

# Medium & Message: Conflict Photography in the Digital Era, Dublin, 3-4 May 2011

Hosted by the UCD Clinton Institute for American Studies'  
*Photography & International Conflict* project

Seminar schedule:

## Tuesday, 3 May 2011

9:30-10:00- arrival, registration, tea and coffee in the ground floor of the Quinn School of Business (no. 48 on UCD campus map)

10-10:30- Introduction/greetings/announcements

10:30-12:00- **Discussion panel 1- *Exploring New Opportunities for Visual Journalism***

**Opened by: David Campbell and Stephen Mayes**

**Moderator: Paul Lowe**

Given the disruptions to the traditional media industry, the way in which photojournalism is practiced and funded is changing dramatically. This session will explore what these upheavals mean and how 'multimedia' will play a role in the new landscape.

Going beyond the standard online photo essay- there will be discussion of how 'multimedia' or other new forms can disrupt linear storytelling, promote audience involvement and diverse approaches to subject matter. How do we develop, distribute and fund this kind of work? Are we too caught up in debates on formats? How is photography as a vehicle for social knowledge and change affected by its format through stages of creation, distribution and consumption?

12-13:00- lunch

13-15:00- **Discussion panel 2- *Northern Ireland: the Politics and Possibilities of Post-Conflict Visualisation***

**Opened by: Paul Seawright, Anthony Haughey and Karen Downey**

**Moderator: Justin Carville**

During the last decade of the 'peace process', the visual arts have been identified within official policy as playing a crucial role in peace-building across communities and the official 'public' spaces of post-conflict Northern Ireland. While the merits of such policy in particular, and the realities of the designation 'post-conflict' in general have been open to much debate, the role of visual culture in areas such as cultural memory, ethics, human rights and political activism have generated a range of responses from scholars,

photographers, visual arts practitioners, curators and community based activists working through a range of disciplines. This panel will address themes relating to the role of image producers in communicating conflict and the place of the visual in the ameliorative practices of the post-conflict peace process.

15-15:30- tea/coffee break

**15:30-17:00- Discussion panel 3- *Visual Journalism's Role in Witnessing and Reconciliation in Bosnia***

**Opened by: Paul Lowe and Ziyah Gafic**

**Moderator: David Campbell**

Photographic coverage of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the series of conflicts that ensued marks a key phase in the development of the 'journalism of attachment'. Photographers were indirect and direct witnesses to atrocity, and various parties in the conflict used their images in journalistic, propagandistic and legalistic contexts. This raises important ethical questions about the role of the photojournalist; are they news gatherer, news interpreter, human rights advocate or a combination of all of these? Because of their long-term nature, the Balkan wars also raised serious questions in the minds of many practitioners about the efficacy of the visual. This panel will also consider recent visual work examining Bosnia as a transitional, post-conflict society.

**Wednesday, 4 May 2011**

9:30-10:00- tea/coffee, arrival

**10:00-12:00- Discussion panel 4- *War in Iraq and Afghanistan: Affects/Effects Inside the American 'Home front' and Beyond***

**Opened by: Robert Hariman, Ashley Gilbertson and Edmund Clark**

**Moderator: Liam Kennedy**

What can visual journalism tell us about the war on terror and its pervasive effects in America and far beyond? Much work has focused on the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, but approaches have been varied and have also investigated the war on terror's impact on domestic American culture and conceptions of 'homeland' and 'outside'. This panel will explore visual themes in Western media representation of the war on terror. Ashley Gilbertson will outline some of his work documenting the 'Bedrooms of the Fallen' and earlier photography from Iraq, 'Whiskey Tango Foxtrot'. Edmund Clark's work takes the viewer beyond the dehumanised stereotypes of Guantanamo and

the 'War on Terror' into the experience of men, such as Omar Deghayes, released without charge after years of incarceration, as well as the American community living on the U.S. military's oldest overseas naval base. His 'Letters To Omar' series provides insight into the American experience of Guantanamo as well as raising some interesting questions about the future of documentary imagery, not just photography.

12:00-13:30- lunch

13:30-15:30- **Discussion panel 5- *Distribution & Display: Curating the Visual On and Offline***

**Opened by: Susie Linfield, Julian Stallabrass and Bernadette Buckley**

**Moderator: Debbie Lisle**

This panel will consider the politics and possibilities of new forms and new modes of distributing visual media, including Flickr and the blogosphere. Susie Linfield's talk will critically evaluate the political and cultural significance of the deluge of new online-distributed images (digital photography, Facebook, citizen journalism, etc.) during recent uprisings in the Middle East. A comparison will be developed between these events and key historical writings by the Frankfurt School, which considered and questioned the rise of new media forms in the 1920s-30s during the emergence of fascist regimes.

Bernadette Buckley's contribution will consider the Open Shutters Iraq photo project. These images, taken by 'non-professional' photographers, are routinely described as 'touching' or 'intimate'. Her interest, however, is in their political potential, which is rarely commented upon. Buckley will argue that these images bear testimony to what remains of a post occupation (and therefore post-mediatised) Iraq.

15:30-16:00- tea/coffee break

16:00-17:00- **WPP 2010, final roundtable-** An open discussion of this year's winners, the overall direction of this competition and major themes such as coverage of the Haitian earthquake and drug wars in Mexico, Michael Wolf's Google Street View project etc.

17:30- wine reception at Clinton Institute building. End of seminar, meet and greet with group leaders for beginning of workshops