

Machine in a Void

World War One & the Graphic Arts



March 4 - May 23, 2010 / Kress Gallery
Spring @ the Spencer celebration: 5:30 PM, Thursday, March 4

MEDIA CONTACT

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PUBLICITY IMAGES AVAILABLE (300 PPI JPG)

LAWRENCE—This Thursday, March 4, the Spencer Museum of Art will unveil ***Machine in a Void: World War I & the Graphic Arts***, presenting approximately 200 works of graphic art made during the years of the First World War (1914-1918), with a post-script on the art of the decade following the war. Five years in the making, the exhibition invokes the perspective of primarily European artists, focusing attention on the substantial roles played by the graphic arts during WWI (1914–1918) as a tool for official propaganda and as means of voicing individual responses to the war ranging from documentation to dissent.

Machine in a Void is made possible by the generous support of the Breidenthal-Snyder Foundation. Research toward the exhibition was supported by the Franklin D. Murphy Travel Fund, KU International Programs/International Travel, and a Wolfsonian-Florida International University Fellowship.

The exhibition's genesis stems from the Spencer's 2005 acquisition of a rare and extensive treatment of the war by Belgian artist Henry de Groux in the form of nearly 50 etchings. These proofs and trial prints were preparatory to a portfolio, *Le Visage de la Victoire (The Face of Victory)*. In his introduction to the printed series, de Groux wrote of the war as an "undeniable and colossal absurdity, like a machine functioning in a void," an "opulent excess of perfect horror." The Spencer's exhibition derives its title from de Groux's evocative expression. The central goal of the exhibition is to identify and give voice to those artists who, through their work during and shortly after WWI, renounced specific national concerns to articulate a more transcendent vision. These uncommon voices will be exhibited along with mainstream nationalistic and propagandistic works.

Machine in a Void draws principally from the permanent collection of the Spencer Museum of Art, and includes material that may provoke discussions of the rise of ironic and ambivalent attitudes toward war, the defenselessness of innocents in the face of modern war machines, the use of the graphic arts to promote official government attitudes, and the role of mechanized warfare within the dystopian idea of the Machine Age.

The Spencer's collections are strong in German, French, and Belgian material concerning the War, but less extensive in British and American works. For this reason, ***Machine in a Void*** does not offer a comprehensive overview of art and the War, but does introduce many key themes, which are loosely organized according to five sections:

- *Introduction* (mechanized war and several comprehensive portfolios)
- *Machine in a Void* (Henry de Groux's *Face of Victory* portfolio)
- *Dissent and Loss*
- *Propaganda*
- *The "Machine Age" – Art in the Wake of War*

Exhibited artists include [Otto Dix](#), [Kerr Eby](#), [George Grosz](#), [Jules de Bruycker](#), [Henry de Groux](#), [André Devambez](#), [Erich Heckel](#), [Henri Ibels](#), [Jean-Emile Laboureur](#), [Karl Maes](#), [Maxime Maufra](#), [Ludwig Meidner](#), [Robert Michel](#), [Johannes Molzahn](#), [Karl](#)

[Schmidt-Rotluff](#), [Georg Scholz](#), [Max Slevogt](#), [Edmond van Dooren](#), and, [Jean Veber](#).

Stephen Goddard, senior curator and curator of prints & drawings, organized the exhibition following a sabbatical spent primarily in Germany and a fellowship at the Wolfsonian-Florida International University—one of the world's great repositories for WWI-era material culture. Goddard was assisted by curatorial interns Rachel Voorhies and Olena Chervonik, with additional help from Lorie Vanchena and Andrea Weis. A catalogue is planned.

MACHINE IN A VOID PUBLIC PROGRAMS

3/4

Reception/Party: Spring @ the Spencer / 5:30 PM / Central Court / Sponsored by the Spencer and the Friends of the Art Museum / Celebrate the spring exhibitions at the Spencer.

3/11

Machine in a Void* Book Discussion/Film Series

Book Discussion: *One of Ours* by Willa Cather / 6 PM / Kress Gallery

Film: *A Very Long Engagement* / 7 PM / SMA Auditorium

3/25

Machine in a Void* Book Discussion/Film Series

[Please note today's location: Lawrence Public Library, 7th & Vermont]

Book Discussion: *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque / 6 PM

Film: *All Quiet on the Western Front* / 7 PM

3/26

Panel Discussion: Town & Gown Forum: The Long Shadow of the "Great War" / 10 AM / Kress Gallery / Sponsored by the Spencer and the Hall Center for the Humanities / Join KU faculty members for a series of gallery presentations about *Machine in a Void*. / Curator Steve Goddard, moderator

3/29

Panel Discussion: KU Osher Lifelong Learning Institute: *Machine in a Void: World War I & the Graphic Arts* / 2 PM / Kress Gallery / Sponsored by the Spencer and KU Continuing Education / A multidisciplinary panel discussion of *Machine in a Void*. / Enrollment required / \$ / Please contact Continuing Education, 785-864-KUCE(5823), www.kuce.org, or kuce@ku.edu

4/8

Machine in a Void* Book Discussion/Film Series

Book Discussion: *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway / 6 PM / Kress Gallery

Film: *The Sun Also Rises* / 7 PM / SMA Auditorium

4/10

It Starts With Art! **Children's art appreciation class: *War of the Worlds: Pencil v. Print* / 10:30 AM & 1:30 PM / Central Court / Explore the *Machine in a Void: World War I & the Graphic Arts* exhibition. Study line and composition in the works on view, then experiment with creating the same image in both print and pencil.

4/22

Machine in a Void Book Discussion/Film Series*

Book discussion: *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf / 6 PM / Kress Gallery

Film: *Mrs. Dalloway* (1997) / 7 PM / SMA Auditorium

4/29

Reception/Party: Spring Student Night & Juried Art Show Opening / 5:30-7 PM / Central Court / Sponsored by the Spencer and the SMA Student Advisory Board / The Spencer's annual Spring Student Night is also opening night for the SAB's Juried Art Show, and features free food, live and DJ music, activities, and art!

5/1/2010

Spring Arts & Culture Festival / 1-4 PM / Front Lawn, Spencer Museum of Art / Sponsored by the Spencer and the SMA Student Advisory Board / Celebrate the season at the annual Spring Arts & Culture Festival. The event, which is free and open to the public, includes live music by local bands, performances by various artists, booths with student and local art for purchase, and the opening of the Museum's annual Children's Art Exhibition, which features works from the Spencer's "It Starts with Art" program.

***Machine in a Void Book Discussion/Film Series**

This collaborative program pairs film screenings at the Spencer with book discussions sponsored by the Lawrence Public Library. In conjunction with the exhibition *Machine in a Void*, the Library has created a book discussion group on the subject, and the Spencer has assembled a series of films with storylines or themes similar to those found in the literature. A book discussion precedes each screening. To register for the book discussion group, please contact Maria Butler at 785.843.3833 ext. 123, or email mbutler@lawrence.lib.ks.us

****It Starts With Art!**

Our entertaining, interactive programs for children ages 5-14 combine art education with hands-on creation. In each class, students explore selected artworks in the Museum and make their own art based on the techniques, media, and traditions they discover. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Ages 5-8 meet 10:30 AM-12:30 PM, and ages 9-14 meet 1:30-3:30 PM. Classes are \$12/\$10 for Friends of the Art Museum members. Enroll in four or more classes and receive the FAM price. To enroll, contact the Education Department, 785.864.0137 or smakids@ku.edu, or visit www.spencerart.ku.edu

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**Spencer Museum of Art
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Also find the Spencer...

- **On the Web:** www.spencerart.ku.edu
- **E-mail:** spencerart@ku.edu

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