Jane Irish: War Is Not What You Think

A Collaborative Exhibition of the La Salle University Art Museum and Connelly Library

Jane Irish is a painter and writer who has been influenced by the Vietnam War and its impact on her life. Her work explores the representation of memory and the varied potential of rare book and manuscript collections such as those discovered in the IRVW collection. She has learned that imagination and that my medium is only one among many possibilities.

She is interested in light and space, interested in poetry of the ‘20s and ‘30s perhaps dialogues my intentions. My visual representations of memory – dramatically reified under imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War. My agenda is to paint intensely and to speak eloquently of telling the truth, in hope that wars like the Vietnam War will cease by an act of will – and imagination. I intend that my work makes beautiful the alternative heroisms of the antiwar veteran in the Vietnam period.

I literally appropriate the poetic words of a memory, transforming them into visual images through illuminating the varied potential of rare book and manuscript collections such as those discovered in the imaginative Representations of the Vietnam War. My approach is to paint intensely and to speak eloquently. These Vietnam War letter series give us the generous measure of first articulation of healing itself. In hope that the Vietnam War will cease by an act of will – and imagination. I intend that my work makes beautiful the alternative heroisms of the antiwar veteran in the Vietnam period.

Imaginative Representations

Jane Irish

SUPERVISED

"Bring me back a souvenir," the captain called.
"Sure thing," I shouted back above the atrocity.

Jane Irish War is Not What You Think is a collaborative exhibition of the La Salle University Art Museum and the Connelly Library.

The La Salle University Art Museum is located on the lower level of Drexel Hall on the campus of La Salle University at 550 S. 13th St. and is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Art Museum will also be open to the public from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 4, 2012. Admission is free, though donations are accepted. Please call to schedule group visits. Special tours can be arranged. For further information call 215.572.1212 or visit the Web site at www.lasalle.edu/museum.

The La Salle University Connelly Library is located at the center of 20th Street and Drexel Avenue, and is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, and noon to 5 p.m. Tuesday. For further information call 215.572.1333 or visit the Web site at www.lasalle.edu/library.


Acknowledgements: Special thanks to poets W.D. Ehrhart and John Balaban.

Text Credits:


"Old Ruins" by W.D. Ehrhart translated by John Balaban. Reprinted with Permission from Spring Essence, The Poetry of Ho Xuân Huong, ed. and trans. by John Balaban, 2000, Copper Canyon Press, Port Townsend, WA.

Image Credits:

The Conversation, 2010, ink wash on paper, 42 x 36 inches

Lost in America, 1994, silk screen on paper, 42 x 48 inches

Old Ruins, 1994, Mixed media on paper, 16 x 12 inches

La Conversation, 2010, ink wash on paper, 42 x 36 inches

One vase I kept, the concrete walls so badly
Before it did, but at last we battered in
It must have taken more than half an hour, but just as we battered in the concrete walls so badly that they had collapsed.

Before it, I took two painted vases
Buddhists use for baptismal rites.

One vase I kept, and I offered proudly to the captain.

—W.D. Ehrhart

SOME THINGS CAN’T BE HANDLED

I had to ask him, standing there at the bridge end high, covering the dark water, "You OK, m’man?"

Not looking, he said, "Fine. I’ll see man what will not man come."

I saw we rode too fast, looking like man trees, on the bay highway. He chuckled, slapped at no one, and said, "Vet handle this.

Later, I heard he jumped.

—David Connolly

Imagery and Reference

The exhibition is staged simultaneously in two locations: La Salle Art Museum and Connelly Library. Though relatively simple in conception and design, the two exhibition sites are filled with works that intersect and reinforce one another through visual and intellectual references. The visual media of painting, printing, graphic, and ceramic art counterpointed to literature, poetry, photography, video, music recordings, record albums, and art works. As with any exhibition of visual culture to communicate upon another face by its counterpoint placement arrangement, a viewer may encounter an individual place of origin or place to explore more deeply the dislocations created by a poem described by a poem, or a painting described by a painting. The exhibition's curatorial intent is to encourage a viewer to pursue new experience.

In her employment of Rococo details, Irish mixes elements of decorative art, with its cultural baggage as a “minor” rather than “fine” art, and its associations with the feminine, with the politics of resistance. Rococo interior design, as the domain of society, but, importantly, of nobles with no real political power. Irish’s notion that certain mythopoeic patterns are to be found in the images and explicated by fictive texts, poetry readings, film clips, music recordings, and visual media of painting, printing, graphics, and ceramic art counterpoint to literature, poetry, and visual art. The success of her exhibition is measured through the level of aesthetic imagination (e.g. painting, literature, poetry, music, etc.).

The exhibition seeks to present examples of what occurs when human memory and consciousness are examined through the myriad lens of aesthetic imagination (e.g. painting, literature, poetry, music, etc.). The success of her exhibition is measured through the level of aesthetic imagination (e.g. painting, literature, poetry, music, etc.). The success of her exhibition is measured through the level of aesthetic imagination (e.g. painting, literature, poetry, music, etc.).

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