Since September 11, 2001, the United States has been engaged in multiple wars, varying in intensity, locale, and consequence. After fifteen years, this warfare has become normalized into our social and cultural landscape; it is ongoing, yet somehow out of sight, invisible.

The Face of Battle: Americans at War, 9/11 to Now explores and assesses the human costs of ongoing wars through portraiture. The exhibition title is drawn from John Keegan’s classic military history, which reorients our view of war from questions of strategy and tactics to its personal and individual toll. Featuring fifty-six works by six artists, the exhibition includes photographs by Ashley Gilbertson, Tim Hetherington, Louie Palu, and Stacy Pearsall; site-specific installation of drawings by Emily Prince; and paintings, sculpture, and time-based media by Vincent Valdez.
With this poignant exhibition, the National Portrait Gallery will put a face on recent wars through the work of artists who have pictured the experience of common soldiers. The Face of Battle will also bring to public attention the latest formal developments in the field of portraiture as practiced by a diverse and talented group of artists. The exhibition will place the focus on the identity and experiences of ordinary soldiers who fought and continue to fight for our nation.

On display at the Portrait Gallery from April 7, 2017, through January 28, 2018, before beginning a limited national tour, The Face of Battle is the tenth installment of its Portraiture Now series, which showcases some of the world’s most creative twenty-first-century portrait artists. The curatorial team is led by David Ward, senior historian, and includes Taina Caragol, curator for Latino art and history; Dorothy Moss, associate curator of painting and sculpture; and Asma Naeem, associate curator of prints, drawings, and media arts.

The Artists

Australian-born Ashley Gilbertson (born 1978) is a war correspondent who was early on the scene in Iraq in 2002. Having won several individual photography awards, his Bedrooms of the Fallen series depicts haunting images of the “rooms they left behind”—the bedrooms of American service people killed in the post-9/11 wars, preserved by their families as the inhabitants left them.

Tim Hetherington (1970–2011), a British filmmaker, author, journalist, and conflict photographer, was killed in 2011 while covering the Libyan civil war. Embedded with a U.S. platoon in 2007 and 2008, Hetherington took images that explored the consequences of conflict and focused on humanitarian endeavors.

Canadian-born photographer Louie Palu (born 1968) has documented the life of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay and members of Mexican drug cartels as well as participants in the conflict in Afghanistan. He sees his work as a way to document social and political issues relating to human rights, poverty, and conflict.
Air Force veteran Stacy Pearsall (born 1980) began photographing the conflict in Iraq in 2003. During three deployment tours, in which she suffered several injuries, Pearsall used her camera to portray the gamut of military life—from the chaos of combat to quieter scenes in the day-to-day lives of soldiers.

Emily Prince (born 1981) focuses on large installation projects depicting portraits of American service members killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Shown at the 2007 Venice Biennale and at the Saatchi Gallery in London, Prince’s work includes more than 5,000 individual portraits, often displayed in sections or chronologically. The exhibition tour will include approximately 400 drawings, representing just some of the losses suffered during one year of war.

Texas native Vincent Valdez (born 1977) creates visual memorials in painting, pastels, and graphite as part of the process of bearing witness to loss. The Face of Battle will showcase his works commemorating the life and death of his best friend, who was killed in action in Iraq. It includes a dream sequence video with music of a funeral caisson being drawn through the streets of San Antonio, as well as large-scale paintings.

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

Content
- 56 works including paintings, sculpture, photographs, site-specific installation of drawings, time-based media art, and ephemera
- Digital files for all exhibition texts, title graphic design, organizer and sponsor credit, and logo(s)
- Sample ideas of Portrait Gallery educational programming

Support Services
- Installation and display guidelines
- One Portrait Gallery courier to oversee unpacking/packing and installation/deinstallation
- Press kit, including press release example, and press images with captions and credits
- Publication: Bilingual exhibition brochure (25 complimentary copies); will provide print-ready files for venues to insert local details

Space Required
Approximately 4,000 square feet

Security and Special Requirements
- High security
- 7 foot-candles required
- 70°F ±2; RH 50% ±5%

Availability
Limited to 3 venues, March 2018 to February 2019 (see Tour Itinerary)

Participation Fee
$36,000 for a 12-week booking period plus one-way shipping within contiguous US

Shipping
One-way shipping via Portrait Gallery-approved professional fine art shipper with dual driver, air-ride transit
The Face of Battle: Americans at War, 9/11 to Now

Tour Itinerary

Early March 2018 to early June 2018
OPEN

Mid-July 2018 to mid-October 2018
OPEN

Mid-November 2018 to mid-February 2019
OPEN

Contact:
If you would like to be considered as a host museum, please contact the Department of Exhibitions at the National Portrait Gallery expressing your interest and include an AAM Standard Facility Report. Please address inquiries to either:

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Traveling Exhibition Specialist
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Figs. 6-7: Emily Prince, Tevan L. Nguyen, December 28, 2010 (one of approximately 400 drawings), 2010, courtesy of Saatchi Gallery, London; Emily Prince, American Servicemen and Women Who Have Died in Iraq and Afghanistan (But Not Including the Wounded, Nor the Iraqis nor the Afghans), detail of installation at The Drawing Center, New York City, 2011. Photograph by Cathy Carver.