

ELSA MADRIGAL



Santiago Robles*

Between **WAR** and **PEACE**¹

I won't go to war against the Argentinean
He's my neighbor and also my friend
I won't go to war against the Peruvian
He's my neighbor and also my friend
I won't go to the war against Iraq
I'm not interested in going to steal.

Los Prisioneros, Viña del Mar Festival, 2003

*Santiago is a visual artist; you can contact him at @santiagorb.
Translated by Heather Dashner.

Between war and peace exists a world of images that mobilize and determine us. How can we distinguish which ones are real? We're constantly receiving information about a war between the West and Russia that is not happening as it is represented, because in recent months, the mis-information media have been distributing images taken from other places and other times. They have even gone to the extreme of broadcasting sequences from a 2013 videogame to show a supposed Ukrainian pilot carrying out heroic maneuvers in defense of "freedom" and "democracy." What seems plausible is not always true, and, therefore, the attempt to understand what war or peace is becomes increasingly difficult. Clearly, wars, where ordinary people unfortunately suffer the worst consequences, are a theatrical production to prepare the way for an appropriate scenario for imperialist economic interests.

FRANCISCO MORTALES



How often have we validated an image simply because we've seen it on television, in a newspaper, or —mainly— on social media? These images lack context, life, time, and rhythm, but even so, we take them for reality.





RAFAEL LÓPEZ CASTRO

How often have we validated an image simply because we've seen it on television, in a newspaper, or —mainly— on social media? These images lack context, life, time, and rhythm, but even so, we take them for reality. Internet's algorithms save us the effort and the bother of thinking for ourselves; they offer images that tacitly promote a political position about the war.

The model of media consumption we are immersed in today convinces us day after day that it is not necessary to be deeply informed about events or to compare sources or to see the different sides of a problem. The only thing important in a media society is "satisfying the client," giving him/her more news than he/she wants, regardless of whether that information is deliberately fake. If you think the Earth is flat, here we will give you more and more arguments, processed and ready to be defended in any after-dinner conversation or social network. What's important is feeding that insatiable hunger for information, the eternal quest for a self-determined truth.



Every image could be fake, but some images summarize the discourse of the times we live in. When that happens, they become a tool for initiating a dialogue between people from different cultures and geographies. Between peace and war images also exist that do not seek to collaborate with media manipulation and do show evidence of their authors' critical, analytical position. These images have many, many aspects. In this article, I will briefly look at the work of artists who seek more horizontal relationships with viewers of their creations, creating spaces in their works for discussion.

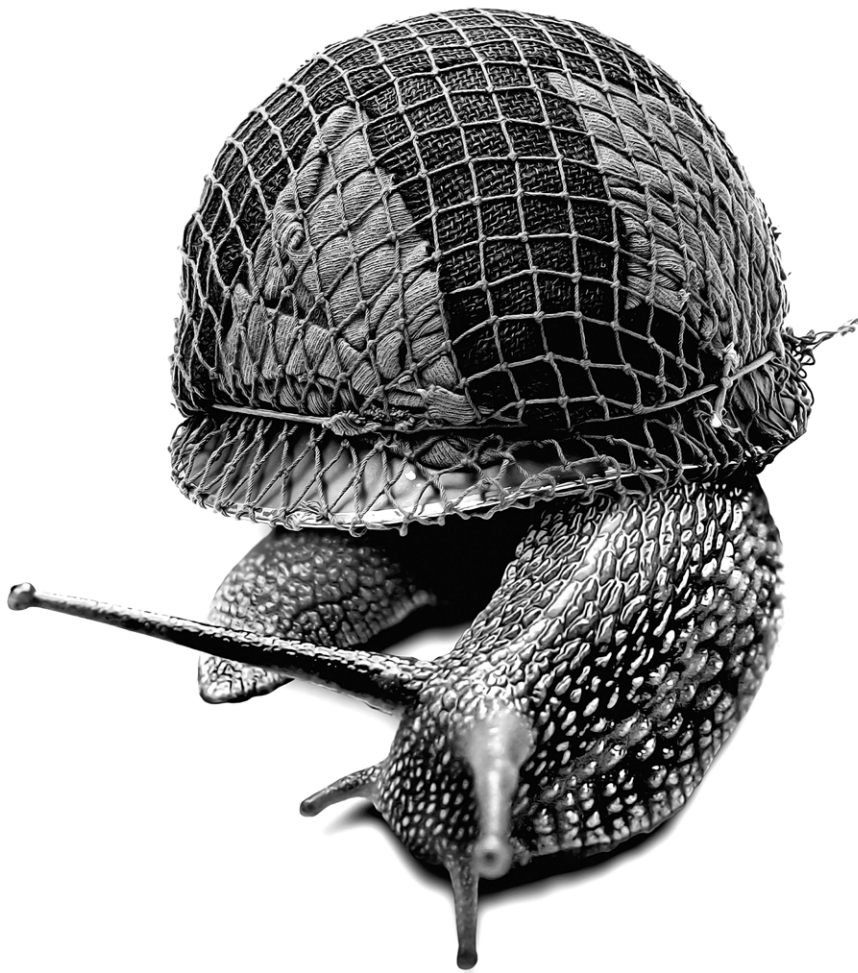
In her linoleum print, Elsa Madrigal refers to the complex intertwining between war, nature, and pollution. Using an aesthetic with its roots in European twentieth-century trench warfare, she reminds us of the onslaught humanity continually perpetrates against itself, digging its own tomb by using a massive industrialized apparatus to destroy the environment where it lives and that sustains it. This postulation becomes relevant in a global context in which political leaders and the media try to convince the population that global warming doesn't exist, or, as social critic George Carlin would say, that the planet resolves the problem of pollution by "shaking itself out of it" at any time, like a dog shaking off its fleas. Let's hope that dog starts barking soon.

In his poster protesting North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military bases in Spain, illustrator Francisco Mortales presents a very clear political position opposed



MÉXICO 2010

JORGE GARNICA



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to the war operated from the United States through a mishmash of references ranging from Siqueiros to stridentism, from Renau to Russian constructivism, in which aggressive dogs could well represent the communications media that defend the interests of their owner, disguised as freedom.

Something similar happens on a national level. Conservatives publish the images circulated as part of the electoral war with the intention of manipulating, and they share them on social media even if they are fully aware that they are false images; that is, that they do not correspond to the reality they say they represent.

Rafael López Castro presents the symbol that Vicente Fox —slightly less angry than today, but just as much a traitor to democracy— usurped from the 1968 student movements when he was a presidential candidate. His aim was to create another empty, fake publicity symbol, like Coca-Cola

ADRIÁN AJA





Quando Rusia Anexa ilegalmente territorio Ucrainiano



Quando Israel anexa ilegalmente territorio Palestino



8:36 p. m. · 13 nov. 2022 desde Benito Juárez, Distrito Federal

2.425 Retweets 114 Tweets citados 5.314 Me gusta

Esta fotografía corresponde a Buenos Aires, el autor no ha borrado su tuit ni ha pedido disculpas

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marketing, to help him win an election. Naturally, since that symbol is no longer useful for his economic and power ambitions, he doesn't use it anymore, but people who are still struggling continue communicating a clear position about life through the "V" for victory, for love, and peace.

Jorge Garnica presents an excellent photographic collage that offers a very specific critique of the absolute absence of planning, operational capability, and results in the supposed war against drug trafficking that the electoral thief Felipe Calderón used together with his right hand, the now-jailed Genaro García Luna, and that bathed an entire country unnecessarily in blood. We are still living with the ravages that war wrought, since its imprint will not be erased or forgotten among the thousands of murdered and disappeared.

In a whirlwind of pigs, monkeys, people with burro heads, men holding work tools that also serve as weapons, and many more elements, an overwhelmed Adrián Aja presents us with how intricate, complex, and abundant the violent dimension of human beings can be. Amidst this chilling Tower of Babel, reminiscent of scenes out of Hieronymus Bosch, we find a devourer of justice, democracy, and legality in Mexico: Augustín Carstens, the minister of finance from 2006 to 2009, who magically—read that as "massively"—got all the federal deputies to unanimously approve the national budget. Not even Goya glimpsed monsters of that magnitude.

Between war and peace is a world of images that allow us to define political identities, but that also try to make us reproduce ideologies with specific interests that someone else has already designed for us. We must always question what we see. **MM**

Notes

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