

Heidi Schaefer

Artist Statement

How can an artist engage intimately with the issue of war from any distance? How is art production and reception implicated in the development of ideologies and technologies that promote conflict and violence? I have been exploring these questions in my art practice since 2002.

I'm interested in how war is manifest in cultural and theoretical ideas and in the meaning and consequences of war in history and art production. For the past few years I have been making a body of work that closes the distance between war production and cultural production by fusing familiar images or objects of war with moments in cultural and art history, a de-familiarisation that re-engages us with the complexities of our relationship to war. The work also raises questions on the relationship between violence, aesthetics and ethics in art production.

My work draws inspiration from: Dada, Surrealism. Theoretically I am influenced by Walter Benjamin's 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' - "instead he grasps the constellation which his own era formed with a definite earlier one", and also Deleuze and Guatarri's ideas around the War Machine.

I use a range of mediums: 3D, drawing, painting, artist's books, digital collage and video in my work, with each piece developed by working through the materials, medium and ideas. My practice is predominately gallery based but I have been involved in collaborative process-based projects in the past. I also am interested in public sculptural site-specific interventions interrogating received perspectives on war histories.

Since 2007, as a part of my practice, I have been curating a contemporary art gallery called twenty+3 projects in the converted front room of my house in Manchester. It has a mandate to show international and regional, non-commercial work.

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