

# North Dakota Museum of Art

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Contact: Matthew Wallace  
mwallace@ndmoa.com  
701-777-4195

## **Artists and War** **A multi-media group exhibition of artists from around the world** **creating art about war or conflict**

The North Dakota Museum of Art announces the opening of *Artists and War*, a multi-media group exhibition of six artists from around the world creating art about war or conflict. This exhibition is the first in a series of exhibitions about the subject, which will result in a touring exhibition and book.

**SIAH ARMAJANI's** *Fallujah*, a monumental sculpture that echoes the themes and images of Picasso's *Guernica*. Picasso was inspired by the Nazi German bombing of Gernika on April 26, 1937, just as Armajani made *Fallujah* in response to the April 28, 2003 beginning of combat in the city of Fallujah, Iraq. *Fallujah* was unveiled in April 2007 at the Artium de Alava in Vitoria, Spain, three miles from the village of Guernica, before returning to the States. The Lannan Foundation has purchased *Fallujah* and are loaning it to the exhibition before it becomes part of the Walker Art Center permanent collection.

Armajani (b. 1939) is an Iranian-born American sculptor who moved to Minneapolis in 1960, where he continues to reside. Armajani has devoted his 30-year career to investigating the connection between architecture and society, and to designing spaces that serve human needs on both an imaginative and a practical level. The artist has long been concerned with creating "neighborly" public sculptures—including bridges, gazebos and reading rooms—that are both physically and psychologically accessible. In striking contrast, his new work, which is at least partially inspired by the sense of alienation engendered by the attacks of Sept. 11, embodies a sense of isolation, imprisonment and surveillance, and a foreboding sense of nostalgia and death.

**HANNA HANNAH** (Santa Cruz) paintings—casein and mixed media on mulberry or rice paper. The artist was born in El Salvador, where her parents lived after they emigrated from Germany with the rise of National Socialism in 1939. She moved to the United States in 1958 at age eleven, leaving behind a familiar language and culture, and a country with an unsettling mix of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. She loved to read and later earned her masters degrees in French literature and painting. Currently she teaches in the Art Department at the University of California Santa Cruz. Hanna's sense of displacement emerges as a theme in her paintings; her use of underlying text(ure) is embedded in the work. For her there is no separation between theory and practice.

Hannah's paintings depict with fine brush and casein paint horrific images from newspapers within a field of steady, meditative pattern, producing an effect that is startling and arresting. Her more recent oval-shaped "cameos" of detailed scenes are equally disquieting on stark panels of floor-length paper like holes in a fence, both inviting and daring us to look closer. Hanna Hannah's work exposes a confrontation with terror and beauty.

(From

*Rydell Visual Arts Fellows 2007 catalog*)

# North Dakota Museum of Art

---

**DANIEL HEYMAN** (Philadelphia) dry points and watercolors. Too rarely, a work of visual art can break through the complacency of ordinary lives to bring vital information about present day life that is not a question of beauty in the traditional sense, but that reveals a larger and much more important role of the artist in society—one that does not coincide with a present fixation on coordinated colors or styles in a tableaux of good taste, but rather holds up a mirror to our collective face and asks "Is this who we want to be?" At that point, it is how we recognize ourselves and what we do about who we are that creates the art.

For the past four years, Daniel Heyman has concentrated his art on making images about the war in Iraq, specifically the abuse and torture of innocent Iraqis at Abu Ghraib and other prisons. For this work, Heyman traveled to Jordan and Turkey where he has talked face to face with over twenty-five former detainees, painting their portraits and taking down their own versions of what happened to them at the hands of the American captors. Three of these detainees have since been killed in the war. Heyman continues to fly to the Middle East to witness and record the testimony of former victims of torture at Abu Ghraib. The depositions are being conducted by Attorney Susan Burke and a number of other concerned Americans who have brought a suit against those responsible for the horror at Abu Ghraib.

The winter issue of the *Virginia Quarterly Review* reproduced a series of Heyman images with an introduction by Laurel Reuter, Director of the North Dakota Museum of Art and curator of Artists and War. The February issue of *Esquire* will feature Heyman's work as well.

**DAVID OPDYKE** (Brooklyn) is installing *Aerial Assumptions*, an airborne installation of thousands of paper airplanes made from pages of an Arabic-English dictionary, specially commissioned for the Corcoran in Washington, DC. By day a professional model maker, David Opdyke's art rekindles childhood memories of such small-scale diversions as model building, miniature railroading, playing with Matchbox cars, and flying paper airplanes. But his child's play suggests real war, real generals, and conflicts of whole cultures. According to Blake Gopnik of the *Washington Post*, one could argue that Opdyke's toy-like fine detail is precisely what is needed to carry his political messages, which are all about a world run by overgrown boys. Our leaders start life playing with model jets and Tonka trucks and G.I. Joes, and by the time they come to power they're collecting real industries and live battalions. How better to poke at an America under the sway of macho generals and swaggering industrialists than with an extravagant deployment of die-cut plastic and model airplane glue?

Opdyke was born in 1969 and received his BFA in Painting and Sculpture at the University of Cincinnati in 1992. He showed for years at the Roebing Hall Gallery in New York but has just joined the Ronald Feldman Gallery. In 2005 Opdyke received the Aldrich Emerging Artist Award from the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Conn.

**MIGUEL ANGEL ROJAS** is one of a handful of Colombian artists who use the processes, semantics and pragmatics of the medium of photography to expose unexpected layers of reality. His photo installation that echoes Michelangelo's *David* will be in the exhibition. Rojas's *David* suggests Michaelangelo's *David* in pose and form. His *David*, however, has lost the lower half of his leg to a land mine.

# North Dakota Museum of Art

---

Born in Bogota in 1946, Rojas has been living and working in Colombia his entire life. He has taught art at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University, the Los Andes University, and the National University, his Alma Mater. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in his native country and has formed part of ground-breaking group exhibitions in the United States, most notably "The American Effect" at the Whitney Museum, NY (2003), FotoFest (1992) Houston, TX, and the traveling exhibitions "Images of Silence" (1989-1990) organized by the Museum of Modern Art of Latin America, WH, and "Re-Aligning Vision" (1997-1999) organized by the Museo del Barrio, NY.

**ADRIENNE NOELLE WERGE** was born in Vietnam of a Vietnamese mother and American father, an American serviceman. As an infant at the end of the Vietnam War, she was adopted from an orphanage outside Saigon and grew up near the University of Notre Dame in Indiana where her father was a professor of English. She graduated with an MFA in photography from the Rhode Island School of Design. Her work, *For Such a Time As This: Remembering Vietnam* is about loss, identity and parents. The principle element in the installation is 240 helmets made of rice scattered randomly across the gallery floor. She found Vietnam-era combat helmets at an Army Surplus and used them as molds. There is one helmet for each child in the orphanage. This might be one helmet for each American father who left a child behind. Among the helmets is a mound of jasmine rice upon which the artist projects original 1972 footage from *Vũng Tàu*. (During the Vietnam War, *Vũng Tàu* was home to the Australian Army and American support units, and was a popular spot for in-country R & R for U.S. combat troops. After the war, *Vũng Tàu* was a common launching place for the Vietnamese Boat People fleeing the communists.) Central to the installation is film footage of her basket performance wherein she reenacts the story of Moses in the bulrushes as the sunsets and rises, linking the past with her present. According to the artist, "My story—and others like mine—are among the last to be heard. We are a post-script, an afterthought, a city of lost lives. We were the rescued, the ones who lived happily ever after, or the lucky few. We are the children of a thousand and one nights of storytelling by which we hope to save our souls."

The North Dakota Museum of Art is located on Centennial Drive, Grand Forks. Weekdays 9 – 5 pm. Weekends 1 – 5 pm. The Museum Shop is open during these hours as well. The Museum Café is open weekdays 10 – 4 pm with lunch served from 11 – 2 pm. Although the Museum does not charge an admission fee, the suggested donation is \$5 for adults and change for children. Wireless internet access available.