



War fear as a subject matter of Artist in today's scenario

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Abstract:

The context applies in the formation of the art produced in certain period of time and the reflection intercourse within the situation, which occurs. The art generated throughout history represents the battles in different periods, and how this trauma runs through the Artworks of the visual artists. My main aim is to focus Artist depiction, through which they have passed in the period of political conflict. This paper highlights the representation of the artists how they have deals with the experience of destruction and how in the contemporary context the conflict and Art negotiates.

I want to analyse how artistic visual representation has been displaying the war, and also to investigate the explicit absence of the war in art works. Broadly speaking, this analysis will focus on the changes engendered by the war, in an attempt to disentangle the ambiguous relationship between war and the art scene.

Introduction:

Art addresses not only the intellect, but also the emotions, and above all, the imagination. As art is always on the lookout for new solutions and new means of representation, it can soften the hardened lines that are always to be found in conflicts and bring to light deeper layers of the unconscious and what is repressed, including the historical dimension, in order to encourage reflection and reappraisal. To cite Kant, "only art is capable of making a synthetic judgment, in other words, to consider things in context far removed from pre-determined criteria and to lend this context a form that can be perceived using the senses."

From 1947 until present, the country of India and Pakistan suffered from one of the precarious and most renowned wars in recent history. The conflict area "Kashmir" which is occupied by both these nations and has

fought several wars in between. The huge presence of defence force not only disturbs the daily survival of the peoples, but also responsible for killing of thousands innocent peoples.

I stress the essential dimension of commemorations: the need to keep on showing what really happened in order to not only retain the memory but also the truth alive. This task of artistic representation – to revive and deal with the memory and the truth – is the cornerstone of this thesis. I will continuously inquire into the intention and determination of various artists to deal with the memory of the war, and to grasp the truth of what took place in the past, and what is occurring in the present. For, it is my contention, that many artists regardless of their age, and experiences during and after the war, inevitably are affected by the trauma of the war, and continuously revisit the subjects of memory and truth of the war in their work.

The war has caused great changes in several areas: on its people and population, on ways of life and interaction among neighbours and also on the field of arts. Not everyone accepted the states misfortune passively during the war: many decided to migrate and has been migrated from the state, these struggles for survival and killings of peoples, feature prominently in the artistic and cultural production of many “Kashmir” artists. Hence, the following analysis will be based on the work of several artists who deal with the war, the memory of the life prior to and during the war, at the moment of displacement, and the aftermath “rehabilitation” period through the idiom of visual arts and many artistic genres through history visualize the effects of war.

I want to analyse how artistic visual representation has been displaying the war, and also to investigate the explicit absence of the war in art works. Broadly speaking, this analysis will focus on the changes engendered by the war, in an attempt to disentangle the ambiguous relationship between war and the art scene. To be more specific, my main task will be to examine how the war image is depicted by artists in view from history particularly in the domain of visual arts. In other words: how the influence of the war has been displayed. I will focus on four essential genres of visual art: installation, sculpture and paintings. The decision to focus on visual arts and on these four idioms stems from both pragmatic and also aesthetic incentives. The comparative aspect of these genres allows me to construct several sections in my analysis that are intertwined, and also to illustrate and support my arguments. By contrasting the realism, symbolism or expressionism in different installations, sculptures and paintings, I attempt to tackle the aesthetic form in which the artist conveys his or her intentions. The works analyzed in the following pages are created by artists who have different attachments to war. In terms of temporality, I will focus not only on the war time period but also on its aftermath. By stretching the analysis

to contemporary times, I intend to assess how artists deal with the consequences of war many years after its occurrence. Does the time distance affect the visibility and the presence of war in contemporary work on and from “Kashmir”? Do artists tend to move beyond the need for dealing directly with the war, and the traumatic events that took place within their own lives? In addition to the art works themselves, I will also attempt to situate the art scene nowadays. By giving an overview of institutions that are affected by the war. We will see if the theme of war is something that shapes the experiences of artists for an extensive period of time. When and how do artists become detached from the explicit representation of the war in their work? If yes, what role does time play in this detachment? While fully aware that we do not have methodological means at our disposal that measure artistic (or any other human) experiences, I will attempt to provide symbolic/semiotic reading of the works analysed in this thesis, and make a conclusion on the influence the war has had on visual art.

As for the primary material for the analysis, I also encountered numerous difficulties in selecting the works and images available primarily on internet. Given the vast amount of visual and graphic art produced on the war, I plunged into an arduous process of screening and selecting the pieces that are most relevant for my thesis. A description in itself is often subjective and the nature of the images in this context does not make it any easier. Although I will try to accomplish this task in a manner as objectively as possible, I acknowledge that the objective/subjective dichotomy is not always the most helpful but rather, when I analyze the artists' positions and decisions, as well as my own interpretations, the dichotomy should be treated as mutually entangled and overlapping. The emphasis will be placed on the depiction of events. However, these events need to be placed in its political context to understand the meaning. This is why I used articles and general information on the events appearing in the installations, sculptures, photographs and the paintings. This is part of my strategy to keep a critical lens in this analysis necessary when analyzing art, and especially when analyzing images that cannot be taken as truth and for granted.

We will commence by constructing a historical oversight of the representation of war in different art forms. By selecting and analyzing some representative works by various artists in various time periods and art movements, we will formulate some general conclusions, which will answer the question on how to define war art.

In between the experienced and the received accounts are those artists who lived through the traumas of terror and torture, yet remained personally buffered from the atrocities. Chief among them is no less than the first great artist of modernity, Francisco Goya, whose etchings and aquatints from *The Disasters of War*, made between 1810 and 1820,

catalog the inhumanity of the Napoleonic Peninsular War consuming France, Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Besides being regarded as the superlative record of torture and terror, Goya's renderings establish him as the first visual journalist of an in-depth and sustained account of war, a fact made more remarkable by his work preceding the invention of photography by two decades. And yet, mindful of how dangerous his account was, Goya was never able to share his greatest achievement with even his intimates, and the public would not view *The Disasters of War* until decades after his death.



Francisco Goya, two prints from the series *The Disasters of War*, 1810-1820, etching and aquatint.

All of which underlines Goya's most significant break with the past. For *The Disasters of War* is also the first significant account of war made by an artist under his own private auspices—that is, not as an agent commissioned to propagandize this history of a victorious state, as all prior records of torture and terror throughout history had been. Goya's testament also counts as no less than the first truly Universalist vision void of nationalistic, ethnic, and religious ideology. The images may be confined historically to European antagonists, but what makes them universal is that Catholics and Spaniards among whom Goya lived are shown to have been no more compassionate and no less cruel than their enemies. Goya's observations have become the standard of objective picture making for all media, a standard dividing the modern from the pre-modern in terms of image making for the joint effort of history and art. In the former category, Spanish examples are powerful and instructive. Goya's series *The Disasters of War* provide dramatic and disturbing images of Spanish resistance against the invasion of the French during the Napoleonic Wars of the early nineteenth century. This was the first example in the modern era of what was to be termed guerrilla war, in which no distinction was made between civilians and regular military forces. Goya's *The Third of May 1808* depicts the execution of Spanish civilians by French troops.

Since the war between India and Pakistan took place in an era in which technology was already fully developed, it is a logical consequence that a mass of images of this conflict can be found. While searching for these on the

India and Pakistan war, it is strikingly clear that painting was not an important form of expression. It became evident that the vast majority of images are photographs. In contrast to photographers, painters have the complete freedom to express an event in the way they want to. Therefore, we cannot quote a general painting technique or theory here. The basic influences on artists' work are to be found in various art movements. This is why we have to focus our attention on both the subject and the form through which it is shaped. By searching for the meanings and the underlying anecdotes behind the works, we understand why it is depicted like this. In this way, the works can be connected to various art movements. Although they are not a major part of the existing visual art, paintings on the war theme do exist.

Subodh Gupta is world famous for his enormous sculptures made from old kitchenware, and he's wowing audiences once more with his latest offerings. Seen here are images of sculptures that use old pots and pans to replicate protective equipment you'd expect to see on military personnel. Curiously, Gupta fashioned helmets, ski masks and gas masks out of cooking equipment while moulding realistic-looking faces out of melted metals.

Subodh Gupta makes a transition of sorts in his own idiom and dialect in his latest work Gandhi's Three Monkeys. Here a tragic-comic PlayStation War Game is conjured up by sculptures of three soldier heads that are trimmed with eye shades, a mask and a helmet made of Indian brass utensils. The irony and wit in turning the mascot of a Man of Peace into a testament of violence causes these bronze sculptures to embody more subversive possibilities.

War is one of the themes in the exhibition that Gupta represents here with a 1 kilogram hexagon-shaped chunk of 24 carat gold by the same name. This perfect object is layered with meaning and disquiet; it addresses the viewer with a rather simple question: "How many kilos (of war) do you want?" 1 KG War, modest in scale, appears delicate and prized within its glass-topped and secured display case as to prevent it from reaching hands that may misuse it.

A pink Chimta (Untitled, 2008) adds a splash of color to the exhibition. While at first-glance, it resembles a cheerleader's pompom or party decoration. In fact it is made of thousands of "Chimtas", pincers used in every common Indian kitchen to make bread. Once more, Gupta takes from the everyday an object and subverts it to make a work that is electrifying in aesthetic and simplicity.

Subodh Gupta, in his new series of paintings, makes a transition in scale and style with “moving”, crashing and falling utensils disrupting the surface of the picture. Another major sculptural installation consisting of a fifty-foot-long moving sushi belt carrying copper and brass containers used for serving food speaks of a city in motion.

Subodh Gupta navigates his chariot of transgressions in a cathartic pageant –that of a world constantly being lost /destroyed and yet emerging anew, reconfigured and reconstructed from its own debris.



SUBODH GUPTA, *Still, steal, steel*, 2008

Warfare, the conflict between nations and different religions, has caused tremendous anxiety mixed with depression. Shilpa Gupta uses her art as a media to explore the angst and to examine its cause.

Long barbed wire fenced border between India and Bangladesh. Stretching from Sundarbans to Teen Math, this fence attempts to shield India from terrorism and smuggling, but also creates a potentially lethal boundary for the population in the wetlands of the Bengal delta who live in a volatile environment that is subject to the effects of climate change.

Imagination is the most mysterious and interesting aspect of human beings. It connects our conscious with our subconscious and allows us to explore our inner self. Transforming expressions and feelings into a format that is not only a visual delight, but also full of life are the qualifications of a successful artist. Veer Munshi is such

an artists who creates intriguing images full of life and expression. An artist from Kashmir who has been able to show to the world through his canvas, the sufferings and pain of an exiled community.

Violence, terror and fear unleashed in Kashmir since the late 1980s had resulted in the displacement of almost the entire Kashmiri Hindu population from Kashmir valley. Veer Munshi has been able to transform his memories of forceful exodus from Kashmir into his paintings. In one of the exhibitions hosted by Art Alive Gallery in New Delhi titled "Encounter", veer featured his paintings and installations, articulating his own experience of leaving his home. This is what Madhur Tankha reported:" Evoking an ethereal landscape of lake and mountains through his canvas, Munshi confronts discerning art lovers with two figures -- one of the "common man", naked and vulnerable, and next to him a militiaman in camouflaged uniform. Standing beside each other and looking back towards the mountains, together they represent the conflicts, the violation of human rights and of denying people their freedom."



Veer Munshi, Chamber, an acrylic on hand made paper pasted on board

His work is very personal and at most times disturbing. It is his reaction to a specific event – in this case, the ongoing political situation in his home, Kashmir – and he wants everyone who views his work to understand what is happening there. Rather than leaving viewers with a light hearted happy feeling, Munshi wants his works to cause reflection and spread awareness. He is a painter with a clearly defined course In Veer Munshi's paintings we see a reflection of the anguish and fear he felt whilst living in his own home, a fear that plagued so many other Kashmiris as well. Munshi was forced to give up his home and heritage, and witness how men he once knew turned into vicious, killing animals – a theme often recurring in his large canvases. In Munshi's paintings we also see the artist's bitterness upon seeing a once beautiful valley ravaged by men intent on nothing but their own gain in the name of patriotism. This farce is reflected in Munshi's ability to telescope images of pain and hatred over those of the Kashmir that was. Beautiful houseboats lie overturned and neglected in the Dal Lake and the flowers in the Shalimar Garden are trampled and dying. The artist also manages to manipulate the colour

he uses to suit the message of his paintings. Reds, oranges and greens, otherwise warm and inviting, are given harsh and dark roles. His purples are potent and the shades of brown always cloak and muddy everything.



Veer Munshi, "Encounter", 2007

Mir Imtiaz says about his work, "it carries very suggestive Title 'THE THINKER OF NEW WORLD ORDER' This is something about the world politics; it is a tassel between peace and conflict where the justice is delayed rather denied. This particular work is a representation of political class of the globe, the people who have put the political as well as social system in muddles. These powers of the world show bogus concern for atrocities, violence, innocent killings, and the mutilating ecology and environment of the world. However, at the level of explanation no agenda sees the light.

There are windows of hope, with suffocated voices, Shattered Structures of Societies, Fired Skeletons of Human races, undeserved sufferings of masses and disregard for human values and lot more. .

This also carries the under current message of Arrogance of power and Hegemony. Unlawful occupation of resourceful nations is the only objective of these powers in the name of security and terrorism.



My work is not comprised solely of paintings; I create video art and live performance pieces, and I have collaborated with musicians and with writers and actors. The tenor of my work is often political; I often seek to explore themes and subjects that would be troubling or vital.

Art usually addresses public opinion, [with the idea] that the public puts pressure on the decision makers, the politicians in this case, to act in a certain way. Why doesn't art try to address the decision makers directly? Art needs to encourage the decision makers, the politicians, to set their imaginations free, so they can think about new nonviolent solutions to the convicts. I have executed many artworks addressing the subject of the countless of difficulties facing in my state. This is an international problem now; it represents the ugliness and violence of fanatic beliefs. It is a situation that doesn't have any excuse [for being], and I think all contemporary art will be attracted in one way or another by this unfortunate circumstance. People tend to forget their pains, such as wars. This is good [for easing individual suffering], but forgetting can lead to committing the same mistakes that caused these pains. Art can constantly remind us of the pain and the mistakes, so that people do not fall into the same errors again. One of the ways we forget the atrocities of war is by transforming them into journalistic facts that vanish the next day to give place to new journalistic facts. Some art is journalistic, but I think real art should bring these horrors back to our consciousness by connecting with the viewer on a personal level and by moving his imagination. Art should push the viewer to formulate his own knowledge about the war rather than gathering information from mass media. I think there is a crucial difference between knowledge and the accumulation of information; I think knowledge is an essential step toward dealing with our problems in a peaceful way.



Mir Irfan, Body Armament, Medium :wire, Size :life size, Year :2014

I feel immense gratitude toward the state in which I was born and immeasurable sadness about what is happening to it, and there is no way I cannot devote most of my art to what is going on now. This [fanaticism] is spreading everywhere, and I think that the solution cannot be waging more wars; politicians should think about new solutions that are not violent. I want people to know that “Kashmir” has changed a lot; we lost a lot, and the world is also changing and losing. New solutions should be created for this conduct and all the ones related to it. I think there are two tendencies in art born of conditions: one fuels the struggle by pointing fingers and judging, and other shows the conditions negativity in a sensitive, humanitarian way that works toward the extinction of violence. The first raises emotions of anger, hate, and desire for revenge while the second provokes recreation, consideration, and understanding.

In the past four years, I’ve felt that everything could collapse at any second. While sculptures are example images, I’ve wanted to create Art works that suggest to the viewer that this could be the last moment of that place’s existence. My Sculpture often depicts movement—the subjects are rarely still, rather in the middle of a gesture, and the lines often give the impression of movement from one part of the form to another—because I want the viewer to think of what comes after whatever is depicted, and hopefully the viewer will contribute in helping to end this crisis.



Mir Irfan, life package, Medium: wire fibre and lamp, Size: 42x42x60 cm, Year: 2015

Conclusion:

The power of the arts to promote peace lies in their emotive nature; the arts can help people feel the pathos and waste of war and help to instill a desire and commitment to end war and work for peace. All of the arts have a contribution to make - music, drama, literature, poetry, dance, film – and the visual arts, such as paintings, prints, posters, sculptures, and photography. This paper will focus on the visual arts.

Art can contribute to social change through the imagery it gives us and the ways it can be used to communicate our deepest feelings and needs. To create a culture of peace, we must first imagine it, and the arts can help us do that, for ourselves and future generations. The war definitely had an immense influence on the art scene, both at the institutional level and on the creativity of artists. The implementation of the feelings evoked by war has changed over the years. It is clear that people sometimes need it to digest certain events and it has always been like this. War art has existed for as long as war has been fought. “The evidence for war art’s existence lies in the paintings, drawings and sculptures about brutal conflict that date from the beginning of civilization to the present day. War is part of the human condition, and as long as humans have created works of art, they have depicted this aspect of their lives and deaths. Some of the greatest masterpieces have emerged from some of the most brutal events in history”. Since it is in the nature of people, war art has existed for a long time and will continue to prevail.

We all agreed that the war had been instigated by the individual governments using the dullest, materialistic reasons related to political maneuvering none of us could appreciate the courage it takes to get yourself shot for the idea of a nation, which in the best case is a syndicate of fur traders and black marketers, and in the worst case a cultural association of psychopaths, who set forth in the German ‘fatherland’ with a copy of Goethe in their knapsacks to run Frenchmen and Russians through with a bayonet.” in the words of Hugo ball: “the Dadaist fights against the death throes of the age.” the relationship of the Dada artists to the abstraction that dominated Western art after World War II remains ambivalent. In 1920 huelsenbeck notes: “rather than continuing with art Dada sought an opponent, it places itself in direct opposition to abstract art. Through the engagements related with the depiction of the power directed from the rule, the element of visualization both historically related with in the works of arts, the theme and subject continue as the conflict is occurring in every period of life.

War art can take many forms, it can describe many aspects of battle, and it can fulfil many functions, but in limited view of total war, my dismissive remarks about the art of those who actually experienced it, is dubious views of war rape and insistence on the “complicity” of artists and art viewers with war perpetrators, it overlooks important concepts that also affect our understanding of power relations, the history of war and the purposes of war art. The positive and life-affirming aspects of art production and art reception, such as silence-breaking, catharsis and empathy, are fit subjects for consideration in any discussion of war art. It is a considerable disappointment to find them missing from *Art and War*. Moreover, the intellectual desire for information about historical events, the belief that visual art can present and interpret that information and the willingness to see art objects—even war art—as empathetic connectors between peoples and events ought not to be confused with outright “complicity” in war-making. Nor, to extend the argument, is museum-attending or book-reading an act of war crime collusion. If it were, what could then be said of those who knowingly and cynically profit from the business of such complicity, such as curators of war art, as well as those who produce books like *Art and War*? This question is not intended merely to be an argumentum and absurdum, for it goes to the core of this fundamentally misbegotten effort: the moral right of war survivors to describe their experiences if they are able—and the moral obligation of the rest of us to witness the testaments to their suffering without belittlement or sarcasm.