

# Harn Museum of Art

## Educator Resource

### *Engaging with Aftermath*





# Aftermath: The Fallout of War

## Exhibition Description

*Aftermath: The Fallout of War – America & the Middle East* is an original exhibition curated by Carol McCusker, curator of photography at the Harn Museum of Art. The exhibition addresses the physical and emotional conditions of people caught in the wake of war, and reveals the impact of war on soldiers, civilians, cities, and the environment. It includes images from Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya's Uprising, Syria's Civil War, America's home front and the on-going conflict between Israel and Palestine.

*Aftermath* features twelve international artists who explore new territory in war coverage that combines rigorous journalism and fine art sensibilities. Nine of the artists are women, and six artists live in or originate from the Middle East. The exhibition also features three poets who write about the impact of war on people and the environment.

## Educator Resource

This resource unit is offered as a complement to the exhibition, with the intention to support classroom investigation by K-12 educators and their students. Selected objects are presented with corresponding images, detailed background information, discussion questions and additional resources including lesson plans.

Through investigation of these works, students can gain a better understanding of current conflicts in the Middle East as well as the human and environmental impact of war in general.



Lynsey Addario, American born 1973

*Waiting to be Transported, Syrian Refugee, Northern Iraq*  
August 21, 2013

Archival pigment print

On loan courtesy of the photographer

The young man pictured is a Syrian war refugee – one of thousands waiting to flee across the border into Iraq, from one war zone into another. The plastic water bottles littering the scene hint toward a recent exodus while also highlighting war's assault on the environment. Photographer, Lynsey Addario, is an American photojournalist whose work vividly portrays on-the-ground war and post-war conditions.



# Rania Matar

“Because this is their lives, and maybe my life is different but we can all relate to each other as human beings at the core.”

- Rania Matar



Rania Matar  
American, born Lebanon, 1964  
*Invisible Children* series  
Archival pigment prints  
On loan courtesy of the artist  
and Carroll and Sons, Boston

Clockwise from Top Left:  
Tamer 6, Beirut, 2015  
Yasmine 13, Beirut, 2014  
Mohammad 7, Assaad 12, Beirut, 2014  
Ahmad 9, Beirut, 2014

Rania Matar's series *Invisible Children* documents the increasing number of Syrian refugee children on the streets of Beirut.

More than 400,000 Syrians have been killed in the country's 5-year-long civil war; 5 million more have become refugees. The tiny country of Lebanon holds the distinction for hosting more Syrian refugees per capita than any other country in the world. (UNHCR)

In 2015, the refugee numbers in Lebanon exceeded one million people. This great influx of people has strained Lebanon's economy and infrastructure, including schools. Approximately 350,000 Syrian children are left without a place in school and spend their days in refugee settlements and on city streets, begging or trying to sell small goods or services (Livesay).

Artist Rania Matar lives and works in Boston, but was born in Lebanon. Visiting and working in her hometown of Beirut, she was able to see the situation with fresh eyes. In a 2016 interview by "Your Middle East," Matar said,

*In 'Invisible Children' I often found the kids in front of a wall with graffiti or billboards. That was for me an important part of the story. All these walls have a rich history and keep evolving over time when people are adding new layers on it, layers of paint, graffiti, stickers and billboards. So for me these kids became the newest layer of history on the wall, they had become part of the story of the wall in some way. This is why I call them invisible children, because they almost become invisible in the eye of the public.*



# Ben Lowy

“We [photojournalists] are not just responsible for a story, but we’re responsible for a visual aesthetic — a communication tool.”

- Ben Lowy



Ben Lowy  
American, born 1979  
*iLibya: Uprising by iPhone* series  
July 2012

Archival pigment prints made from cellphone images  
Loan and image courtesy of the photographer

Images, Left to Right (abridged titles):  
*A Libyan man cries at the sight of at least fifty burnt bodies. . .*  
*Two Libyan women walk through a park. . .*  
*A car is torched, along with Gaddafi loyalist encampment. . .*  
*Omar stands outside his family's bullet-riddled house. . .*

Ben Lowy is a photojournalist who champions the use of cell phone cameras and social media to reach an audience for his stories.

Lowy's series *iLibya: Uprising by iPhone* was created in 2012 in tandem with the Arab Spring movement across the Middle East. He used the Hipstomatic app with a photojournalism lens and posted photographs in real-time on his own Tumblr account. Lowy asserts that the small and inconspicuous cell phone allows him easier access to subjects. He also claims that using a cell phone was fitting for the Libyan uprising, “because so much of the content that began the Arab Spring was from mobile technology” (Estrin).



# Jennifer Karady

“I wanted to try to tell different kinds of stories; some that really challenge your idea of what a war story is . . . [and that] reveal some kind of invisible emotional truth.”

- Jennifer Karady

For over nine years, Jennifer Karady has worked with American veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan to create staged narrative photographs that depict their individual stories and address their difficulties in adjusting to civilian life.

Each photograph represents a collaboration between Karady and a veteran. After extensive interviews with the veteran and their families, Karady works to reenact a specific moment from their war experience within the safe space of their everyday lives, often surrounded by family and friends.

Each large-scale color photograph is created on film in one choreographed image, without the use of digital editing to combine images. Each work is accompanied by a written narration of the veteran's story in his or her own words.

Karady's images break down the barriers between a soldier's war experience and their everyday life at home, evoking the psychology of life after war and the challenges entailed by any adjustment to the home front. Rather than presenting a replication of an actual event, these dream-like images document the psychological consequences of war.

Karady works for months on the preparation and staging of each image, with multiple visits and interviews with each veteran. The process becomes a way for veterans to share their stories and bring their families and communities into their experience. Karady has said that one reason she is making these images is “for people to talk about things they don't generally want to think about or talk about” (Pagel).



Jennifer Karady, American, born 1967  
*In Country: Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan*  
Digital C-prints made from film negatives  
On loan courtesy of the artist  
\*Titles and stories included on Image pages



# Suzanne Opton

“This may have more power than a documentary picture.”

- Suzanne Opton



Suzanne Opton  
American, born 1954  
*Soldiers' Stories* series, 2004 – 2005  
Archival pigment prints  
On loan courtesy of the photographer

Clockwise from Top Left:  
*Soldier: Bosiaki* – 364 Days in Iraq  
*Soldier: Williams* – 396 Days in Iraq  
*Soldier: Pry* – 210 Days in Afghanistan  
*Soldier: L. Jefferson* – Length of Service  
Undisclosed

Suzanne Opton's *Soldiers' Stories* series features unconventional, close-up portraits of American service men and women. Working with soldiers who had returned from Iraq or Afghanistan (or both) and were preparing to deploy again, Opton asked each of them to simply rest their head on a table and turn sideways toward her camera. As she adjusted camera settings and lighting, the soldiers tended to let their guard down and retreat to their own thoughts. Opton recalls, "Some of them looked serene, some looked shell-shocked. They're all terribly vulnerable" (Casper).

The extreme close-up view creates an intimate experience for the viewer – one that is usually reserved for loved ones. It also eliminates customary military identifiers; with no uniforms or medals, the haircuts are perhaps the only way to know they are soldiers. Some viewers have been upset that soldiers are represented without the usual symbols of strength and heroism, but Opton explains that "it's from that very personal point of view that I wanted to show them" (Moakley).



# Poetry

## *Living in History*

*It's true, whatever we do or don't do may come to haunt us.  
Outside a man walks by: blue shirt, bald head. He blends  
into the dusk, like the olive tree outside my window,  
the blue-gray sky washed clean by recent rain,  
the bird whose twittering heralds the evening.  
May we all fit together like this: trees, birds, sky,  
people, separate elements in a living portrait,  
outlines smoothed by the forgiving wash  
of lingering light. Whatever the skins we live in,  
the names we choose, the gods we claim or disavow,  
may we be like grains of sand on the beach of night:  
a hundred million separate particles  
creating a single expanse on which to lie back  
and study the stars. And may we remember the generosity  
of light: how it travels through unimaginable darkness,  
age after age, to light our small human night.*

*- Lisa Suhair Majaj*

Additional poetry  
by Lisa Suhair  
Majaj and others is  
available in the  
exhibition catalog,  
Aftermath: The  
Fallout of War –  
America and the  
Middle East, Carol  
McCusker, ed.

# Advance Discussion

Prior to looking at *Aftermath* images, have students reflect on the following ideas through individual writing, small group discussions or entire class discussions,

**What do you think of  
when you think of  
home?**

**What do you think of  
when you think of  
your country?**

**What qualities do you  
expect from a strong  
leader?**

**What ways do you find  
to express  
disagreement with  
school/government?**

**What has been a  
defining event in  
your life? How did it  
affect you?**

**What national events  
have affected you  
personally?**



# Questions for Discussion

After looking at the images and information as a class, give each student one question. Have students work in small groups to discuss their individual questions and then share ideas with the entire class.

**Which pictures do you find most challenging? Why?**

**Which images are most successful?  
How are they successful?**

**How does the medium of photography affect your response to these images?**

**What do you think or feel when you look at someone else's suffering?**

**Are any of the works relevant to the local community? How?**

**What information do you need in order to understand or relate?**



# Suggested Reading & Lessons

## Non-Fiction Reading

Grades 10 – 12

### **“Fractured Lands: How the Arab World Came Apart”**

by Scott Anderson; New York Times Magazine

August 11, 2016

<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/08/11/magazine/>

Related lessons are provided by The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting – including pre- and post-reading questions and exercises. <http://pulitzercenter.org/project/fractured-lands>

Grades 7 - 12

### **Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees**

by Deborah Ellis, 2010

Ellis interviews dozens of young people, living as war refugees in Jordan and Canada. Harrowing and powerful stories that reveal a true cost of war.

Grades 4+

### **Off to War: Voices of Soldiers’ Children**

By Deborah Ellis, 2010

Interviews with children of American soldiers reveal how war has touched their daily lives.

## Fiction

Grades 8+

### **Sunrise Over Falluja**

by Walter Dean Myers

From the award-winning author of *Fallen Angels*, memorable characters deliver powerful insight into a contemporary war.

Lesson plans readily available from Scholastic

<https://secondarylessonplans.wikispaces.com/Y.W.+Week+1>

### **The Things a Brother Knows**

by Dana Reinhardt, 2011

The story of a young marine’s return from war in the Middle East and the psychological effects it has on his family.

## Visual Art

**Narrative Art** – Investigate storytelling through a visual medium. Multiple lessons for “Looking at Narrative Art” available from The Getty:

[http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom\\_resources/curricula/esl/esl\\_lesson\\_plan\\_index.html](http://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/classroom_resources/curricula/esl/esl_lesson_plan_index.html)

**Documentary Photography** – Allow students to record their lives and community, rather than only watch it depicted through media. In-depth curriculum by International Center for Photography at [www/icp.org](http://www.icp.org), including Documentary Photography Projects:

[https://www.icp.org/files/icp\\_curriculum\\_guide\\_part2.pdf](https://www.icp.org/files/icp_curriculum_guide_part2.pdf)



# Teaching Resources

## War in the Middle East - Background Information

Interactive map of the Middle East, with languages, religion, and ethnicities

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/mideast/maps/>

Middle East Map with quiz

<http://online.seterra.net/en/vgp/3049>

CNN map of American casualties in Middle East

<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/war.casualties/>

The War in Syria, explained in 5 minutes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKb9GVU8bHE>

Video about weapon contamination in Iraq:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m\\_EtQ5Ec61I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_EtQ5Ec61I)

PBS NewsHour interview with Lynsey Addario

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/photojournalist-making-impact-means-risking-life/>

Video interview with Jennifer Karady on “Soldiers’ Stories”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hP5TDT4xfk>

## Artist Information/Interviews

Lynsey Addario – video interview on PBS NewsHour, “Brief but Spectacular” series

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/photojournalist-making-impact-means-risking-life/>

Rania Matar – print interview in “Your Middle East”

[http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/culture/photographs-that-capture-ordinary-life-in-the-wake-of-conflict\\_40391](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/culture/photographs-that-capture-ordinary-life-in-the-wake-of-conflict_40391)

Ben Lowy – video interview about smart phone journalism and war photography

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLBtuGbBc5U>

Jennifer Karady – video interview about “Soldiers’ Stories”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2hP5TDT4xfk>

Suzanne Opton – video interview about “Soldiers” series and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vZOKLbQ0TY>



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"Photographs that Capture Ordinary Life in the Wake of Conflict." *Your Middle East*, April 26, 2016. Web, August 23, 2016.  
[http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/culture/photographs-that-capture-ordinary-life-in-the-wake-of-conflict\\_40391](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/culture/photographs-that-capture-ordinary-life-in-the-wake-of-conflict_40391)

"Syrian Regional Refugee Response." UNHCR, UN Refugee Agency, June 30, 2016. Web, August 23, 2016.  
<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php>



**IMAGES**





Rania Matar

American, born Lebanon, 1964

**Tamer 6, Beirut, 2015**

*Invisible Children* series

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston





Rania Matar

American, born Lebanon, 1964

**Yasmine 13, Beirut, 2014**

*Invisible Children series*

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston





Rania Matar

American, born Lebanon, 1964

**Ahmad 9, Beirut, 2014**

*Invisible Children* series

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston





Rania Matar

American, born Lebanon, 1964

**Mohammad 7, Assaad 12, Beirut, 2014**

*Invisible Children* series

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston





Ben Lowy

American, born 1979

**A Libyan man cries at the sight of at least fifty burnt bodies in a construction-site shed near the base of the infamous Khamis Brigade, Gaddafi's security forces.**

*iLibya: Uprising* by iPhone series

July 2012

Archival pigment prints made from  
cellphone images

Loan and image courtesy of the  
photographer





Ben Lowy

American, born 1979

**Two Libyan women walk through a park on the outskirts of Martyrs' Square, seen through a bullet-shattered window in a Gaddafi government domestic spy office.**

*iLibya: Uprising by iPhone series*  
July 2012

Archival pigment prints made from  
cellphone images

Loan and image courtesy of the  
photographer





Ben Lowy

American, born 1979

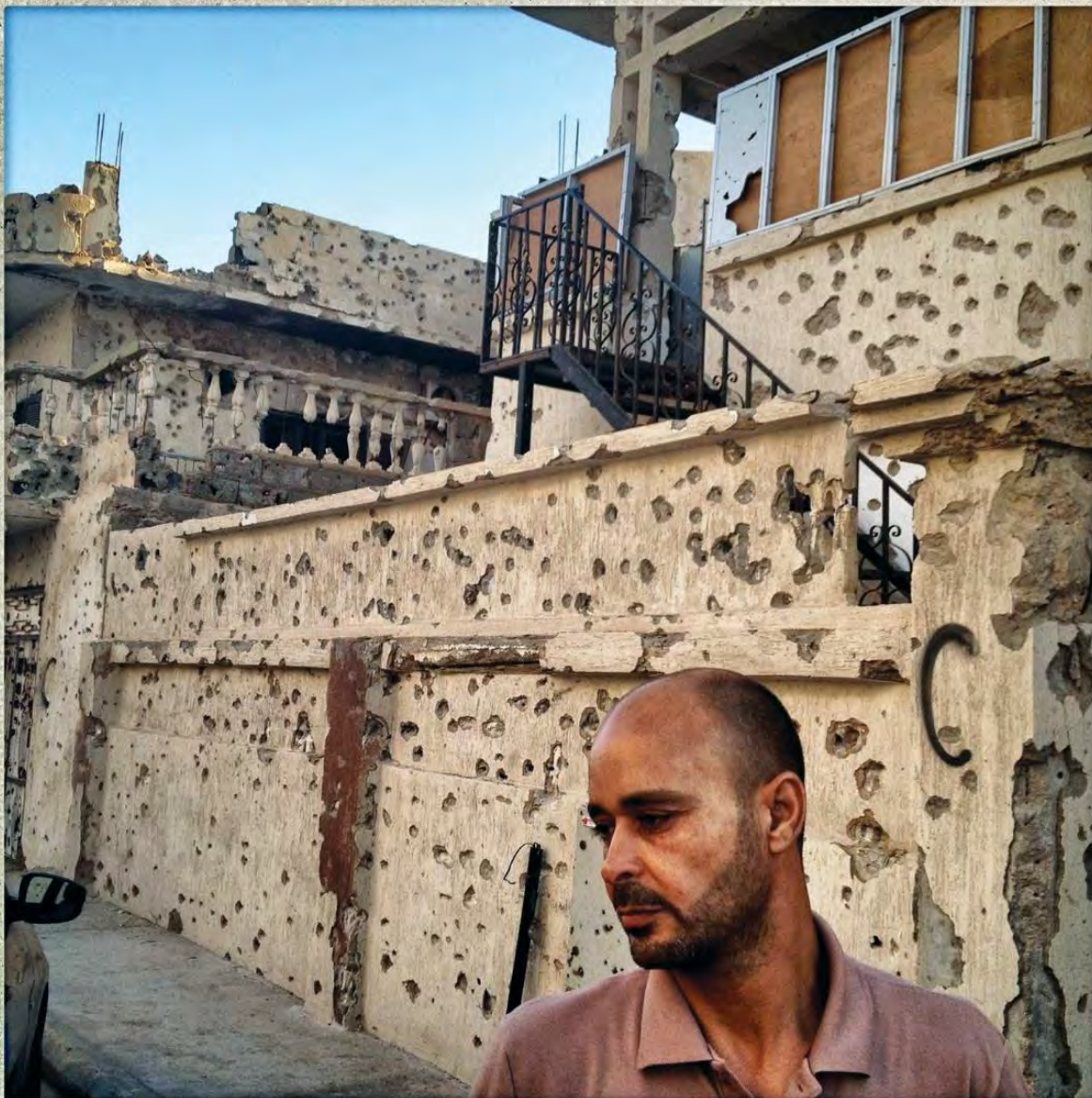
**A car is torched, along with a Gaddafi loyalist encampment, in the roundabout outside the Bab al-Aziziya compound.**

*iLibya: Uprising by iPhone series*  
July 2012

Archival pigment prints made from  
cellphone images

Loan and image courtesy of the  
photographer





Ben Lowy

American, born 1979

**Omar stands outside his family's bullet-riddled house in a neighborhood that is home to Gaddafi loyalists, July 16, 2012, Sirte, Libya.**

*iLibya: Uprising by iPhone series*  
July 2012

Archival pigment prints made from  
cellphone images

Loan and image courtesy of the  
photographer





Jennifer Karady, American, born 1967  
*Former Specialist Shelby Webster, 24th Transportation Company, 541st Maintenance Battalion, U.S. Army, veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with children, Riley, Dillin, and Sidnie, brother Delshay, and uncle Derek; Omaha Nation Reservation, NE*  
October 2010; From series: *In Country: Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan*  
Digital C-prints made from film negatives  
On loan courtesy of the artist



Jennifer Karady, American, born 1967

**Former Specialist Shelby Webster, 24th Transportation Company, 541st Maintenance Battalion, U.S. Army, veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, with children, Riley, Dillin, and Sidnie, brother Delshay, and uncle Derek; Omaha Nation Reservation, NE**

October 2010; From series: *In Country: Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan*

Digital C-prints made from film negatives

On loan courtesy of the artist

I was twenty years old when I joined the Army. I was a single mom and I had two babies that I left—a two-year-old and a three-year-old. When I found out that I was deploying, I remember crying on the phone to my dad, “I don’t want to go.” I didn’t join just to join. I joined the military thinking I would give my kids a better life.

I drove a PLS (palletized load system truck). We transported all sorts of supplies from Kuwait into Iraq when there was nothing there. Whatever they needed, we hauled. The funny thing about it is that we weren’t armored. We only had flak vests and our little M16s.

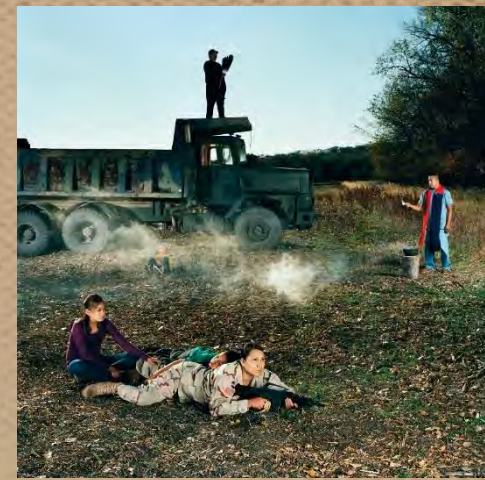
When we convoyed into Iraq for the first time, it was probably two o’clock in the morning. I remember being so tired and seeing explosions and thinking, “Wow, this is like the movies. This isn’t happening.” Then we started getting attacked. We had a big convoy of about twenty trucks. We stopped and my squad leader, Sergeant Jackson, jumped out and said, “Be ready, lock and load!” At that point I thought, “How am I going to shoot and drive?” I remember shaking and almost freezing up. And my TC (passenger and vehicle commander), Gabe, said, “It’s OK, Web. It’s OK. I’ve been through this already.” He was trying to reassure me because I was terrified.

They had us line up all the trucks in four rows. Sergeant Jackson told us to get out of our trucks just in case. So we were in the sand, lying in the prone position, just waiting. Then we hear gunfire and I remember thinking, “What am I going to do, I’m a girl.” I lay there crying to myself, “God, please, I don’t want to die. I want to go home to my kids.” I was so scared. It was so hard.

I’m Native American and I believe in my culture. I believe in my Omaha ways. I said a little prayer to myself asking God to protect me and to watch over my babies if something were to happen to me. This feeling came over me and, I don’t know if it was my subconscious or what, but I heard a voice that said, “It’s going to be alright.” I recognized that voice as my Grandpa Danny’s voice. I was ten when he passed, but I remember him—he was a good grandpa and always protective.

In this moment I also smelled cedar and we pray with cedar. When I smelled it, I took a deep breath and I smelled and smelled. I thought, “What the heck?” I looked around and asked Gabe, “Do you smell that?” He said, “No, I don’t smell nothing.” I could still see and hear tracer rounds and explosions and could feel the ground shake. But a feeling of calmness had come over me and I thought, “I can do this.” When I called home and told my Dad that I smelled cedar, he cried. He said, “Well, we’ve been praying for you. We’ve been having meetings for you.”

My Dad had my kids while I was gone. It seemed like during those two years I saw my kids probably one or two times. My kids are ten and eleven years old now and I had another baby after I got back. My youngest is now five years old and totally different compared to my older kids, who have separation anxiety—they always have to know where I am. My youngest is more independent; she’s her own kind of person. But the older two are always looking for me, asking, “Where’s Mom?” And I say, “I’m right here.”







Jennifer Karady, American,  
born 1967

***Staff Sergeant Kyle Winjum,  
Explosive Ordnance Disposal  
Technician, U.S. Marine Corps,  
veteran of Operation Enduring  
Freedom and Operation Iraqi  
Freedom, with fellow Marines;  
Twentynine Palms, CA***

April 2014; From series: *In  
Country: Soldiers' Stories from  
Iraq and Afghanistan*

Digital C-prints made from film  
negatives

On loan courtesy of the artist



Jennifer Karady, American, born 1967

**Staff Sergeant Kyle Winjum, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician, U.S. Marine Corps, veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, with fellow Marines; Twentynine Palms, CA**

April 2014; From series: *In Country: Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan*

Digital C-prints made from film negatives

On loan courtesy of the artist

During my deployment in Afghanistan, we got information from one of our sources that there were improvised explosive devices (IEDs) set on a hilltop, so we went out looking for IEDs. We found two around eight o'clock that morning and set them off. We pretty much woke up the whole town because it was early. In our search, we went up the hill sweeping with our metal detectors.

My team leader, Jeremy, was in a little low area between a couple of trees. I was watching him investigate an area—he was kneeling down probably within five meters from it when it went off. Time slowed down when I saw the explosion. I saw the fireball and the blast wave come out and push the trees and the dust and the dirt out and I also watched it suck itself back in, creating a mushroom cloud. I saw the fragmentation flying up in the air, and it was white and it was red and it was orange and it turned yellow. It goes up white-hot and as it's coming down, it's cooling down. I was watching it change colors. It was a very intense experience for a brief moment but it seemed like forever.

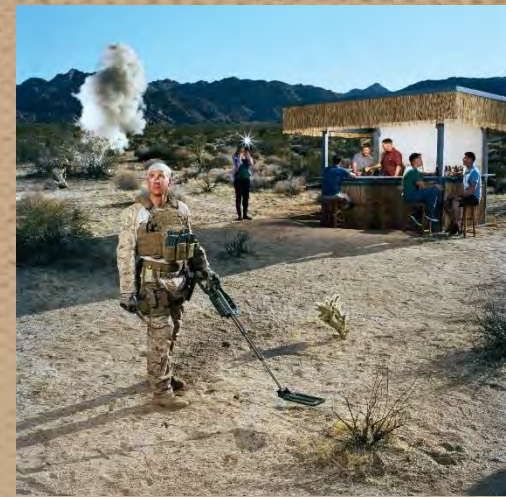
I looked up and down at both of my arms and thought, "OK, I don't see any holes, I don't see any blood, I feel OK." I looked at my legs and did the same thing. Then I started getting up and yelled for Jeremy to make sure that he was OK. I heard him and I knew that he was at least coherent. Our third team member, Matt, was on the other side of the hill and he was OK too.

We all regrouped in our little safe area. My right ear was ringing, as was everybody else's. We calmed ourselves a little bit, we all smoked cigarettes. We replaced the batteries on our countermeasures equipment and we went back in. We had to do an investigation. I was scared shitless going back again. I was thinking, "What the fuck!?" My whole body was shaking as I was sweeping. But I kept calm enough to know, "This is part of the job. This is what we're doing. And this one's already gone off so it can't be too bad."

It was almost a year later—I was out in a bar with a bunch of my friends. People were taking pictures and one photograph flash caught my eye in the same manner that that IED had gone off. And I lost it. I was freaking out. I was wondering where my friends were. "Where am I? What am I doing? Is everybody OK?" I walked around the bar searching for my friends and picking them out. "OK, there's my friend—he's safe. There's my friend—he's safe. There's my friend—he's safe. There's his girlfriend—she's safe." I knew physically I was still in a bar but mentally and emotionally, I was back in Afghanistan. I saw the camera flash and my brain instantly saw that explosion flash, and it went back to seeing everything.

After that, I talked with my friend because he's been in some past experiences, and he suggested that I go to see his therapist. I went the very next day. I'm glad that I did because the therapist I saw really helped me.

That's the only experience I've had with more or less being blown up so far. I hope it doesn't happen again, but I'm still on the job. I mean, there's still always the potential and possibility whether we have to go back to Iraq or Afghanistan or wherever else in the world.







Suzanne Opton

American, born 1954

***Soldier: Bosiaki – 364 Days in Iraq***

*Soldier Stories* series, 2004 – 2005

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the photographer





Suzanne Opton

American, born 1954

***Soldier: Williams – 396 Days in Iraq***

*Soldier Stories* series, 2004 – 2005

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the photographer





Suzanne Opton

American, born 1954

***Soldier: L. Jefferson – Length of Service Undisclosed***

*Soldier Stories* series, 2004 – 2005

Archival pigment prints

On loan courtesy of the photographer





Suzanne Opton  
American, born 1954  
***Soldier: Pry – 210 Days in Afghanistan***  
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