CHECKLIST

Albrecht Dürer, German, 1471–1528
The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, about 1497
Woodcut on laid paper
Gift of Helena Mein Wade in memory of her husband, Alfred Byers Wade; PR.950.21.10

Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, German, 1884–1976
Melancholy (Woman with Bowl), from the portfolio Ten Woodcuts by Schmidt-Rottluff, 1914 (published 1919)
Woodcut on laid paper
Purchased through the Julia L. Witheriff Fund; PR.953.4

Rockwell Kent, American, 1882–1971
Workers of the World, United!, 1937
Wood engraving on wove paper
Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; PR.937.3

Leopoldo Méndez, Mexican, 1902–1969
Jugoslav Guerillas: The Second Front in Europe, about 1942–45
Offset lithograph
Gift of Willis S. Fitch, Class of 1917; Gift of Edward Tuck, Class of 1862; PS.987.6.145

Eric Avery, American, born 1965
Chimera, 1991
Linoleum block print on reduction silkscreen on Arches paper
Gift of Trevor Fairbrother and John T. Kirk; 2010.88.2

Roger Peet, American, born 1975
What the Market Will Bear, from the Occuprint Sponsor Portfolio, 2012
Screenprint on French wove paper
Purchased through the Contemporary Art Fund; 2012.38.7

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


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A SPACE for DIALOGUE
In Chimera (1991), Eric Avery describes the contours of an entire conflict—the Gulf War—in a visual appropriation of an eighteenth-century etching of a monster by Louis Jean Désprez. Désprez created his Chimera (about 1777–84) at the height of a neoclassical revival, drawing on a classical myth of the fire-breathing chimera who stalked the destroyed palaces of African kings, always hungering for human flesh. In his work, Avery frequently appropriates traditional images from Western art and gives them shocking new meanings. Avery’s chimera presents the heads of President George H. W. Bush, James Draper (Secretary of State), and Norman Schwartzkopf (leader of Coalition Forces), while the cormorant, line of prisoners, and tanks in the lower right question the cost of war. Through the creature’s penis—the form of an armament and the caption “Father of all wars,” Avery presents the conflict as a contest of male egos, turning Saddam Hussein’s allegation that this is the “mother of all battles” into a critique of male leaders as instigators of imperialistic war.

The recent Occupy movement has also produced its own visual language to question the entrenched idealization of capitalism, as seen in the creation of the 2012 Occuprint portfolio, a collection of screenprints curated by artists involved in the Occupy movement. Roger Peet’s What the Market Will Bear (2012) visualizes the economic language of the bear and bull markets, presenting the destruction of the economically positive bull by the savage bear. The Great Recession in 2007 decreased public confidence in the expanding market sector, graphically presented by Peet in the spilled blood of the bull. The command to “Occupy” reminds the viewer of the economic motivations of the movement and of Occupy’s demands for a less corrupt financial system that does not favor the wealthy.

Through central figures, these artists create images that inspire viewers to think critically about their contemporary circumstances, whether the image is a fine art print, a propaganda poster, or an illustration for a religious text. The prints speak from specific historical moments, both drawing on and subverting Western icons, to create emblematic figures that stand in for the abstract concepts of poverty, revolution, apocalypse, war, and protest. The prints demand a response from the viewer, not a passive acceptance of present circumstances. Even across time, these images challenge viewers today.