

MATURA PAPER AT KANTONSSCHULE OERLIKON ZURICH

**SHOT AGAINST GUNS
WRITTEN AGAINST BLOOD**



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My father used a P-51 to fight fascism.
I use a pen.
Listen to your heart beat.
Choose your weapon.

Alec Emerson

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A. FOREWORD

The war has always been a part of the humankind. From fighting with sticks in the Stone Age in front of a cave and the medieval clashing swords on a battlefield to the current global warfare with the most harmful weapons ever.

Besides the war there have always been pacifists who tried to teach the world that war is not the ultimate solution.

When I met one of them, Alexander Emerson, the great-grandson of the famous Ralph Waldo Emerson, in New York City, and read his work, I decided to write this assignment about the pacifistic art against the ongoing war between Iraq and the United States of America.

You are going to read a presentation of two war photographers and Pulitzer Prize nominees, Chris Hondros and Michael Kamber, and two poets, Alec Emerson and Sam Hamill. All four of them are contemporary artists who want to express their aversion towards the different wars on our world.

Their information is divided in a personal part and a part which discusses their work concerning the Iraq War in detail. The presentations are supplemented with background information on the Iraq conflict.

B. HISTORY OF THE IRAQ CONFLICT

To be able to understand the artists' purposes and what they want to express with their work, we must know the key points in the ongoing conflict in Iraq because every conflict, even war, is unique as same as the artist's piece of work. I consider it therefore wise to introduce to you a short summary of the meanwhile over a decade ongoing conflict in Iraq as an extended timeline It begins with the First Gulf War in 1991 and presents the development of the situation to the point where the Iraq War is officially declared by the President of the United States of America George Walker Bush in 2003.

B. I TIMELINE

The diplomatic relationship between Iraq and the United States of America and its allies was already tensioned because of the precedent Gulf War from August 2, 1990, until February 28, 1991, which was authorized by the United Nations (UN) in order to liberate Kuwait.

B. I. I GULF WAR CONSEQUENCES

After Iraq had lost the war the UN Security Council Resolution 687 set the terms that Iraq had to fulfill. This Resolution required the complete destruction of all Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction¹ and missiles with a range of more than 150 km.

UN Security Council Resolution 687; Paragraph 8

8. Decides that Iraq shall unconditionally accept the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless, under international supervision, of:

(a) All chemical and biological weapons and all stocks of agents and all related subsystems and components and all research, development, support and manufacturing facilities related thereto;

(b) All ballistic missiles with a range greater than one hundred and fifty kilometers, and related major parts and repair and production facilities;

Further, the resolution said that the United Nations were allowed to send their inspectors for approval of the compliance with the resolution itself.

¹ The term "Weapon of Mass Destruction" was originally used by Soviet military to denominate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Now, it has mainly kept its signification but with addition of radiological weapons. After the 9/11 attacks the term's definition has broadened to include also any kind of instruments capable of inflicting mass casualties.

Another consequence of this war was the establishment of two no-fly zones² (northern NFZ and southern NFZ), which were proclaimed by the USA, UK and France. They were established to protect humanitarian operations, anti-Hussein Iraqis and the minorities like Shiites in Iraq. The Iraqi military forces tried several times to shoot down the patrolling allied aircrafts with air-defense missiles but they always failed. In response to these attacks the allied forces bombed the Iraqi air-defense bases and radars.



Northern and southern NFZs

These no-fly zones continued to be established until Iraq war began in 2003.

B. 1.2 9/11 AFTERMATH

After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City on September 11, 2001, which were carried out by al-Qaida, George W. Bush identified Iraq, along with Iran and North Korea, as an “axis of evil” on January 29, 2002, in his state of the Union speech.

Extract of George W. Bush’s speech on January 29

“But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will.

Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature. North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.

Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people’s hope for freedom.

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of

² A no-fly zone is an airspace in which any aircraft is permitted to fly. In the Iraqi no-fly zones allied aircrafts had the permission to patrol and secure the airspace.

its own citizens – leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections – then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.

We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. We will develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack. (Applause.) And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.

We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch – yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch”

(Bush, George W., 2002, The President's State of the Union Speech, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html>)

In a following speech in September, the U. S. president challenged the United Nations to enforce their resolutions, which have been shortly revised, against Iraq and stated that the USA would act on its own if the organization did not. This speech was based on precedent statements, which said, that the United States were ready to strike first in order to defend their homeland.

B. 1. 3 THE DECLARATION OF WAR

A few weeks later, the U.S. Congress authorized the attack on Iraq, but the UN Security Council insisted on their resolution 1441 though new inspectors should take surveillance of the ongoing destruction of their weapons. Should Iraq violate this diplomatic contract, it had to face serious consequences, which were not defined yet by the UN Security Council.

After the return of the arms inspectors to Iraq, the Iraqi government published a declaration of about 12'000 pages on its nuclear, biological and chemical arms affirming that it had no forbidden weapons anymore. Nevertheless Bush was not impressed and ordered the deployment of around 200'000 U.S. troops to the Gulf region by March whereas the allied troops joined them later on. The crisis began to get worse by the moment as the UN inspectors discovered eleven warheads constructed for chemical weapon usage in Iraq. This discovery led to a very critical UN report, which stated that Iraq did not have the appearance of a general acceptance of the resolutions and did not accomplish the required disarmament. The American president said in a speech addressed to the state of Union that the USA was prepared for war against Iraq even without the consent of the United Nations.

As a result of Bush's orders big demonstrations for peace were held all around the world.



A demonstrator in New York City, February 15, 2003

They took place in about 60 countries and according to BBC over 6 million people were involved. It was the biggest antiwar demonstration that had ever taken place but the U. S. government was not willing to abort the invasion of Iraq.

A few days later Hans Blix, UN chief inspector, ordered the destruction of Iraqi missiles with a range that exceeded the specification given by the UN. Two days later the United States of America, together with the United Kingdom and Spain, filed a document describing Iraq's failure on taking the final opportunity afforded to it in Resolution 1441 and asking for authorization to use military forces against Iraq. In response to this document, Germany, Russia and France ensured the UN Security Council that there was still "a real chance to the peaceful settlement of this crisis".

Iraq obeyed the orders and began with the demanded destruction of its long range missiles but at this time USA and UK were trying to find further supporters, besides Spain and Bulgaria, among the UN Security Council members because if there is a call for a vote on a resolution there are 9 votes of 15 required for the resolution's acceptance. They did not find enough and decided not to call for a vote.

On March 17, 2003, George Walker Bush delivered an ultimatum to Saddam Hussein Abd al-Majid al-Tikriti to leave the country within 48 hours or else to face a military strike. Saddam Hussein did not fulfill this ultimatum and as a consequence this led to the declaration of war on Iraq.

C. WAR PHOTOGRAPHY

C. I INTRODUCTION

War photography is a part of photojournalism focused on the military actions. Some of the war photographers are just covering the ongoing action in the combat zone but the term “war photography” does not only refer to actual combat but also to photographs of all scenes which follow as a part of the warfare; pictures of military vehicles and equipment, civilians, refugees and casualties. It includes photographs of buildings or situations showing the circumstances in the ongoing war.

Currently, the biggest problem for the war photographers is the censorship. At the beginning of 20th century the war photographers were very restricted in their actions. In World War I they were basically not allowed to take pictures of the front. Pictures of dead American soldiers were presented for the first time in World War II where the photographs should be used as propaganda for the military forces but Life Magazine published a picture of three fallen GI's.



Dead U. S. soldiers on Buna Beach, 1943, Strock

First, the photographers were also allowed to take pictures in Vietnam; but after several images showing how Vietnamese villagers were massacred by U. S. troops and other similar pictures, this freedom was drastically restricted. These pictures were also partly responsible for the turn of the public opinion of war. This is the reason why the Army learned that allowing the photographers too much freedom is harmful to their reputation and image. In the following First Gulf War the journalists were kept in position and had no access to the combat zone or only a tightly restricted one. That is why there were hardly any close combat photographs published of this war which means the aspects of brutality and actual killing were suppressed and the war seemed to be like destroying sandcastles or shoe-boxes. But after the war several pictures “escaped” and had a huge impact on the public.

The role of war photographers is currently very disputed, first, because the close combat is still not really shown, second, because on the one hand the war photographers and journalists have again access to the front but on the other hand only “embedded” and together with the troops; for that reason their reports might not be completely objective. This could be interpreted as a modern form of propaganda or censorship.



Highway of Death, 1991



Dead U.S. troop in Iraq, after 2003

C. 2 CHRIS HONDROS



Chris Hondros was born in 1970 in New York City. His parents were Greek and German Immigrants. In his childhood he lived in North Carolina, where he received a degree in English Literature at the North Carolina State University. He conducted his graduate work in photojournalism at the School of Visual Communication of Ohio University. Chris returned to New York City to focus on international journalism. Since the 1990s Hondros has been in most of the main conflict zones of the world to take photographs. His visited zones include Angola, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Liberia, Iraq, Kashmir and the West Bank. The pictures he shot there were published on many covers and front pages of magazines and newspapers like The Economist or The New York Times, Washington Post or Los Angeles Times. For his work he has been awarded with various grants and fellowships. Among them were the ones from the U. S. Agency for International Reporting with its photojournalism grant and the Fellowship for International Reporting at John Hopkins University in 2001. CNN and other media rely frequently on his experiences and his work.

Chris Hondros was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize³ in 2004 in the category News Photography for his pictures taken in Liberian civil war and in 2006 he received Robert Capa Gold Medal which represents war photography's highest honor.

Today, Hondros is a photographer for Getty Images⁴.

³ The Pulitzer Prize is an American award for journalism, literature and music given by the Columbia University in New York. This prize can be only rewarded to an U. S. citizen except in the categories of history, where the author may be of any nationality but his historical work must refer to the U. S. history, and the journalism competition, where the author's work must have appeared in U. S. print media which is published at least once a week.

⁴ Getty Images is an American photo stock founded by Jonathan Klein and Mark Getty which distributes over 3 billion pictures worldwide to 4 million users. Among them are leading newspapers and magazines which publish these pictures practically daily.

C. 2. 1 HONDROS' PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION

Hondros' decision to become a photographer was not hard. He was always interested in photography and when he was in high school in North Carolina, he bought his first serious camera. He felt, respectively feels, inspired by works of many other war photographers but especially Eddie Adams⁵ and James Nachtwey⁶. Outside of photography he has Leonard Bernstein⁷ and Stephen Jay Gould, an American paleontologist and an evolutionary biologist, as role models.

He has no favorite piece of work of its own but he points out the worldwide published picture of a little girl in the checkpoint shooting in Iraq and his work in Liberia, primarily a fighter on a hardly fought bridge. The picture he is referring to shows a Liberian militia commander thrilled after a hit with his rocket he fired at enemy position.



Liberian militia commander on a bridge, 2003, Hondros

To the question if a camera were enough to create serious photographs he answered:

"That's like asking if a violin is enough to create serious music. I think the answer is obvious."

Hence, Hondros is shooting virtuosic pictures, which he wants to use to convey to the general public how different people of the world are but that there are still similarities which make us human beings. He also tries to show us the nature of war and the terrible horrors connected to it. He realizes also that the best results in understanding that can be achieved

⁵ Eddie Adams (1933 - 2004) was a winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography and of the World Press Photo award for the world famous picture capturing General Nguyen Ngoc Loan executing a Vietcong prisoner Nguyen Van Lem in the Vietnam War. He covered 13 wars and his images won over 500 awards.

⁶ James Nachtwey (*1948) is an U. S. war photographer whose person was used in the documentary "War Photographer". He won many prizes and awards, including five times the Robert Capa Gold Medal and the World Press Photo Award in 1994.

⁷ Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990) was a composer, author, educator, pianist and the first conductor educated in the United States of America to get worldwide acclaim. His work includes the soundtrack to the famous Broadway musical West Side Story.

with knowledge of the background. Therefore he goes to these deadly conflict zones to deliver demonstrating pictures like the little girl in the checkpoint shooting. Besides that

“Someone has to do it.”

C. 2. 2 HONDROS' MASTERPIECE - ORPHANED IN AN INSTANT

On a January evening in 2005, Chris Hondros was patrolling with U. S. troops in Tal Afar⁸ in Iraq. Suddenly a car approached. The U. S. soldiers fired warning shots but the car refused to stop. As result of this, the soldiers fired a volley into the vehicle but as they went to examine the stopped car, they realized that they made a big mistake. There was a family inside whose parents were killed in the precedent shooting. Hondros had his camera ready and shot several pictures, an instant later, Hondros shot an unforgettable photograph of a crying girl. The picture was shot in a big rush because as soon as the troops had fired the salvo, they rushed to the rolling out car. They pulled six children out of the back-seat and examined them for wounds as everyone was covered in blood. It was a horrible mess. The children were crying from terror and pain while the soldiers tried to provide medical assistance. In this moment the picture was shot.



Orphaned In An Instant, 2005, Hondros

In this 1st place shot, Pictures of the Year International, you can see one of the children found in the car. The photograph became popular in a very short time because it is an iconic picture for the circumstances in Iraq. This is because the image can hardly be misinterpreted and its liveliness is so real, that you are almost able to hear the girl scream. Also, the picture has plenty of symbols, which say more, than seen at the first glance. Many people refer to the girl's cheeks with streaks of blood. It is mostly interpreted as a kind of crucifixion and representing the pain of a whole country. Another symbolic contrast are the boots of a tall and “mighty” U. S. soldier and the little girl, nearly looking like a doll. Although, there is the soldier standing next to her and protecting her, she appears to be completely alone and abandoned. This image

⁸ Tal Afar is city in the north of Iraq. It lies approximately 65 km east of the Syrian border.

illustrates the currently desperate situation in Iraq. Later they found out the names and identities of the people. This girl is called Samar Hassan and was 7 years old when the accident happened. One of her siblings, her brother Racan, 12 years old at the time, had to be flown to the United States because of his injuries.

According to Pentagon this is a standard procedure in attempt to stop a car because of the possibility of carrying a bomb. Although the U. S. military is searching and testing alternative possibilities of slowing down or stopping approaching cars, this action is performed up to 7 times a day.

C. 3 MICHAEL KAMBER



Michael Kamber was born in Maine, Massachusetts, in 1963. In 1984 Kamber started to photograph social unrest and politics in New York City. He sold these pictures to local newspapers and news agencies. Later, Kamber was shooting a large amount of photographs in the Caribbean, in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Haiti until the 1990s. At the same time he worked on documentary projects in his office in New York. In the year of millennium and the following one he went several times to the Mexican border in the United States and Mexico to gather information and photographs for his documentation on Mexican immigration to New York. This documentary work has been honored with three national reporting awards. In recent years Michael Kamber has worked mainly for The New York Times photographing the conflicts in Liberia, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Israel, Chad, Nigeria, Congo, Haiti and Iraq. He also wrote some articles for The New York Times covering the situation in Haiti, West Africa and Iraq.

Michael Kamber won the Mike Berger award from Columbia University in New York and has been a member of The New York Times team, which won the Overseas Press Club Citation of Excellence for their outstanding coverage of Iraq in 2003. He has also been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in the categories photography and reporting.

C. 3. 1 KAMBER'S PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION

Kamber became a photographer because his mother briefly worked as a photojournalist for a newspaper in Maine when he was young. She did a photographic essay on an institution for mentally ill people, which induced a reform of this institution. This impressed him and simultaneously gave him the idea that photojournalism is important and able to spark change. He was originally inspired by the pictures of Ansel Adams⁹ and Edward Wetson but he grew away from landscape and portrait photography. Among his preferred war photographers are also W. Eugene Smith¹⁰ and Robert Frank¹¹.

Kamber refers to a picture shot in Haiti as one of his favorite pieces of work. The picture shows silhouettes of soldiers and children. Partly the children are also the soldiers. It has a slight touch of mystery but it should primarily represent a protest and act as a social commentary.



Haiti soldiers & kids, 2004, Kamber

His motivation to do this is mostly based on his will to show Iraq and other conflict areas as an equal part of the world and that we, as human beings, have responsibility and that we are involved, too. In his interview he said a very pinpointing quote:

"If you are on this earth, it concerns you and me."

With his photographs he exposes the conditions which are to be interpreted as a support for the search for solutions and to help to understand the critical situation in different spots on earth.

⁹ Ansel Adams (1902 - 1984) was an American photographer who focused his work on motives from the American West and photographed them mainly in black and white.

¹⁰ William Eugene Smith (1918 - 1978) is an American photographer who worked for the Life Magazine and published extremely dramatic and impressive photographs of the World War II. He took them during the American offensive against Japan.

¹¹ Robert Frank (*1924) is a Swiss, Zurich, born artist and is a well-known person in the American photography. His famous work "The Americans", a photographic book, was published for the first time in Paris as "Les Américains". In the United States, the book was published for the first time in 1959.

C. 3. 2 KAMBER'S WORK IN IRAQ

Michael Kamber worked in on assignment for New York Times about Iraq in the end of 2003 and in spring 2004. When he arrived to Baghdad in October, the situation astonished him because it seemed that normality was coming back. Only a few days later the ground under his office shook because of a bomb in the Iraqis Red Cross headquarters although the building was located several kilometers away.



American Soldier next to the Red Cross headquarters, October 27, 2003, Kamber

This explosion was indicating an organized guerilla warfare from the resistance against the U. S. troops which led to several bombings across Baghdad and Iraq in which around 50 people were killed, including civilians and children.



Rescuing forces near the Red Cross headquarters, October 27, 2003, Kamber

When Michael Kamber did his second trip to Iraq, he was located in Sadr City, a suburb of Baghdad. The circumstances were terrible because the group of journalists and soldiers were attacked every time they exited their residence. They were in such a desperate situation that he wrote in an article

"It got to the point where you wished for someone to shoot at you with just an AK"

(Kamber, Michael, 2005, [Killing 2005](http://dirckhalstead.org/issue0501/dis_kamber.html), http://dirckhalstead.org/issue0501/dis_kamber.html)

The experiences he made there were impressive but still, he did not find a formula to safely survive without a variable of luck. His luck keeps him alive, for example because a bomb exploded a little bit too late and missed his vehicle or a shooting at a police station he was just missed in.

"You stay alive because you are lucky, a little more."

(Kamber, Michael, 2005, [Killing 2005](http://dirckhalstead.org/issue0501/dis_kamber.html), http://dirckhalstead.org/issue0501/dis_kamber.html)



A former college basketball star is evacuated. As a result of the attacks she lost her arm, May 25, 2004, Kamber

D. POETRY AGAINST WAR

D. I INTRODUCTION

It was in late January 2003 when Laura Bush was to hold a symposium at the White House to celebrate "poetry and the American voice". Among the invited was Sam Hamill, a poet, editor, translator and a veteran of the protest against the Vietnam War back in the 1960s. He refused the invitation because according to his words, he felt no joy but rather, he was overcome by a kind of nausea, which means he could not take part in such a symposium when simultaneously the U.S. Government planned the "Shock and Awe"¹² attack whose report Sam read only a day before. He called instead for help to speak up for the conscience of their country from around 50 friends and fellows to revive a movement like the original Poets Against War, which spoke up against the Vietnam War by creating and presenting poems that deal with war in a negative way. The word spread incredibly fast and after only four days, about 1500 poets responded. The First Lady heard of Sam Hamill's plans and cancelled the symposium but the poets did not stop but even organized readings and events around the USA on the day the symposium was supposed to take place. Such an overwhelming and unexpected response drove Sam to create the website www.poetsagainstar.com and by that day over 6000 poems were already published.

Currently, this platform is operated by 25 editors and has over 22'000 poems posted online. Meanwhile, the poets are not U. S. American only anymore but from all over the world. Parts of this enormous anthology has been presented to the U. S. Congress and been introduced to the Congressional Record. This anthology has been shown to representatives from Alaska to Massachusetts. Also, poets from other nations have presented the collection to their respective governments in England, Turkey, India, Pakistan, Italy, Australia, France, Germany and probably more. I chose *The Children of Iraq* by Minnie Warburton as an example:

*Every morning I wake
and I cry for the children of Iraq
Every morning I wake
and I cry for the mothers of the children
of Iraq
Every morning I wake
and weep for the fathers and grandfathers
the brothers the sisters the grandmothers
of the children of Iraq*

We are all the children of Iraq

(Warburton, Minnie, 2003, *The Children of Iraq*, <http://www.poetsagainstar.com/displaypoem.asp?AuthorID=14721>)

Although the planned "Shock and Awe" impact couldn't be stopped this way, this platform continues to give the opportunity to poets to speak out for a peaceful world, where the crimes that are committed are not justified only with a man's word and his religion.

¹² "Shock and Awe" is military doctrine written by Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade on the National Defense University in 1996. The purpose of this doctrine is to actually show off the forces on the battlefield to paralyze the opponent and to lower its will to fight.

D. 2 SAM HAMILL



Sam Hamill is a Pushcart Prize¹³-winner who published 13 volumes of poetry, 24 volumes of translated poetry from ancient languages and 3 collections of essays. Besides writing poetry, Hamill taught in different prisons for 14 years and worked primarily with mistreated children and women. He is also the founding editor of the publishing company Coper Canyon Press. For his work he received fellowships from various organizations, including the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He is the recipient of two Washington Governor's Arts Awards.

For his project, the world's biggest anthology against the war, he writes poems too.

State of the Union, 2003

*I have not been to Jerusalem,
but Shirley talks about the bombs.
I have no god, but have seen the children praying
for it to stop. They pray to different gods.
The news is all old news again, repeated
like a bad habit, cheap tobacco, the social lie.*

*The children have seen so much death
that death means nothing to them now.
They wait in line for bread.
They wait in line for water.
Their eyes are black moons reflecting emptiness.
We've seen them a thousand times.*

*Soon, the President will speak.
He will have something to say about bombs
and freedom and our way of life.
I will turn the tv off. I always do.
Because I can't bear to look
at the monuments in his eyes.*

(Hamill, Sam, 2003, *State of the Union, 2003*,
[http://www.poetsagainstawar.com/displaypoem.asp?
AuthorID=1708](http://www.poetsagainstawar.com/displaypoem.asp?AuthorID=1708))

¹³ Pushcart Prize is given to exceptional literary work focused on small presses.

D. 2. I HAMILL'S PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION

Sam Hamill's way to poetry is a short one because his foster parents were avid readers. They were also reading poetry aloud and Hamill was fascinated by how it sounded. It were mostly Romantics poets and Robert William Service and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Since Sam wanted to create such sounds he began making up poetry when he was 6 years old. His mother had to write it down for him because he could not even write.

He left home in 1958 as a teenager and followed the beat scene to San Francisco. He was quickly fascinated by Kenneth Rexroth¹⁴ and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Rexroth became later a sort of mentor to Hamill. Therefore he was a kind of role model for Sam Hamill but Hamill felt also impressed by classical Chinese and Japanese poets, he translated, Denise Levertov¹⁵ and Giorgos Seferis¹⁶.

Although, Sam Hamill wrote and translated many poems he is not able to say, which one is his favorite because

"...choosing a favorite would be like choosing a favorite child. It's a body of work - a single body of work."

Sam Hamill writes poetry and organizes projects like "Poets Against War" because of opposing the "fascists like the ones inhabiting the White House" at the moment and opposing war in general. Hamill says about his form of writing poems

"The poem, I believe, is a gift to the poet. I begin to hear an "inner voice" of sorts, and listening closely to what the poem has to say THROUGH me. The subconscious mind speaks; the conscious mind speaks; the poem emerges or is revealed TO me FROM within that complex. I don't know what I "have to say" when I begin a poem."

¹⁴ Kenneth Rexroth (1905 - 1982) was an important person in the San Francisco Renaissance, the beat scene on the West Coast. Besides being a poet he was also a translator and essayist. He was one of the pioneers in exploring and using old traditional Japanese poetic forms in the United States.

¹⁵ Denise Levertov (1923 - 1997) was an American poet but born in Britain. She was an active opportunist of the Vietnam War, feminist and activist. She spend much time teaching at various Universities, including MIT and Stanford. War and politics is probably the most important subject of her poems.

¹⁶ Giorgos Seferis (1900 - 1971) was a Greek poet allocated with the Nobel Prize in 1963 for his lyrical work.

D. 2. 2 POETS AGAINST WAR



The organization's logo

The organization "Poets Against War" includes by now over 22'000 poems written in languages from all over the world, 18 at least, including for example Arabic, Russian and Korean.

Sam Hamill initiated this projects because he wanted to provide a place for poets who often felt silenced by the U. S. government and who share his convictions. Another point is that there have always been poets against war down through the ages.

The anthology contains also poems from prominent poets like Rita Dove¹⁷

Umoja: Each One of Us Counts

*One went the way of water,
one crumpled under stone;
one climbed the air but plunged through fire,
one fought the fear alone.*

Remember us, though we are gone.

*A star flares on an epaulet,
a ball rolls in harm's way;
the glowing line onscreen goes flat,
an anonymous bullet strays --*

Remember us! Do not forget!

*One lay slathered in garlands,
one left only a smear;
one cracked a joke, smiled, then shrugged
to show he didn't care.*

Do not forget that we were here.

*Do those who failed still miss the wind,
that sweet breath from the sky?
Do they still covet rock and moss
or the swift, hard blink of the lizard's eye?*

We walk on water, we are written on air.

*Let us honor the lost, the snatched, the
relinquished,
those vanquished by glory, muted by
shame.
Stand up in the silence they've left and listen:
those absent ones, unknown and
unnamed --*

remember!

their whispers fill the arena.

(Dove, Rita, 2003, *Umoja: Each One of Us Counts*,
<http://www.poetsagainstar.com/chapbook.asp#Dove>)

¹⁷ Rita Dove (*1952) is a Pulitzer Prize-laureate in 1987 and was the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in the years 1993 until 1995.

D. 3 ALEXANDER EMERSON



Alexander Emerson is originally from Concord in Massachusetts. He is the great-grandson of the well-known American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson¹⁸. He graduated only one year from Harvard after his older brother was shot down as a helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War. After graduation Alec worked on different projects since he graduated including building his current house with his own hands. He published his first anthology in 1989 where he assimilated the death of his brother in Vietnam.

Youth

*My brother lives in memory
an eternal youth,
looking like a photograph
taken before time
and bullet
stopped in Vietnam.*

*He was my older brother then,
before we heard of Vietnam,
before he went,
before the telephone rang with pain.
Then I helped,
to bury him.*

*I am his older brother, now.
He hasn't aged a day,
since his last breath,
across a world,
blew
my youth
away.*

(Emerson, Alexander, 1989, [Youth](http://connectedwords.com/somber_reunion.htm#YOUTH), http://connectedwords.com/somber_reunion.htm#YOUTH)

After the publication, Emerson put his poetry work away until the year 2000. At this point he decided to create poetry for at least one more decade. Five years later, he finished his 2nd book "Connected Words" and in 2007 he published the book "Another Victory, By George!"

¹⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803 - 1882) was an American poet and philosopher. He founded the Transcendentalist Club in New England, where new philosophical ideas of a more spiritual way, were developed where the autonomy of a human being is of central importance. This movement originated from a protest against the Harvard-taught intellectualism and Unitarian church. It was initiated by Emerson's essay Nature, and had a huge influence on the American enlightenment.

D. 3. I EMERSON'S PROFESSIONAL MOTIVATION

As an answer to my question about artists as his role models, Alec responded that he has three. One of them is Daniel Chester¹⁹, a sculptor who created the minuteman in Concord, where Emerson grew up. Another person who was important for Alexander Emerson was Oliver La Farge²⁰

"The first book I read that seemed to carry the truth more clearly than the words used by everyday people was 'Laughing Boy' by Oliver La Farge."

Alec met the third artist who inspired him when he was taken in by the family of a girlfriend after college. The family's father, Victor Kalin, did an oil painting of the Mai Lai massacre for a record company as a cover of a LP in protest of that war.

In none of the books Alexander Emerson wrote, does he want to point out any favorite piece of work because according to him the word "favorite" is too transitory. Since he has not a favorite piece, he thinks that "World Trade Center" is the most important.

World Trade Center

*The ghosts of Wounded Knee
welcome you.
They are quiet and gentle.
No one has young eyes.*

*Their clothes are neatly patched,
their moccasins carefully repaired.
It happens to be their rotation as guides
in the museum of atrocity.*

*Last week it was Dresden's turn,
the week before, My Lai.
The week before, Tiananmen Square,
the week before, Nagasaki,
the week before, Guernica.*

*Next Tuesday, a small ceremony
will mark the opening of
the World Trade Center.*

*The ghosts of Wounded Knee
welcome you.*

(Emerson, Alexander, 2003, [World Trade Center](http://connectedwords.com/connected_words.htm#WORLD); http://connectedwords.com/connected_words.htm#WORLD)

¹⁹ Daniel Chester French (1850 - 1931) was a notable American sculptor who created several well-known sculptures. Among them are the Lincoln sculpture at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D. C. and the John Harvard Monument at Harvard Campus in Massachusetts.

²⁰ Oliver La Farge (1901 - 1963) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning writer and anthropologist. He received the Pulitzer Prize for his novel "Laughing Boy" in 1930. He also discovered two languages in the American Southwest and Central America. He was the president of the Association on American Indian Affairs.

Alexander Emerson is creating poetry, words, which are caught and refined by pen. But only the way they are painted on a page can suggest their meaning, because he does not approve of waging war and killing children for profit

*...[!] don't need to drink human blood,
or chomp on human flesh and human bones,
metaphorically, energetically, or actually.*

He does it with the best he can with the muse that comes to him.

D. 3. 2 ANOTHER VICTORY, BY GEORGE!

The most recent anthology Alexander Emerson published is called "Another Victory, By George!" and deals with the current political situation in the United States of America and the Middle East conflict. The book contains 22 poems written by himself, an excerpt of the New Testament "The Sermon on the Mount"²¹ and a poem by Langston Hughes "Dream Dust"

As a presentation I chose two poems of this anthology to discuss.

Oil and Ice

*Shouting over
and over,
and over,
and over.*

*FIRE !
FIRE !
FIRE !
FIRE !*

*Instigating a murderous riot.
Capital Crime.*

*Shouting over
and over,
and over,
and over,*

*WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION !
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION !
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION !
WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION !*

*Instigating a murderous riot.
Capitol Cool.*

(Emerson, Alexander, 2007, [Oil and Ice](http://connectedwords.com/another_victory.htm#OIL), http://connectedwords.com/another_victory.htm#OIL)

In this poem he wants to emphasize the lie about the presence of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq, which was one of the reasons why the war was initiated. He is playing with the words and although it appears to be the same, it is a difference of many senseless killed people.

²¹ "Sermon on a Mount" refers to a sermon given by Jesus Christ to a large amount of listeners on a mountain in Galilee.

Cookbook

*When a United States
Certified Public Accountant cooks the
books, the dish is
called a FELONY.*

*When a United States
President cooks the
Constitution, the dish is
called a FINDING.*

*When a United States
Secretary of State strains
a little passel of lies through
white teeth, stirs
up a little war,
and garnishes it with
plump little body bags,
the dish is called
LITTLE BLACK SAMBO.*

*When five United States
Justices ice a fraudulent
election with red, white,
and blue sugar frosting,
the dish is called
MOCK REPUBLIC SUPREME.*

*When a United States
Certified Public Accountant cooks the
books, the dish is
called a FELONY.*

(Emerson, Alexander, 2007, [Cookbook](http://connectedwords.com/another_victory.htm#COOKBOOK), http://connectedwords.com/another_victory.htm#COOKBOOK)

In this poem he refers mainly to the in his eyes faulty administration of the United States of America. To Condoleezza Rice, the current United States Secretary of State who was prior to her current function the National Security Advisor. She claimed Iraq's possession of Weapons of Mass Destruction and to president George W. Bush who disrespects the constitution and the falsified election in which he was elected for the second period.

E. EPILOGUE

The main purpose of this assignment was to show the art against the current war in Iraq. I tried to achieve the intention by presenting four contemporary artists. I had the opportunity to have an interview with each of them and this provided me a deeper insight into their work and motivation. It helped me a lot, mostly in understanding and interpreting their work.

When I began with the work on this assignment I did not know how big the community against war is. I was overwhelmed because I had been convinced that the actual number of protesting people is the one you see on television during demonstrations but this is by far only a small part. There are countless artists who are writing, photographing, modeling, making music or somehow transforming their anger into wonderful pieces of art and every single one is unique, important and demonstrating their aversion towards war.

In the beginning, it was very difficult to decide which artists to present but after considering different possibilities I decided to focus on two genres, poetry and photography. I took poetry because I am fascinated by the power of a written line. It is mostly clear what the artist wants to say and nevertheless every reader has an own interpretation. The photographic work goes into the same direction. Every picture shows a subject but the subject does not have to be the intention of this picture. I would even say that I like the idea behind a picture or a poem more than the piece of work itself

As I said in the beginning “besides the war there have always been pacifists who tried to teach the world that war is not the ultimate solution”; I must say that due to this assignment and its research, I consider myself to have become a pacifist too.

In my opinion the perfect ending is what Sam Hamill wrote me to in an e-mail

Ma'asalama - go in peace

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