

Harn Museum of Art Displays WWI Posters and Prints to Mark the 100th Anniversary of Armistice

GAINESVILLE, FL, Sept. 25, 2018—The Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida is observing the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice that ended World War I by displaying more than 60 vintage WWI posters and fine art prints from seven countries, as well as objects carried and exchanged during the war. Armistice Day is recognized each year on Nov. 11. The exhibition, *The Great Catastrophe: Remembering WWI, 1914 - 1918*, is on view now through February 3, 2019.

The First World War is the “great catastrophe,” which sired so many later disasters of the 20th and 21st centuries: the Russian Revolution, the rise of Fascism, Nazism and WWII, and the sectarian conflicts that continue to roil the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East. It was the first war to harness the vast technological inventions from the Industrial Revolution, including the machine gun, airplanes, submarines, tanks and poison gas.

The statistics of the war’s mass slaughter are shocking, even today, with more than 9,000,000 combatant and 7,000,000 civilian casualties.



Alfred Everitt Orr, c. 1918, *For Home and Country*, On loan from the Robert and Elizabeth Sanchez Collection

Governments employed artists and illustrators to portray idealized scenes and propagandistic visual messages of war designed to encourage citizens to support the war effort and even make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. WWI occurred before radio and wide-spread cinema, and it was the war’s often idyllic imagery in magazines, newspapers, postcards, cartoons, sheet music and, most accessibly, posters displayed on public walls and work places, that depicted a palatable version of the war to people around the world. “In any modern government, but particularly a democracy, the relationships between advertising, government information, truth and propaganda are hard to define,” said co-curator of the exhibition Robert Sanchez. “These are topics we still struggle with in today’s society.”



Lloyd Myers, c. 1917, *Britishers You're Needed*, On loan from the Robert and Elizabeth Sanchez Collection

The posters are from seven countries, covering broad, common themes from each nation: The Homefront & Patriotism; Demonizing the Enemy; Money for War; Combat & Ruin; and Protest.

“These posters, prints and objects from WWI are crucial pieces of history for our visitors,” said Carol McCusker, Harn curator of photography and co-curator of the exhibition. “The expertly drafted posters of varying artistic styles portray love of country, pride in duty, degradation of the enemy and masculine and feminine clichés. These tropes worked toward harnessing the imagination of citizens toward “all in” support of the war. The fine art prints, however—made by men who fought in the trenches—convey a more realistic, dire narrative. Arguably the only good thing to come out of this four year carnage was that women won the vote by proving their mettle in wartime. We hope students and the general public will see the complex shared emotions of this tragic era through images, personal letters, artifacts, gallery talks, a panel and a film, to see how WWI was sold, how and why it

was embraced, who it effected most harshly, and for what purpose and profit.”

This exhibition is curated by Carol McCusker and Gainesville collector Robert C. Sanchez. Sanchez’s collection of posters, prints and sheet music are displayed alongside items of popular culture from the collection of University of Florida Emeritus Associate Professor of History, Geoffrey J. Giles. Also in the exhibition are the WWI personal effects of Russell Hull, who survived the brutal Meuse-Argonne Offensive, lent by his grandson, Russell Etling, Cultural Affairs Manager of Gainesville, Florida.

This exhibition is supported by the Eloise R. Chandler Program Endowment Fund with additional support from Visit Gainesville, Alachua County and the Harn Annual Fund.

Admission to the museum is free. For more information, call 352-392-9826 or visit www.harn.ufl.edu.

Images are available upon request.

Programs

The Harn is offering a number of related programs providing an opportunity for visitors to engage in conversation and learn more about the works on view. All programs are free and open to the public.

Collector Talk: The Great Catastrophe Sunday, September 30, 3 p.m.

Robert Sanchez will discuss his experiences as an art collector, including his collection of vintage posters and prints on view in the exhibition, which he co-curated. Robert and Elizabeth Sanchez collect 20th century photographs, prints and other works on paper. Selections from their photography collection were included in the 2018 exhibition State of Excellence—Treasures from Florida Private Collections at the Orlando Museum of Art.

Museum Nights: Europe Future Past Thursday, October 11, 6 – 9 p.m.

Visitors may experience art from across Europe, original choreography from UF students and new perspectives on history, culture and war. Tours, discussion, screen-printing and other hands-on activities inspired by WWI propaganda posters and contemporary photographs will challenge and inspire. Museum Nights is an ongoing program made possible by University of Florida Student Government and the Office of the Provost. Additional support provided by the UF Center for European Studies.

Panel Discussion: WWI, Then and Now Thursday, October 11, 6:30 p.m., during Museum Nights

Panelists are: Dexter Filkins and Andrew Nagorski, both award-winning authors and foreign correspondents (The New Yorker, New York Times, Newsweek); Matthew Jacobs, UF Assoc. Professor of History, author of “Imagining the Middle East: The Building of An American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967”; and Rachel Silveri, UF Assistant Professor of Art History, author of “The Art of Living in the Historical Avant-Garde.” They will discuss the enduring legacies of WWI and how the war shaped the world we live in today, moderated by Robert Sanchez, co-curator of the exhibition.

Lecture: Keep the Home Fires Burning: Postcards from the Front Sunday, October 28, 3 p.m.

A popular song in the First World War sent a message from soldiers to their loved ones to “keep the home fires burning/ while your hearts are yearning.” The most common means of staying in touch was through the mail. The German field post office alone handled 19 million pieces of mail each day. This illustrated lecture by Geoffrey J. Giles, UF Emeritus Associate Professor of History will show examples of some of the surprising themes embellishing picture postcards beyond the typical patriotism and heroism, including those on loan from Giles and in the exhibition.

Film: *J'Accuse*

Sunday, November 18

Reception, noon and Film, 12:30 p.m.

J'Accuse by Abel Gance is a politically and stylistically daring anti-war film produced while the trench warfare of World War I raged on. (1919, silent, 166 minutes). This film is presented in partnership with the UF Center for European Studies.

Tours

Saturdays and Sundays, 2 p.m.

No reservations necessary. Groups of 10 or more may schedule a tour three weeks in advance by contacting tours@harn.ufl.edu.

About the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art

Founded in 1990, the Harn Museum of Art is an integral part of the University of Florida. The Harn contributes to an interconnected, international community by integrating the arts and culture into curricula throughout the university's system of colleges and centers. Its holdings include more than 11,300 works in five main collecting areas: Asian art, African art, photography, modern art of the Americas and Europe, and international contemporary art. The museum also has noteworthy collections of Oceanic, Ancient American Art and works on paper. In addition to rotating installations drawn from its permanent collection, the Harn organizes traveling exhibitions, public lectures, panel discussions, academic symposia, and educational programs for adults, students, and children.

The Harn Museum of Art, at 3259 Hull Road in Gainesville, Florida, is part of the University of Florida's Cultural Plaza, which is also home to the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Admission is free. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. The museum is open until 9 p.m. the second Thursday of every month for Museum Nights. The Camellia Court Café is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call 352-392-9826 or visit harn.ufl.edu.

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