

together through their gendered violence.

Acting as referents to the victims as well as to the ideologies that enabled their deaths, the sculptures possess an affect of slow release: initially unobtrusive in their softness, the clothes carry a visceral charge. Empty as they are of bodies, they force us to ask who is missing. Where are they now? Are they coming back? The crates are similarly unsettling, with their evocation of concealment, trafficking, and transport. Literally, they support an absence, and more metaphorically, they embody a willingness—ingrained and implicit—to let these bodies disappear from view and collective consciousness. The LAB, which hosted the Dublin installation of *Shrine for Girls*, is, after all, only a few minutes' walk from Sean McDermott Street, where Ireland's last Magdalene laundry closed in 1996. The installation's proximity to a building where women were hidden in plain sight reiterates our complicity and disallows contemplation as a passive act. Instead, it becomes destabilizing, obliging us to query if anything has changed since the laundries' inception or closure: Does the brutalizing, murdering, and absencing of female bodies mean anything different today than it has at any other moment in history? Does it mean anything different in Ireland than in India or Nigeria? The repeated, and continuing, fact of empty clothing, of feminine attire devoid of bodies, would suggest not.

—Sue Rainsford

LONDON

"Age of Terror: Art since 9/11" Imperial War Museum

In order to reach the Imperial War Museum's landmark "Age of Terror" exhibition, you had to negotiate its astonishing atrium, complete with a suspended jet plane and rocket. Underfoot, James Bridle's *Drone Shadow* lurked as a white outline on

Right and detail: Walid Siti, *Floodland*, 2017. Foam board, plaster, wood, and acrylic paint, dimensions variable. From "Age of Terror."

the floor. IWM has commissioned contemporary artists to go to war zones since its founding 100 years ago. Its collections include 20,000 works of art, in addition to thousands of war-related artifacts that combine a big-picture view with intimate personal stories.

Contemporary art curator Sanna Moore assembled a provocative exhibition of post-9/11 works—the museum's largest-ever contemporary art show—including a stunning low relief sculpture commissioned from Kurdish-Iraqi artist Walid Siti. The first section was devoted to the destruction of the Twin Towers and what followed on the ground. A long, narrow gallery featured front-page headlines from around the world, collected by Hans-Peter Feldmann. Iván Navarro's light box and mirror version of *The Twin Towers* glowed deep into the specially cut floor. In contrast, a silent black and white film by Kerry Tribe captured the atmosphere of suspicion with headshots of 27 people who "look like terrorists" (all respondents to a newspaper ad for volunteers). On the border of public and private, Fabian Knecht strolled nearby streets during the reconstruction at Ground Zero, wearing a dust-covered suit from a suicide bombing in Hillah, Iraq. In *VERACHTUNG (Contempt/Overlook)*, Knecht echoes the appearance of people walking away from Lower Manhattan in the aftermath of 9/11, but no one pays attention to him. His project combines the public spectacle and personal action characteristic of IWM's approach to war documentation.

"State Control," the show's second section, focused on the loss of civil liberties. In *May 1, 2011*, Alfredo Jaar exposes the power of authorities to control public knowledge. He jux-

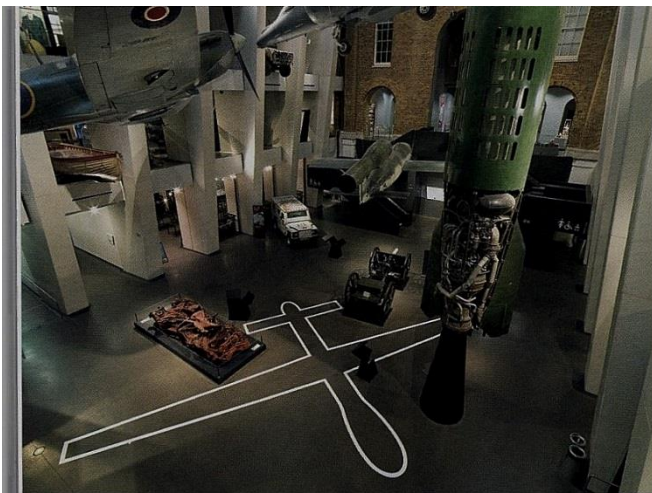


taposes a blank screen with a photograph of the National Security Council watching the killing of Osama Bin Laden. Jaar's eerie point is that we never saw the assassination or Bin Laden's body, only this staged image. Coco Fusco, along with several friends, underwent interrogation training; *Operation Atropos* addresses the psychology of surveillance while engaging viewers directly in a harrowing process.

"Weapons" emphasized technical, dehumanized war (first announced in Bridle's *Drone Shadow*), in addition to traditional weaponry. Mona Hatoum's resonant *Natura morta (bow-fronted cabinet)* (2012), for instance, contains a sarcastic display

of hand grenades cast in glass. Francis Alys juxtaposes a British soldier and a Taliban soldier loading and unloading assault rifles, with exactly the same unemotional gestures, each preparing to kill the other.

"Home," which focused on the violence destroying the Middle East, included the largest number of Middle Eastern artists and was the most coherent and affecting part of the exhibition. Walid Siti's *Floodland*, a map of Iraq cast in plaster, embodies the instability of the region, curling at the top and sliding onto the floor. The intersecting empty cells suggest the abstract patterns of Islamic art and the cultural vacuum



Left: James Bridle, *Drone Shadow*, 2017. Vinyl with Neschen dot adhesive, installation view. From "Age of Terror." Below: Carolee Schneemann, *Controlled Burning: Fireplace*, 1963–64. Wooden box, glass shards, mirror, paper, oil paint, and adhesive.

of war. *Floodland* faced Hanaa Malallah's painfully rendered map of Baghdad, for which she ripped and burned canvas into a collage, venting her despair as the city burned. In the video installation *Homesick* (2014), Hrair Sarkissian continuously slams a pile of concrete on one screen, while a second screen shows a model of a Damascus apartment building, like the one in which his parents have chosen to remain, gradually disintegrating into a pile of rubble.

Compared to "Home," with its heartfelt personal statements, "State Control" and "Weapons," with a few exceptions, felt random and uneven. The ascetic conventions of contemporary art exhibitions, which rely solely on artworks and minimal labels, were subverted here by the history museum approach of contextualizing and personalizing history. The Imperial War Museum, with its strange trajectory—from a celebration of the heroics that won "good" wars to the tragic ambiguities of today's permanent "war on terror"—provided an appropriate and insightful context for "Age of Terror."

—Susan Platt

DISPATCH

QUEENS, NEW YORK

Carolee Schneemann

MoMA PS1

Carolee Schneemann, speaking at the press conference for her touring retrospective, recalled the days when the art world labeled her unabashed use of her body to disrupt misogynist attitudes toward women as "lewd" and "narcissistic." The long overdue recognition represented by "Carolee Schneemann: Kinetic Painting" shifts the focus from her body to a body of work that goes beyond feminism to explore cultural taboos, human atrocities, and personal loss, ever reinvented through painting, sculpture, choreography, performance, installation art, film, and video.

Schneemann describes herself as a painter, and "Kinetic Painting" signaled her unique interpretation of the genre. She regards painting as an "arena for action" in which the extension of the mind's eye and the projection of hand and arm translate the energy of what one sees into the energy of art-making. The curatorial team, led by Sabine Breitwieser, looped this concept through more than 300 multimedia works, from early Abstract Express-

sionist landscapes, including *Mill Forms—Eagle Square* (1958) and *Winter* (1959), to more recent installations, including *Flange 6rpm* (2011–13).

As a young painter, Schneemann wanted more than she was achieving through expressionist action painting. After taking a knife to *Colorado House* (1962) and responding positively to how canvas shreds dangled from the open frame, she added to it—fur strips, a broom, glass shards—ultimately reinventing the painting as a freestanding sculpture. She torched other works, filling wooden box constructions such as *Controlled Burning: Fireplace* (1963–64) with miscellany and setting them on fire. The alchemy of fried and molten glass shards, mirror, paper, and oil paint rendered the combustible process inseparable from the charred result. Such bold experiments liberated Schneemann from old rules.

The incorporation of her physical body as a kinetic element within her work marked a pivotal turn. In *Four Fur Cutting Boards* (1963), she activated a stage set-like construction with moving parts and reflective surfaces—a motorized umbrella, glass, lights, and mirrors. This piece then served as a backdrop for *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions for Camera* (1963) in which she had herself photographed performing a series of action poses, her nude body slathered with live snakes, plastic, grease, and paint. Image now became one with the image-maker. These body-actions-as-art set a new dynamic for contemporary discourse while speaking to her body politic: How better to confront the Western art habit of depicting women as idealized sex objects than by immersing one's own ideally proportioned self in grimy, reptilian stuff?

Schneemann was strongly influenced by her association with the Judson Dance Theater, an experimental venue for dancers, composers, and artists. There, she choreographed, directed, and performed *Meat Joy* (1964), which featured Schneemann and other barely clothed young performers engaging



TOP: W. H. HARK / ARTIST; MIDDLE: HARK; BOTTOM: HARK. COURTESY: MOHAMA PS1