

## Navigating the Aftermath- Artist Bios

### **Jesse Albrecht**—Ceramics (Iowa City, IA)



Jesse Albrecht served in the National Guard from 1996-2006 and deployed to Iraq from 2003-2004 with the Iowa National Guard as a medic. The deployment bisected his studies of ceramics and drawing at the University of Iowa, and he completed his MFA in 2006. After graduate school and an honorable discharge he worked as an assistant to ceramic artist Don Rietz, in Clarkdale, Arizona.

Albrecht has said of his work, "I need to speak (through art) about my experience—what I saw, did, smelled, tasted, felt and thought—while in Iraq and now while I process such an overwhelming sensory and emotional experience. My art serves as the physical through which I am processing that experience." Currently he is an Elder in the art group Paintallica and a member of the Combat Paper Project which utilizes art making workshops to assist veterans in reconciling and sharing their personal experiences. Albrecht recently produced a book through through the Veterans' Book Project, "Objects for Deployment." Albrecht

teaches ceramics at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

### **Ayad Alkadhi**—Painting (Baghdad, Iraq via NYC)



Born in Baghdad, Iraq, Ayad Alkadhi spent his childhood between England, the United Arab Emirates and Baghdad. At the age of 23 after the first Gulf War, Alkadhi left Iraq for a better future- first in Amman, Jordan and shortly thereafter in Auckland, New Zealand. He then moved to New York City where he graduated with an MFA from New York University's ITP Tisch School of The Arts.

Alkadhi currently lives and works in New York. Alkadhi's work employs traditional and stylized forms of Arabic calligraphy as a platform to present current social and political issues of Iraq and the Middle East. These creations are deeply personal and sometimes incorporate his painted image -a reflection of an artist at the crux of East and West polarities. Alkadhi has exhibited in the Middle East, New Zealand,

Europe and the U.S. His most recent exhibits include: the Queens Museum, the Austrian Cultural forum and New York University's Bronfman's Centre in New York; the Station Museum in Houston, Texas; the Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah, UAE; the European Parliament in Brussels and Art Dubai in the UAE. Contemporary Art in the Middle East, a book published by Artworld, also features his work.

<http://aalkadhi.com/>

**Susu Attar**—Painting (Baghdad, Iraq via San Francisco)



Susu Attar is an Iraqi-born artist based in San Francisco. Her multi media work includes Iraqi influenced painting as well as new media technology. She has worked extensively with youth in the arts, helping to create programs that foster creative communication.

**Camille Gage**—Conceptual Art (Minneapolis, MN)



Camille J. Gage received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. As an artist and engaged citizen, Gage continues to be inspired by the intersection of art and political expression and believes that artists who choose this path have a role to play in shaping the public consciousness. Gage's work has been shown at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), The Weisman Museum, and the Katherine Nash Gallery, among others. Her work is in numerous individual and institutional collections, including Boston Scientific, The Family Housing Fund, The Minnesota Historical Society and Carleton College. Gage is also one of the founding members of Form + Content Gallery, an artist's cooperative in Minneapolis.

Gage began working on the *War, Redacted* series and other war-related projects after the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The work was intended to provoke dialogue and investigation into the war that the U.S. Central Command labeled "The Long War" and often refers to as a multi-generational conflict. Gage is currently working on a collaborative, national project, *10 Years + Counting*, which will result in a variety of exhibitions and events across the country in the Fall of 2011. Through this project artists across the country hope to raise awareness of the 10-year anniversary of our nation continuously at war, an anniversary which will occur on October 7, 2011.

<http://www.gageart.net/>

### **Sundus Abdul Hadi**—Painting/Sound Installation (Iraq via Montreal)



Sundus Abdul Hadi was born in the UAE to Iraqi parents. They immigrated to Canada in 1994, where she later received both a BFA in Studio Art & Art History from Concordia University, as well as a Graduate Diploma in Communication Studies. As a visual and multimedia artist, Abdul Hadi draws her reference from her frequent stays in the Middle East in juxtaposition to her critical consumption of the Western media. She has taken part in a number of group exhibitions in the United States, Canada, the UAE, and Palestine, with a recent solo show in Toronto, Canada held spring 2010. *Warchestra*, her first comprehensive series, can be viewed as

a commentary on media stereotyping and manipulation. By replacing weapons of war with musical instruments, the *Warchestra* aims to re-imagine the media-saturated spaces of the Middle East, and Iraq in particular, through collage and sound. Abdul Hadi's partnership and collaboration with hip hop artist and academic The Narcicyst has enabled a marriage between the visual and the sonic, with a focus on media consumption, music and culture.

<http://www.warchestra.com/>

### **Monica Haller**—Book Art (Minneapolis, MN)



Monica has a BA in Peace and Conflict Studies, an MFA in Visual Studies and has received awards including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Bush Foundation, McKnight Foundation and Jerome Foundation. Haller's work involves long-term collaborations with individuals and small groups, most often using photos, video and writing. Her work explores the way that people grapple, both psychologically and practically, with difficult transitions or traumatic situations, for example the transition from active military duty to civilian life.

Her aesthetic practice aims to reactivate and amplify the materials and technologies her collaborators have turned to along the way. Haller shared her book project, *Riley and his Story* in IARP's previous exhibit *The Art of Conflict*. She is currently collaborating with by Minneapolis artist Clare Beer, and IARP's Luke Wilcox on *Iraqi Voices* (working title), a book highlighting Iraqi voices speaking about present-day Iraq and Iraq's future.

<http://www.rileyandhistory.com>

**Aaron Hughes**—Film/Photography (Chicago, IL)



Aaron Hughes is a former Illinois Army National Guard (ILNG) Sergeant who after serving six years was honorably discharged in June of 2006. In 2003 he was involuntarily deployed to Kuwait and Iraq with the belief he would provide humanitarian relief for the Iraqi people. As a truck driver he traveled throughout much of Iraq and quickly came to the realization that he would not provide any type of relief, but in stead contribute to the oppression of the Iraqi people. Following this fifteen-month deployment Aaron returned home guilt stricken and dedicated his life to using creativity to fight dehumanization. In 2006 Aaron joined Iraq

Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and helped form the Chicago Chapter. After receive an MFA in Art Theory and Practice from Northwestern University in 2009 Aaron became the first IVAW Field Organizer. He has worked on such projects as Warrior Writers, Combat Paper, Drawing For Peace, Operation First Casualty, Winter Soldier, Demilitarized University, TEA, and IVAW Field Organizing.

**Jim Lommasson**—Installation/Photography (Portland, Or)



Jim Lommasson is a writer/photographer, best known for his critically acclaimed book *Shadow Boxers* (2005). *Exit Wounds: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* is an installation exhibit and upcoming book that includes Lommasson's photographs and interviews with American veterans of the Iraqi and Afghanistan wars, as well as photographs and writing by the soldiers themselves. The project deals with the effects of the United States' wars in Iraq and Afghanistan by focusing – in photographs and interviews -- on returning American soldiers as they reintegrate into civilian life. It is an ongoing collaborative effort, documenting in

images and words the personal experiences and stories of these veterans. In addition to their own experiences, they bring home first-hand knowledge of the impact of war on the civilians caught in the crossfire.

<http://exitwoundshomecoming.blogspot.com/>

**Reben Majeed**—Photography (Iraq)



Reben Majeed is a conceptual performance and installation artist born in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. He graduated from the Sulimany Institute of Fine Arts and is currently an employee at the Ministry of Culture and Artistic Director of Hanar Magazine. Majeed coordinates collectives of artists to develop installations in unconventional spaces that reflect the current state of society and culture in Iraq as a result of flawed city planning and the effects of the war. He has participated in numerous workshops run by artist and curators from Europe who have visited and worked in Iraqi Kurdistan such as Ute-Meta Bauer & Aneta Szyrak & Father Menix and Michael Fee. Majeed most recently curated a project in Sulaymaniyah, (Sera Building) through which he was invited to Leipzig Academy of Visual Art in Germany. He was also an artist-in-residence in October 2008 at London for a collaborative project between ArtRole, Artsadmin and the Live Art Development Agency. He recently participated in the 2010 Estrangement Exhibition at Showroom, London and the 2010 International

Orange Photo Festival in China.

<http://www.transformproject.blogspot.com/>

**Aaron McLeod**—Printmaking (Duluth, MN)



Aaron McLeod began studying graphic design in 2001 at the University of Minnesota until he was deployed to Iraq with the Army Reserve in 2003. Because of his background in design, he was allowed to photo document many his experiences overseas. After returning home, he started exhibiting photography from Iraq while completing his education.

The focus of his work has more recently gravitated towards printmaking and the study of propaganda as a conceptual base, exploring power relationships and the function of visual rhetoric in a democratic society. His photographs reflect the reality of his experience while in Iraq, while his prints (produced upon his return to the U.S.) reflect the processing of his experience and thoughts on the war. McLeod has been honored several awards and recognitions for his series, *American Tourist In Iraq*.

[http://www.mnartists.org/aaron\\_mcleod](http://www.mnartists.org/aaron_mcleod)

**Jamal Penjweny**—Photography (Kurdistan/Sulemanyah,Iraq)



Jamal Penjweny, born in Iraqi Kurdistan, is a graduate of The Photography Institute in Australia. A renown Iraqi photojournalist, major news agencies and publishing companies have published his work including: Al-Sharql Awsat, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), New York Times, Bloomberg, Reuters, Yahoo News, Polaris Images, Zuma press, The Guardian Newspaper, Human Rights Watch, Chicago Tribune, Financial Times, Sipa Press, Jeune Afrique Magazine, Driknews Agency and World News Network. Penjweny has said, 'The media always presents Iraq and Iraqis as tragic. I wanted to report the untouched Iraq and show moment

of happiness and dignity beyond the ongoing chaos. " His series *Iraq is Flying*, depicts Iraqi people jumping midair for the camera on the streets of Iraq's major cities. Those jumping are people Penjweny met on the streets of Baghdad, Fallujah and Kirkuk. Penjweny's series offers a glimpse of hope within the context of a war torn backdrop.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/penjweny>

**Megan Rye**— Painting (Minneapolis, MN)



Megan Rye (born in Seoul, Korea ) is an American painter, living and working in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She received a BFA in Painting from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1998, and an MFA in Painting from the University of Minnesota in 2003. In 2005, Rye was a resident at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. Rye is represented by Forum Gallery in New York City and Galeria Omar Alonso in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Her work is included in private collections across the country and has been the subject of two solo exhibitions. The first, *I Will Follow You Into the Dark*, opened at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 2007. This was followed by the 2008 exhibit, *Long Night's Journey Into Day*, at the Burnet Gallery, Chambers Hotel. Rye's work has received support from the Bush, McKnight, and Jerome Foundations, as well as the Minnesota State Arts Board. The project, *Iraq :The Forgotten War*, consists of painting primarily from photographs Rye's brother took during his deployment to Iraq as a US Marine from 2004 to 2005. When he returned to the United States, he entrusted her with his archive of over 2,000 images.

<http://www.meganrye.com>

**Jane Powers**—Installation (Minneapolis, MN)



Jane Powers is a mixed-media sculptor and installation artist. She is currently delving into our deep psychological predisposition for and physical consequences of violence and war, as well as into choices we are making using bio-tech advances to heal and augment our "natural" bodies. Jane received a BFA in 1992 and a MFA in 1998 from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She has shown her work in galleries mainly in Minnesota and New York and has been awarded grants, including a Forecast Public Art R& D Grant (2009) and two State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant (2007 & 2005). She served as chair of the 700 Artists Association (2002-2004) and as a member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors at the Minneapolis College of Art + Design (2004 - 2008). Bridging her art practice with direct social engagement, she is a member of Twin City Artist Front, a loose collaboration of artists, which created public performances critiquing Bush Administration policy, especially the Iraq war. Additionally, she participates with progressive groups, including Peace Garden Projects and WAMM, and the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers.

[http://mnartists.org/Jane\\_Powers](http://mnartists.org/Jane_Powers)