

Art or Evidence: The Power of Photojournalism

January 3-March 10

Mandeville Gallery · Union College · Schenectady · New York



From left to right: Giclee print from #Occupywallstreet Oct. 15, 2011 © ASHLEY GILBERTSON/VII; Silver print from *Flashpoints: Selected Image* by GILLES PERESS produced by Double Elephant Editions, New York, 1997 UNION COLLEGE PERMANENT COLLECTION; Giclee print from *Egypt*, January 2011 © FRANCO PAGETTI / VII

THIS EXHIBITION features the portfolio, *Flashpoints*, by international photojournalist Gilles Peress, which includes work from the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Iran, Rwanda and Bosnia. Peress sees his work as “gathering evidence for history”¹ rather than art, though the forensic nature of his photography is a mere fraction of its meaning. Thirteen additional photojournalists are included, whose work ranges from the battlefield to the social and political spheres of contemporary life. The response to a photograph whether shot straight, staged or constructed, cannot be determined. Every observer brings his or her own content to the image, thereby changing its interpretation. Publishers seek to sell newspapers and satisfy their customers by choosing images that conform to pre-established views. As Barthes notes, these photographs are read “through a traditional stock of signs.”

The photojournalist’s practice is a complex (and dangerous) pursuit in the name of providing not a single truth, but knowledge to the public. The images resulting form a part of the public memory and often impact the public’s aspirations for the future as well. An iconic photograph can last in the memory far longer than the text it was originally tethered to. If this process is at times imperfect, indeed occasionally a pure deception, it remains profoundly important to the public discourse. These photographs provide a platform “outside of everyday perception, offering time and space to analyze and examine” an event.² Through examination of these

¹ Magnum Photos Website, Gilles Peress Portfolio Page

² Terrance Wright, *Photography Handbook* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1999), 87.

images we can not only see a ‘trace of the original,’ but also gain an insight into the society’s needs and values. What methods have been used “to insure our peace of mind”³ or disturb it? By contemplating press images from multiple angles, we can challenge our own stock responses to them, allowing the structures of society to become visible.⁴—Marie Costello, Curator

Additional Photojournalists featured in the exhibition in collaboration with VII

Jocelyn Bain Hogg; Stefano De Luigi; Jessica Dimmock; Adam Ferguson; Ashley Gilbertson; Ron Haviv; Ed Kashi; Davide Monteleone; Christopher Morris; Seamus Murphy; Franco Pagetti; Anastasia Taylor-Lind; Tomas van Houtryve

A catalogue for the exhibition is available on request.

On Thursday, February 7, 2013 5:00PM Nott Memorial

Alison Morley, Chair of the Photojournalism Department, International Center of Photography will speak about the exhibition

Alison Morley is a photo editor and educator. Alison has been the Chair of the Documentary Photography and Photojournalism Program at the International Center of Photography in New York since 2000, where she teaches and oversees an adjunct faculty of more than 60 working photographers and professionals. As a photo editor, she has been the photography director of *The New York Times Sophisticated Traveler*, *Audubon*, *Life*, *Civilization*, *Esquire*, *Mirabella*, *Elle*, and *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*

Reception with wine and light refreshments will follow.

Free and open to the public

For more information please call 518 388 8360

³ Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (Hill and Wang, 1977), 31.

⁴ Ibid, 32.