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## Scars of War

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# Scars of War

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For HONR 289: War and Trauma in Visual Art from Francisco Goya to Wafaa Bilal, St. Norbert College

## Thesis Statement

War is shattering, leaving behind gaping wounds in need of healing. Some require bandages, other wounds are psychological and not visible. Both leave a scar. These scars are an inevitable part of the human experience. The psychological and physical ramifications of war exist as long as strife pervades. This collection of works, depicting war from the French Revolution to present day Iraq, illustrates the scarring impact war has on the people and places within its grasp. Meanwhile, this chronological art analysis reveals the static outcomes of war throughout history: destruction and suffering.

## Project Methods and Objectives

Out of a long list of artists and works we chose nine exemplary works and series to include in our exhibit. These particular works were the best examples of the scaring effects war has on people and the environment. We created a paradox between the progression in art style and technology with the pervasive, timeless theme of war's destruction.

The complete list of works includes: the *Los Desastres de la Guerra* series by Francisco Goya, the *Der Krieg* series by Otto Dix, the *Hiroshima Panels* by Iri and Toshi Maruki, *Vietnam II* by Leon Golub, *The Rwanda Project* by Alfredo Jaar, *The Victor Weeps* by Fazal Sheikh, *Bomb Ponds* by Vandy Rattana, and the *War is Trauma Portfolio* by Justseeds and Iraq Veterans Against War.

## Selection of Proposed Artworks

*Los Desastres de la Guerra* by Francisco Goya



This collection depicts the hostile relations during the Peninsular War (1808-14). War, famine, and political turmoil are themes in the work, attempting to show the destructive effect war has on civilians and soldiers.

*Der Krieg* by Otto Dix

The gray scale contrast captures the horrific atmosphere of WWI. The series illuminates the fine line between life and death in times of war.



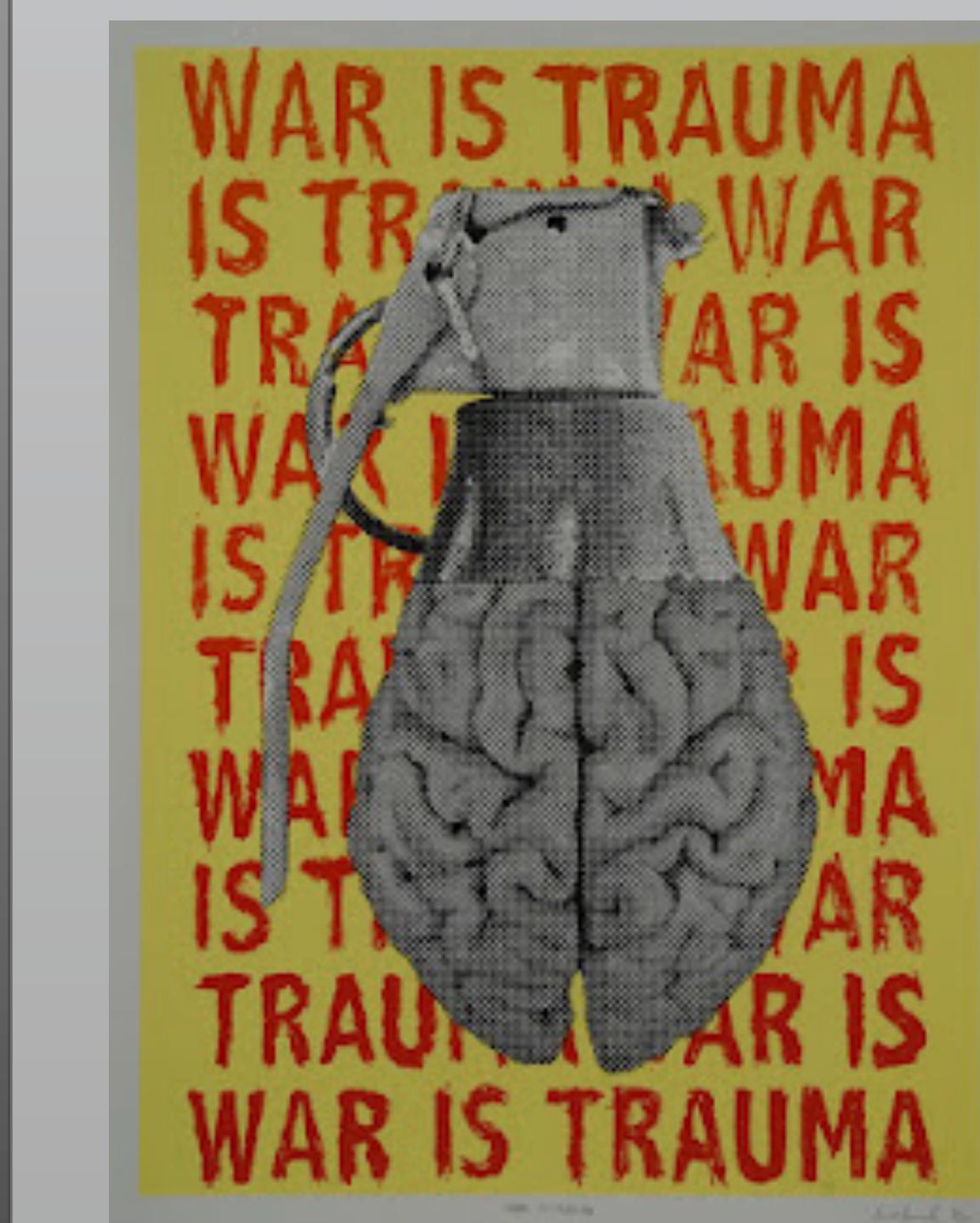
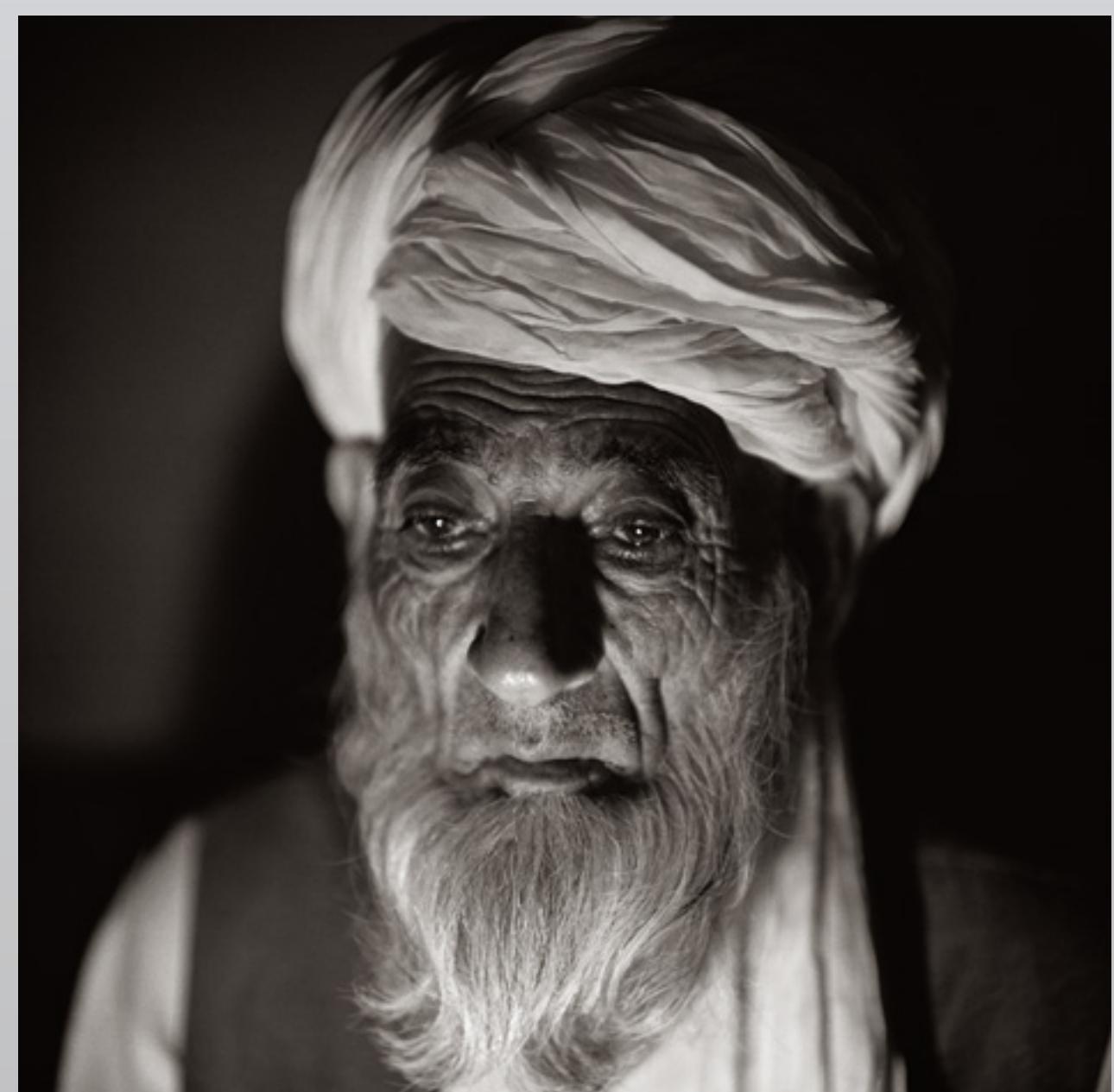
*Vietnam II* by Leon Golub



Civilians are not always exempt from the bloodshed. Here we see soldiers aiming their guns at innocent Vietnamese civilians within this harrowing work.

*The Victor Weeps* by Fazal Sheikh

A series of Sheikh's photographs captures the destitute situation of hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees living in camps since the Soviet invasion.



Justseeds and Iraq Veterans Against the War collaborated to create the *War is Trauma Portfolio* – a campaign to stop the deployment of traumatized troops and win service members and veterans the right to heal.

## Exhibition Summary

New technology and art styles have transformed the way we see the world. We go from plate etchings in the earliest works to works responding to the impact of televised images during the Vietnam War, and photographs and abstract art responding to the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Regardless of what way artists choose to depict war, war remains heartbreaking, psychologically and physically destructive, leaving an imprint on the world around us.

## References

"Fazal Sheikh - The Victor Weeps." Fazal Sheikh - The Victor Weeps. [http://www.fazalsheikh.org/projects/the\\_victor\\_weeps/images.php](http://www.fazalsheikh.org/projects/the_victor_weeps/images.php) (accessed October 22, 2014).

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