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# John Hitchcock

Ghosts of Brutality  
January-April, 2014



### ***Artist Statement***

John Hitchcock uses the print medium with its long history of social and political commentary to explore relationships of community, land, and culture. "Ghosts of Brutality" consists of works on paper, multimedia installation of printed matter and video, which reference the trauma of war and fragility of life.

Familiar images of U.S. military weaponry (tanks and helicopters) are set against unfamiliar mythological and hybrid creatures (buffalo, wolf, deer,) created from the Wichita Mountains in western Oklahoma in order to explore the notion of assimilation and control. Hitchcock grew up in western Oklahoma on Comanche tribal lands that are located next to the largest field artillery military base in North America Fort Sill/Lawton.



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They're Moving Their Feet - But Nobody's Dancing  
screenprint on felt, paper

### Collaborative Action: The Inclusive Power of John Hitchcock's "Ghosts of Brutality"

John Hitchcock negotiates identity through the creation of powerful images that address war, assimilation, and imperialism. To communicate these complex ideas, Hitchcock carefully considers his audiences and involves students by emphasizing the necessity of collaboration. His inclination to collaborate came at an early age. When he was a child, he first learned how to draw from his grandmother, who was of Comanche heritage and produced beadwork. She made him an active part of her creative process by asking him to design patterns and shapes for her works. From this collaboration, he learned the significance of pattern and repetition. For the artist, the presence of pattern and repetition in his print based installations, like "Ghosts of Brutality," signifies the past, future, and present.

Hitchcock connects with his audiences through his cultural heritage and keen awareness of recurring issues that plague American society.

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They're Moving Their Feet -  
But Nobody's Dancing



4 He spent his childhood in Western Oklahoma in a distinctive area where Oklahoma State Highway 49 separates Comanche tribal lands and Fort Sill, a U.S. Military base that specializes in artillery training. Embedded within these locales, the artist became attune to ever present societal and cultural factors such as assimilation, environmental destruction, and war. The artist's childhood experience of the Vietnam War impacted him greatly. A young Hitchcock watched the violence unfold on television, while the military training in his own neighborhood was a constant presence. These formative experiences share a greater resonance with contemporary society as tribal lands and sacred traditions are often under threat of environmental decline and commercial intrusion, and war has too often been the focus of the nightly news on television. Indeed, the military machinery in the artist's work suggests the more recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hitchcock creates a visual language through representations of animals, such as buffalo and deer, and depictions of tanks to communicate to a broad audience.



Ghosts of Brutality  
*felt, paper*

The collective traditions of print making and the artist's desire as a professor to integrate students into his practice have led to dynamic exhibitions. In the case of this project, the realization of some of the works on display, as well as in the creation of this publication. Two teams of advanced graphic design students produced two catalogs for the artist's upcoming exhibitions as their final assignments with Dennis Miller, a professor of graphic design at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In addition to the presentation of "Ghosts of Brutality" at the Cornell, a second solo exhibition of Hitchcock's work entitled Traces of the Plains opens simultaneously at The Museum of Contemporary Native Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hitchcock met with the students as their client. He shared his sketchbook with them, invited them to visit his studio, and explained the multifaceted motivations in his work.



Ghosts of Brutality  
*felt, paper*

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Fear Monger  
screenprint on paper

By involving students not only in process of making art through printmaking courses, but also in the documentation of the projects, Hitchcock provides the students with creative and professional opportunities. This inclusive approach at the large research center of University of Wisconsin-Madison, where Hitchcock teaches, shares much in common with the mission of Rollins College, the liberal arts institution that includes the Cornell Fine Arts Museum. A portion of the Rollins College mission statement reads, "We are dedicated to scholarship, academic achievement, creative accomplishment, cultural enrichment, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship."

We value excellence in teaching and rigorous, transformative education in a healthy, responsive, and inclusive environment." These ideas are ever present in Hitchcock's art and his teaching. Moreover, these interconnected factors set the stage for a powerful exhibition that will inspire the audience to think about cultural heritage and struggle through the manifestation of a print-based installation.

Written by Amy Galpin, Ph.D.,  
Curator of the Cornell Fine  
Arts Museum

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Ghosts  
screenprint on paper







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Epicentro  
video

## Artist Biography



Flatlander  
screenprint on wood, felt, paper

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John Hitchcock is an Artist and Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he teaches screenprinting, relief cut, and installation art. He earned his MFA in printmaking and photography at Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas and received his BFA from Cameron University, Lawton, Oklahoma. His awards include The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Artistic Innovation and Collaboration grant, New York; Jerome Foundation Grant, Minnesota; the Creative Arts Award, University of Wisconsin.

Hitchcock's work has been exhibited at numerous national and international venues, notably "Epicentro: Re Tracing the Plains" and "Air Land Seed" curated by Nancy Marie Mithlo on the occasion of the Venice Biennale 54th and 55th International Art Exhibition at the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice, Italy; The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, New York; the Kumu Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn, Estonia; London Print Studio, London, England, UK; Waldkunstpfad /Forest-Art-Path, Darmstadt, Germany; South African Museum, Cape Town, South Africa; Museu de Arte de Brasilia, Brasilia, Brazil; Museum of Contemporary Art, Santiago de Chile; International Print Center New York, Chelsea, New York; Museum of Arts & Design, New York; Eiteljorg Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana; Naples





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Blancos  
*paper, felt*

Museum of Art, Naples, Florida; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Exit Art, New York; the Print Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand Forks.

He has also served as artist in residence and given workshops at the American Culture Center, Shanghai, China; Frans Masereel Centrum for Graphix in Kasterlee, Belgium; the Proyecto'ace International Center for Visual Arts in South America in Buenos Aires, Argentina; The Venice Printmaking Studio, Venice, Italy; The Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, Vermont; Penland School of Crafts, Penland, North Carolina; Anderson Ranch, Snowmass Village, Colorado; Egress Press, Edinboro, Pennsylvania; and Vermillion Editions, Amarillo, Texas.

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