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HUBRIS CORPULENTIS: PRINTS AND MIXED MEDIA BY ART HAZELWOOD



Art Hazelwood, *The Sycophants*, engraving, 6 x 9", 2003.

Mark Twain called it “the American cocktail,” a mix of savage outrage and satire that lies at the heart of American humor. In a series of prints—woodcuts, lithographs, linocuts, screenprints, etchings, and engravings—coupled with a mixed-media Monopoly spoof called *Iranopoly*, the San Francisco-based, Massachusetts-raised Art Hazelwood harpoons and lampoons America's love affair with war.

The shooting gallery of Iraq is the primary target. Some scenes, like *Four Horsemen*, are apocalyptic; others, like *Requiem for Dionysos*, are mythic. Flags, skulls, stars, coins, crosses, and guns are recurring symbols. Most images satirize the

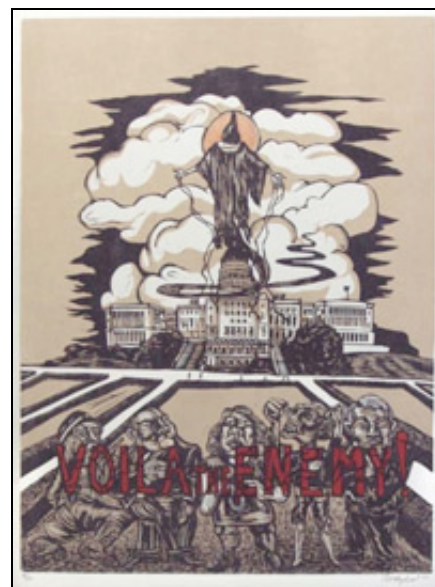
corporate connection to war, with America represented by coin-clutching fat cats. The woodcut *Trouble for Uncle Sam in the Green Zone* shows U.S. soldiers crammed precariously at the top of a mosque-shaped battle tower as coins, bombs, and copies of the Geneva Convention of War Crimes fall on insurgents below. In *the Balance* reveals those same ballooning CEOs in contrast with the huddled masses of American Indians, Mexicans, Vietnamese, and other cultures obliterated in the name of free enterprise. From *War Machine* to *Trickle Down*, *Cronyism to Victory Parade*, the marriage of money and military is presented in all of its grotesque obscenity. Sex, second only in importance to the dollar, is represented in images of bikini-clad women nuzzling up to weapons of war. *Liberty Brought to Baghdad* features an objectified Lady Liberty, bound and gagged in lurid pose, spreading angelic wings over corpulent soldiers.

Memorial for the Dead, Iraq is one of the most visually powerful pieces in the exhibition, a poster-size image rendered with moody color and stylish symmetry. Iconic, cartoonlike soldiers are made from black bayonet rifles wearing helmets. The little figures look as if they could have been Disney characters or wartime Smurfs, scattered around the scene of an oil tower in the center. A pipeline runs through it, and liquid black tornado clouds spin out of control.

Hubris Corpulentis, which translates to mean “overweening pride,” offers political satire in the vein of the old *Punch* magazine cartoons with the mythic and esthetic qualities of 15th-century artist and engraver Albrecht Dürer. In the latter case, the connection is made directly, with works that echo Dürer's classic prints, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and *The Knight, Death and The Devil*. Of course, Hazelwood and Dürer belong to different generations. After all, Dürer grew up on *Faust*, and Hazelwood on *Three's Company*.

The difference that distinguishes Hazelwood's vision is a wild streak of humor born of his immersion in pop culture. The board game/artwork *Iranopoly*, for example, comes with playing directions like “(4) New Dictator ‘Elected’ You're Free to Go” and “(6) Invade a Neighboring Country Get *Iranopoly* Tool!” In Hazelwood's rendering, violence and romance and sex and bombs join company in scenes that equate contemporary America with the age of the Roman bread and circuses, a time of individual hedonism and communal apathy. Some emperors fiddle while the nation burns, he suggests; others play horseshoes.

Doug Norris



Art Hazelwood, *Voila! The Enemy*, color linocut, 24 x 18", 2005.