raids and reconnaissance, 1917–1945

35mm black and white silent film

IWM 1132 / OPX 98 – OPX 100 / OPF 291

Filmmaker

During the Second World War RAF cameramen filmed 683 night-raids and daylight sweeps over occupied Europe. Cameras fixed on aircraft covered a further 900 operations.

Image

These operational films were embellished with titles, sound effects and graphics, and distributed to cinemas. They appealed to audiences - one newsreel described them as 'actual pictures ... of the only weapon that so far inflicts wounds on the body of Germany'.

Context

The main value of film was to publicise successes, including of the aviation industry. By 1944 it employed 1.7 million workers making 26,461 war planes.

(Showcase)

Jim Ricks, Predator (Carpet Bombing), 2016, based on Ruben Pater, Drone Survival Guide, 2013

Vegetable dyed wool

ART 18020

Artist

The use of armed drones escalated rapidly during the 2001–2021 War in Afghanistan. Artist Jim Ricks visited the country in 2013 and created a series of works responding to the growing threat in the sky.

Image

Ricks' carpet depicts a US Predator drone. Though initially built for reconnaissance, the Predator was later equipped with missiles. Able to locate, track and strike targets, armed drones drastically shortened a process known as the 'kill chain'.

Context

This work was woven by Haji Naseer and Sons, Kabul. It builds on Afghanistan's heritage of 'war rugs', which incorporates military imagery with historic weaving techniques.

WITH THANKS

We are very grateful for the major grants, donations and sponsorships for the development of IWM London's Blavatnik Art, Film and Photography Galleries.

Lead supporter:

The Blavatnik Family Foundation

With additional support from:

DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport)

MOD (Ministry of Defence)

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