Wodiczko's Veterans; Artist, Institution, and Audience in Out of Here; The Veterans Project

Blake J. Ruerwein
CUNY City College

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!
Follow this and additional works at: http://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses
Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recommended Citation
Ruerwein, Blake J., "Wodiczko's Veterans; Artist, Institution, and Audience in Out of Here; The Veterans Project" (2012). CUNY Academic Works.
http://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_etds_theses/138

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the City College of New York at CUNY Academic Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of CUNY Academic Works. For more information, please contact AcademicWorks@cuny.edu.
Wodiczko’s Veterans:  
Artist, Institution, and Audience in *Out of Here: The Veterans Project*

By Blake J. Ruehrwein

Under the Advisement of Professor Lise Kjaer

December 10, 2012

“Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts of the City College of the City University of New York.”
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1
  Historical Precedents: Art and War ................................................................................. 2
  Literature ......................................................................................................................... 8
  Contribution ...................................................................................................................... 11
  Wodiczko’s Biography: The Importance of One’s Heritage ...................................... 12
  Wodiczko’s Biography: The Cold War ........................................................................ 15
  Wodiczko’s Biography: His Artistic Development ...................................................... 16
  Wodiczko and His Contemporaries Address the Iraq War ......................................... 20
  *Out of Here: Iterations, Alterations, and Implications* ............................................ 22

CHAPTER ONE. ARTIST AND ARTWORK ................................................................. 27
  Visual Analysis ............................................................................................................... 28
  The Dark Emptiness ..................................................................................................... 32
  Narrative and Sound .................................................................................................... 36
  Inside and Outside: The Window ................................................................................ 37
  Wodiczko and Memorial ............................................................................................... 38
  Out-of-Reach Protagonist ............................................................................................ 40
  Wodiczko as Veteran and Jew ...................................................................................... 42
  Origins and Intentions of *Out of Here* ..................................................................... 45

CHAPTER TWO. COLLABORATION-ARTIST, VETERANS, INSTITUTION ....... 50
  The ICA’s Invitation ....................................................................................................... 51
  Wodiczko’s Collaborative Working Method ............................................................... 54
  Wodiczko’s Veteran Consultants ................................................................................ 59
  Michael Anthony ........................................................................................................... 60
  Tala Khudairi ................................................................................................................ 65
  Alex Hill ........................................................................................................................ 66
  James O’Neill ................................................................................................................. 67
  Museum Events ............................................................................................................. 69

CHAPTER THREE. AUDIENCE RESPONSES ....................................................... 73
  Media and Critical Response ......................................................................................... 74
  Non-Veterans and General Population Exhibition Visitors (a small portion of which may include veterans) ............................................................... 79
  ChangChia Liu .............................................................................................................. 80
  Emily Thurston ............................................................................................................ 81
  Amber Bybee ................................................................................................................ 82
  Eirini Louis ................................................................................................................... 83
  Veterans Respond ......................................................................................................... 84
  Steven Conde ................................................................................................................ 85
  Stanley Ko ...................................................................................................................... 86
  Bradley McNamara ....................................................................................................... 89
  Wodiczko’s Consultants Respond ............................................................................... 91
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tala Khudairi</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Hill</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James O’Neill</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Anthony</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CONCLUSION........................................................................................................96
Exposure Therapy..................................................................................................98
Wodiczko as Clinician..............................................................................................100

Figures..................................................................................................................103

Appendix..................................................................................................................122

Bibliography...........................................................................................................123
Introduction

In 2009, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston (ICA) exhibited ...Out of Here: The Veterans Project by the artist Krzysztof Wodiczko (b. 1943) (fig. 1). The multimedia installation, which ran from November 4, 2009, to March 28, 2010, filled a dark and empty museum gallery with recorded voices and explosions, along with flashes of light, simulating the experience of a mortar attack. On three walls of the gallery, projectors cast two horizontal rows of windows, creating the illusion that viewers were inside a darkened warehouse (figs. 2 and 3). The eight-minute audio track started with the bustle of traffic and citizens in an Iraqi city, brought in children’s laughter, and subtly overlapped an excerpt from an Al Jazeera broadcast of President Obama speaking about the war in Iraq. Listeners also noted an Islamic call to prayer, forebodingly drowned out by the approach of a helicopter. Without much warning, soldiers began yelling and shooting. When the gunfire ceased, a mother was heard wailing, and the episode ended in ominous silence (voices recorded for Out of Here belonged to a mixture of Iraqi-Americans, United States soldiers, and actors). A second iteration of Out of Here was presented at Galerie Lelong in New York in February of 2011.

Incorporating twenty-first century technology, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as a backdrop, and the testimonies of witnesses, Wodiczko worked with Americans and Iraqis to create an immersive experience that was informed by multiple perspectives. Out of Here encourages discussion of new perceptions of war within a global culture, and the artwork takes a fresh look at new uses of technology in postmodern artistic practices. Wodiczko’s reputation was mainly
built from his large-scale, outdoor, public projects that center on themes of individual trauma and collective memory. His socio-political theories and practices require analyses that are similar in methodology. This analysis studies the origins of Out of Here, the role of the ICA, viewer responses, and the collaboration among Wodiczko and his team of American soldiers and Iraqi consultants. In the process, this study will look at the progression of Wodiczko’s opus that led to Out of Here, and contribute to a more holistic understanding of this well-known, yet only partially understood figure. This thesis will provide personal interviews of soldiers and civilians sharing the challenges that they have faced because of their involvement in combat. Finally, it will also uncover an array of repercussions that war has on those who fight in it, live through it, and are affected by it. Equally as important, war’s impact on men, women, and children, which is more relatable to wider audiences, will be discussed.

**Historical Precedents: Art and War**

Within the history of art, the subject of war is not new, and the aftermath, both personal and cultural, has been depicted often enough. Artists, like many others throughout history, have often felt conflict between their own personal codes and the moralities of their cultures-at-large. The expressions of these struggles have become some of the most notable and transcendent artworks of each generation. Around the end of the eighteenth century the industrial revolution, age of enlightenment, and other precursors to Modernism were firmly
in place and poised to create the avalanche of changes that would hasten in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

One artist exemplary of the transition from the old world of empire and convention to the new order of democracy and social consciousness in art is Francisco Goya (1746-1828). Burdened from the inside by a cynical imagination made even more audible by an illness that left him deaf at age 47, and from the outside by French troops occupying his homeland and oppressing his fellow Spaniards, Goya expunged this chaos into paintings and etchings.¹ One of his seminal masterpieces, *The Third of May, 1808* (1814), characterizes attacks by Napoleon’s army on the unarmed Spanish people during the Peninsular War (fig. 4). The martyred citizens in *The Third of May* invoked patriotism in a Spain that had been, and would continue to be politically divided and unorganized for years to come. *The Third of May* served as a launching pad for artists, such as Edouard Manet (*Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, 1868-1869) and Pablo Picasso (*Massacre in Korea*, 1951), to make statements about wars in their own times and places (figs. 5 and 6).² Like *Out of Here*, Goya’s oil painting highlights the injustice of innocent civilian deaths. Similarly, both artworks were produced in countries marked by disunity from war, and both Goya and Wodiczko created the works in response to these settings.

Goya’s *Third of May* is generally regarded as a condemnation of violence, whereas the Italian Futurist movement was often perceived as allied with war. Ranging from about 1909 to the end of the First World War, artists such as Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), Umberto Boccioni (1882-1916), and Giacomo Balla (1871-1958) turned their backs on history and tradition to embrace the industry, speed, and ferocity of the early twentieth century. Marinetti, Boccioni, and others lived by their beliefs and served in the Italian military during wartime.3 Their artistic production sought to overshadow the relics of the past, imbue new art with movement and vigor, while promoting a forward-looking vision for humanity based on industry and aggression (fig. 7).

An alternative outcome to the turbulence of the world wars was Dadaism. The art movement, which began in Switzerland around 1915, was, like Futurism, a revolt against tradition. However, Dada artists wielded random chance and anti-rational, or nonsense tendencies as tools to convey their disgust with the conventions of both art and politics that seemed to endorse the brutalities of war. The painter and sculptor Hans Arp (1886-1966), poet Hugo Ball (1886-1927), and writer Tristan Tzara (1896-1963) were instrumental in founding Dadaism, which soon spread to Germany, propagated by Raoul Hausmann (1886-1971) and George Grosz (1893-1959), and was also manifested in the United States under Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968) and Man Ray (1890-1976).4 Less cohesive yet more widespread than Futurism, most artists operating within the realm of Dadaist

---


4 The Oxford Dictionary of Art, 147.
ideals sought to champion artistic creation rather than enmity and fighting (fig. 8).^5

Working from of an aversion to war based on personal experience, Otto Dix (1891-1969) chronicled the morbid tragedies of World War I. *Der Krieg* or *The War* (1924) is a set of 51 etchings incorporating a variety of techniques, such as drypoint and aquatint (figs. 9 and 10). Dix’s graphic series was influenced by Goya’s 82 etchings, *The Disasters of War* (executed 1810-1814, published 1863) (fig. 11). Dix’s *War* etchings, though closer in style to Goya than the Futurists or Dadaists, are also comprised of an exaggerated or sensationalized horror more akin to Hollywood special effects. The ambiance of theatricality in *The War* series is something that links it to *Out of Here* as Wodiczko’s installation actually employed a special effects crew with the artist acting as the director.^6

As Goya, Dix, and Wodiczko have shown, warfare inevitably finds its way into individual and cultural expressions. However, artistic responses to such conflicts diverge wildly from generation to generation. During World War II, the American public felt the measures of austerity from the rationing of steel, butter, and sugar, and women going en masse to work in the factories for the first time.^7

As American hegemony asserted itself in the art world, a period ironically referred to as postwar, technology and consumerism were directing the way people received and disseminated information. The postwar industrial boom put a television in most homes and handheld cameras allowed the media to report from

^5 Ibid.
^6 Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
almost anywhere. During the international incident in Vietnam, generally
delineated as 1954-1975, three signs differentiated this new conflict from
previous ones.

First, a draft was instituted on December 1, 1969. Any given son, brother,
or sweetheart was snatched away to the battlefields in Southeast Asia, or they
became draft-dodgers, leading to prison or exile. A second sign of the war was
that the streets filled with protesters. In 1969, large groups of people born at the
beginning and middle of the baby boom generation were turning 18 and 21. This
spurt in the population meant a flood of young people protesting in the streets and
around every corner. The third reason the Vietnam War was able to stir such
controversy was television. The onslaught and ubiquity of media seemed to fuel
the passions of demonstrators and ignite further tensions. For instance, Associated
Press photographer Eddy Adams won a Pulitzer Prize for his image, *Execution of
a Viet Cong Guerilla, 1968* (fig. 12). The well-known and chilling photograph
of the South Vietnamese National Police Chief, Nguyen Ngoc Loan, executing a
North Vietnamese guerilla was pivotal in analyses of the media’s impact on
American culture. While they enjoyed considerable freedom in and during
Vietnam, the media had those liberties curtailed afterwards.

---

9 Robert K. Brigham, “Battlefield Vietnam: A Brief History,” Public Broadcasting Service,
The impact on American culture from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is different from past conflicts in several key ways. Though 2008 saw the precipitation of a dramatic economic recession, the rationing of World War II was nowhere on the radar. There was no draft stealing away loved ones. Similar to the Vietnam War (but unlike the world wars), support and opposition to the Iraq War has shown a population divided on the issue. Contrary to the conflict in Vietnam, extensive resistance to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, although they are the longest in United States history, has not precluded the public from supporting veterans at home. Many non-profit organizations have sought to provide outlets for soldiers to address their political, emotional, and social needs, such as Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and the Wounded Warriors Project.\(^\text{12}\)

While television brought the Vietnam War into the homes of millions of Americans, the Internet has disseminated information on the Iraq War in some entirely new ways. The free-for-all given to the media during the Vietnam era, exemplified by Eddy Adams’s execution photograph, was soon after restricted, and access granted to the press has been monitored closely ever since. These efforts at censorship are counteracted by innovations made in technology, namely global communication, instant messaging, and real-time data sharing, chiefly through the Internet. These developments (for example, camera phones, WikiLeaks) are often how stories emerge and world-wide audiences are made aware of incidents such as torture of detainees in Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. Perhaps inspired by these cases, the artist utilizes the latest advances in

projection and digital recording to give people a safe forum to speak out against their oppressors. In fact, Wodiczko’s niche in literature, art history, and politics is underscored by his use of technology and focus on current events.

**Literature**

Most studies of Wodiczko’s art center on his outdoor public projections, for which he is best known and has produced numerous examples. Among these materials, one of the most helpful has been the Public Broadcasting Service’s (PBS) television series, *Art21*, which includes an episode on Wodiczko, with accompanying video clips and articles found on their website. These interviews and essays provide Wodiczko’s own words, and give context to the artist’s work as it regards architecture, memorialization, power systems, and more, all of which are useful in understanding *Out of Here*.

For decades critics and historians have been tying Wodiczko’s artworks to themes of memorial and design innovation. In 1986 the artist and some of the foremost art historians of the era recorded an exchange among themselves in the *October* article, “A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko.” 15

---


dialogue between Douglas Crimp, Rosalyn Deutsche, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, and the artist illuminates, among other topics, Wodiczko’s endeavors regarding the bureaucracy of public art, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of making political statements in these arenas. Though narrowly focused on these themes, the article paved the way to explore further analyses of Wodiczko’s work around the same issues.

Another crucial source was the catalog for Wodiczko’s exhibition at the Polish Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2009, whose main author and editor was Ewa Lajer-Burcharth. The catalogue, *Krzysztof Wodiczko: Guests*, compiled an overview of the artist’s career, included reviews contemporary with each work, and brief, yet poignant statements by the editor.\(^\text{16}\) In this book, particularly with the title work, *Guests*, and throughout extant literature, there is a plethora of scholarship by critics on the elements of trauma, injustice, and memorial related to Wodiczko’s work.\(^\text{17}\) However, *Krzysztof Wodiczko: Guests*, and most other publications, fails to consider the artist’s goal to help veterans from the Iraq War address their experiences. As a result, the amount of attention from critics, curators, and historians given to artistic responses to the Iraq War is insufficient. Could the absence of these critiques be the result of overzealous censorship of the media by the powers in Washington D.C.? Nonetheless, such gaps in recent


criticism provide opportunities for studies such as this one to expand current knowledge of artistic and cultural reactions to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the process of creating Out of Here, Wodiczko opted to expand the dictionary definition of veteran. Traditionally, the term is described as “a person who has served in a military force.” Wodiczko has redefined veteran to include anyone who has lived in an area where war was fought at the time they lived there, for example, residents of Iraq from 2003-2011, or residents of Germany, England, France, etc. during World War II. The Iraqi-born civilians (veterans, by the artist’s definition) who contributed to Out of Here, including the woman who lent her voice to the audio track, offered a perspective altogether different from those of the American military who had been in Iraq. This careful manipulation of the term foreshadows the artist’s choice to insert his own thoughts in Out of Here, in addition to culling the testimonies of soldiers and Iraqis. Wodiczko is not merely working with veterans; he is one. Having lived through World War II in Poland and served in the Polish military during the cold war, the artist fulfills both old and new definitions of the word veteran. By peering closely at the artist’s life, readers will notice the connections between the challenges Wodiczko met, and the challenges that face veterans today. Wodiczko listened to the stories these soldiers and civilians shared with him and shaped them into a single episode. Collectively, these narratives paint a picture of the individual veterans who told them, the larger picture of the Iraq War, and the more subtle clues to the war’s repercussions.

**Contribution**

This thesis will examine *Out of Here* through firsthand experience of the exhibition; interviews with the artist, the curator, Randi Hopkins, American soldiers and civilians; and Iraqis; as well as reviews, articles, television and radio segments, and more. Original surveys created by the author were given to soldiers and civilians who saw *Out of Here*, those born in the United States and those born in the Middle East, of varying races, genders, backgrounds, and ages. They were people who fit the classical definition of veteran—soldiers—and Wodiczko’s revised definition—civilians who have survived war, or in this case, Iraqi citizens.

In light of each other, their responses provide a range of opinions on *Out of Here*, yet also indicate a positive reception by most people surveyed (see Appendix). This response was not because these exhibition visitors were necessarily pro-war, but because they wanted to understand the installation.

An analysis of the responses to Wodiczko’s exhibition by veterans, critics, and curators will add to the data collected and demonstrate how the work is read by different social groups, with various socio-economic and spiritual backgrounds. Wodiczko’s methods of gaining his participants’ trust and sharing in small groups lead to a discussion of therapeutic methods, such as Exposure Therapy. Furthermore, Wodiczko’s role in the equation was one of intermediary. He facilitated a moment where communication flowed from those initiated in war to those inoculated from it. Among the veterans and civilians who have been in war zones with whom Wodiczko consulted to create *Out of Here*, the majority felt misunderstood by those who have not been in combat scenarios. Having been in
the military, Wodiczko could connect with soldiers. As someone who survived World War II, he could connect with Iraqis who have lived through wars fought in their country. It was these shared pasts that allowed Wodiczko to engage with his consultants and create a work that spoke to larger audiences.

**Wodiczko’s Biography: The Importance of One’s Heritage**

From his birth amid a violent uprising in Poland during World War II, to his mandatory service in the communist Polish military, and immigration to North America, Wodiczko seeks out kindred spirits, the traumatized people of the world. His sensitivity to the afflictions of others was likely birthed out of such circumstances; however, he rarely discusses his background, and even disavows these connections. In fact, he has stated:

> I don't like to explain my own work in terms of my biography and geography and historical context...because I don't want people to delegate...responsibility for more risky and ambitious work only to those who went through some hell or turmoil in the early part of their lives. But it is important to mention who I am...My mother being a Jew who survived the war, whose entire family was killed during the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and who gave birth to me in the midst of all this. I would not like to think that one must go through the horrors of war or have heroic parents to create something that makes a difference, goes against the grain, or has a larger social and ethical ambition.¹⁹

Although Wodiczko claims that his biography is not an important component in his work, his life experiences are clearly essential in understanding and interpreting his oeuvre. Furthermore, his artworks are about people’s biographies. He asks the participants of his projects to recall their own pasts: to speak about

their situations and their experiences, explaining how their stories have affected them. The artist seeks to communicate his belief that one need not undergo extreme anguish to create transcendent expressions, yet at the same time, he emphasizes that true sympathy, feeling the same thing as someone else, is nearly impossible. The more appropriate response would be empathy, a vicarious or imaginative experience of the feelings of another. Sympathy or empathy: from which response does Wodiczko operate? The answer is most likely a mixture, situational and informed by the elements of his story.

Wodiczko was born on April 16, three days before the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began in 1943. By the end of this significant and heroic act of resistance by the Jews, which lasted only one month, seven thousand Jews were killed and another seven thousand deported to the extermination camp at Treblinka. Being Jewish, his mother’s family was killed, yet she, her husband, and her son endured. The artist’s mother, Irena Wodiczko, was a pianist and a botanist, and had experience in the television, music, and theatre industries. Despite these notable achievements, it was her Jewish heritage that made her and her family the targets of Nazis during World War II. Wodiczko remembered, “The first few years of my life we were hiding.” To survive, Wodiczko and his family needed to keep a low profile. As a target in his own homeland, the artist was an outsider from the day he was born.

21 Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
22 Ibid.
On his father’s side, Wodiczko is the son of the acclaimed symphony conductor Bohdan (sometimes spelled Bogdan) Wodiczko (1911-1985). The artist’s father earned a living during World War II by playing in the orchestra of a Warsaw night club. After the war, Bohdan went on to become a conductor for the Warsaw Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. Classical music directors in Poland will proudly acknowledge professional connections with him to this day.\(^\text{23}\) Throughout his long career as an artistic director of symphonies in Reykjavik, Warsaw, Krakow, and other cities, the elder Wodiczko also initiated symphony radio programming and directed the Polish National Opera.\(^\text{24}\) Although his lineage derived from protestant Czechs, Bohdan had no personal religious affiliations.\(^\text{25}\) His social connections and heritage were most likely crucial factors in his family’s survival. Both parents came from backgrounds of social connections, education, and professions, yet since his mother was targeted by the Nazis, Wodiczko as half-Jewish, and Bohdan, as a spouse, were targets too. As Wodiczko and his family came out of the rigors of World War II, the geo-political aftermath gave way to a cold war with a new set of challenges, as well as opportunities.


**Wodiczko’s Biography: The Cold War**

The late-adolescent and young adult periods are often the most formative years in a person’s sense of self. As World War II gave way to the cold war in Poland, Wodiczko faced mandatory service in the armed forces. Wodiczko spent those unforgettable years in a young man’s life, then the early 1960s, in the military of a Soviet-governed communist Poland. In fact, the artist was told in 1962 that his unit would be shipping out the following day to support missiles in Siberia. But Wodiczko’s unit was never deployed. Saved from the duty of potentially launching weapons that would have ended thousands of lives, he admitted “I was lucky...We were all lucky.”

This event was a side note in what came to be known in the United States as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Interpreted through the lens of this history, Wodiczko’s art appears to carry a burden of civic duty. The artist construes his role as a call to minister to

---


27 Another way of looking at political influences on Wodiczko and his art is the significance attached to the Zacheta National Gallery of Art. The Zacheta has served as an important platform for the arts in Wodiczko’s hometown of Warsaw. Since as early as 1995 with the exhibition *Where is Abal, thy Brother?* the institution has been a patron for some of the artist’s best known works (other examples include *Projection on the Façade of the Zacheta National Gallery of Art*, 2005, and the museum was the commissioning body responsible for Wodiczko’s appointment to represent Poland in the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009). The museum has also hosted events of significance to the nation. On December 16, 1922, Eligiusz Niewiadomski, a relatively known painter and art critic in Poland with ties to the conservative political party, assassinated the first democratically elected president of Poland, Gabriel Narutowicz. What makes the story even more interesting is that the assassination occurred in the Zacheta National Gallery. An article in *ArtForum* from 2006 states that, “Wodiczko considers this event a significant moment not only for the history of the gallery...but also for that of the nation.” Perhaps it was an impactful event for the artist as well. Marek Bartelik “Krzysztof Wodiczko: Zacheta National Gallery of Art,” *ArtForum*, FindArticles.com, 12 February, 2011, [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_9_44/ai_n26865828/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_9_44/ai_n26865828/) (accessed February 12, 2011).

28 Turkish online art forum m-esf published an interview in March 2011 between Wodiczko and Burcu Yancatarol, professor of Industrial Design at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. Speaking of both the aspects of design in his art and the necessity, or duty, of the civic nature of art in addressing trauma, Wodiczko explained, “We work with the hope that there will be no need for
victims, such as those of Hiroshima, homelessness, or the Iraq War. Wodiczko’s work with veterans grew out of his previous interactions with homeless men, a large percentage of that population being veterans. Looking at these clues, it is easier to see how events in Wodiczko’s early life left impressions on him that remain present in the consciousness of his work overall.

**Wodiczko’s Biography: His Artistic Development**

Not every artwork in Wodiczko’s output is autobiographical, but his oeuvre as a whole can be looked at in that way. Wodiczko is better known as a veteran in the art world than a veteran in the military. His lengthy career began in the sixties while studying in the Department of Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw. In 1968 he earned an M.F.A. degree in Industrial Design, and by 1970 the artist was collaborating with the Polish Radio Experimental Studio on sound and performance installations. His education led him into electrical engineering and monument design, eventually becoming a lecturer on this kind of design.” The artist clarifies using the metaphor of a bandage: “Of course we should not have wounds. So there should not be a bandage. Unfortunately there are accidents, bad conditions and that means that we need the bandage. What if that bandage could also be capable of transmitting some truth of the conditions under which the wound occurs, of testifying to the wrong and unacceptable situations and conditions behind this wound? Then, we will not be simply crying and having an empathy with somebody wounded, but will also learn something about the things that should change. Maybe the wounded person could also even speak through this bandage. It’s amazing how much people could learn if they could see the world from the point of view of the wound.” Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by Burcu Yancatarol, m-est, entry posted on March 4, 2011, http://m-est.org/2011/03/04/burcu-yancatarol-interviews-krzysztof-wodiczko/ (accessed April 4, 2011). The metaphor of the bandage and Wodiczko’s wish that it was not needed parallels the lyrics of “Man in Black” by Johnny Cash: “I wear the black for the poor and the beaten down/Livin’ in the hopeless, hungry side of town/I wear it for the prisoner who has long paid for his crime/But is there because he’s a victim of the times. Ah, I’d love to wear a rainbow every day/And tell the world that everything’s okay/But I’ll try to carry off a little darkness on my back/Till things are brighter, I’m the Man in Black.” Johnny Cash, “Man in Black,” LP, Columbia Records, February 1971. Incidentally, Wodiczko is almost always found garbed entirely in black in public settings.
these subjects at his alma mater. Within ten years he immigrated to Canada, where he taught at various eastern Canadian universities. After Canada he immigrated to the United States and currently lives between Boston and New York.

Wodiczko’s earlier work is more demonstrative of his design background, yet his outdoor slide and video projections are what he is best known for. One example of the former is *Homeless Vehicle* (1988-89), where the artist created a multipurpose home/storage container/vehicle for the homeless of New York City (fig. 13). Of his projections, in *Bunker Hill Projection* (1998) Wodiczko gathered stories from mothers of the nearby neighborhood and projected their faces onto the Boston monument as sound equipment blasted their tragedies of murdered sons and uncaught killers (fig. 14).  

Wodiczko’s artwork is typically tied to a specific location, as is *Bunker Hill Projection*, but *Out of Here* is less so. In the past, his projections have sought to uncover the abuses of people who have lacked proper advocacy or institutionalized power. For example, in 1985, during apartheid, he projected a swastika on the South African embassy in London to point out racial discrimination in the African country, and the disregard of this atrocity by the British government. Another example from the same year is Wodiczko’s projection of missiles on the arches of Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn, New York.

---

29 *Bunker Hill* was commissioned from Wodiczko by the ICA as part of an exhibition entitled *Let Freedom Ring* in the museum’s public art program *Vita Brevis*. For more on *Vita Brevis* and the connection between *Bunker Hill* and *Out of Here*, see Chapter 2 which examines the role of the ICA in the present discussion.
while the cold war was underway (see figs. 15 and 16). The latter work, instead of calling attention to the oppression of a people, referred to government spending and foreign diplomacy. These two works took place outdoors, where the architecture and setting informed not only the reading of the work, but its appearance. *Out of Here* is set indoors, where the blank museum walls provide a neutral space to view the artwork, which opens interpretations up to a wider context.

Wodiczko’s choice of topics over the years can help observers understand the artist. His concentration on immigrants (*Border Projection*, 1988, *Alien Staff*, 1992, and *Guests*, 2009) points to the artist’s own status as immigrant in Canada first, then the United States. Many works in his oeuvre highlight his skills in fabrication and invention (in particular *Homeless Vehicle*, 1988-89, *Poliscar*, 1991, and *Dis-armor*, 1999) and suggest his past designing industrial equipment in Poland. Wodiczko can also be viewed as a survivor. Speaking of an official record he received that labeled him as a child of the holocaust, Wodiczko said,  

---

30 In 1985 Wodiczko was creating his *Nelson’s Column Projection* in London, which was an image of a ballistic missile wrapped in barbed wire projected on the Nelson’s Column Memorial in Trafalgar Square. At that time, South African officials were in London lobbying parliament for support, while much of the world criticized the South African government for the human rights violations under the apartheid system. Seeing an opportunity that might never present itself again, he rotated his projector about 90 degrees, swapped the missile for a swastika, and unleashed what may be his most memorable and caustic projection to date. The police halted the activity two hours later, describing it as a public nuisance. Crimp, Deutsch, Lajer-Burchardh, Wodiczko, “A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko,” 46-50. Under Wodiczko’s transformation, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial at Grand Army Plaza is no longer a reminder of the valor of Union soldiers during the Civil War, or a testament to the development of a great nation, but a co-conspirator in the perpetuation of war and a witness to the corruption of ideals, in the mind of the artist, which leads to war and all its abominations. In so doing, the aim of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch in Brooklyn, “memorializing the Union dead,” took on greater significance as through Wodiczko’s projections, it expanded to memorialize the casualties (be they human or idealistic) of the Cold War and all wars fought by the sons and daughters of its host country. Visit the Park, “Grand Army Plaza,” Prospect Park Alliance, [http://www.prospectpark.org/visit/history/historic_places/h_gap](http://www.prospectpark.org/visit/history/historic_places/h_gap) (accessed March 11, 2011).
“They label me. I didn’t ask for it… I even lost this document they sent me. I don’t want to keep it. But the fact is there must be something to it. It’s not just a paper. If affects me…”31 How does it affect Wodiczko? Perhaps through his work, he is drawn to, and seeks the comfort of others who have gone through similar trials.

These roles in Wodiczko’s life are significant pieces of the puzzle that make up the artist; however, this thesis adds a crucial element that is mostly missing: Wodiczko as a veteran. One can trace the evolution of his work from the homeless population, to those who have experienced violence, to his work with immigrants, to his most recent subject, veterans. If the artist has taken the labels in his life (survivor, designer, immigrant) and explored them through his work, it follows that he would eventually work his way to the role of veteran.

-Out of Here is different from the artist’s past projects with veterans, and is therefore open to more personal interpretations than Wodiczko’s previous work.32 It is not a direct projection of a soldier’s story, but paraphrasings of testimonies that are presented by Wodiczko. With Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver in 2008, the artist projected the words and audio recordings of United States soldiers relating war time experiences from the American military vehicle used in combat, the Humvee (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle). One year later in

31 Wodiczko, interview.
32 As Wodiczko seems to operate exclusively in the realm of trauma, where there is hurt there is often blame. This is the case in at least two other works, namely Tijuana Projection (2001) and Projection on the Façade of the Začheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw (2005). Tijuana Projection consisted of women who had experienced some form of injustice or abuse, be it sexual, economic or other, that gave testimony through the projection of their faces and stories in front of thousands of people at the Centro Cultural in Tijuana. In the Začheta Projection, full-length videos of women were cast onto the pilasters of the museum as their voices addressed personal occasions or laws of inequality to specific politicians. Whether an accusation is direct or ambiguous, the fact that someone somewhere may be to blame heightens the specificity – perhaps even someone-specificity, in Wodiczko’s work. The notion of someone-specificity implies that an artwork has particular meaning, based on common knowledge, shared culture or experiences, to certain individuals or people groups wherever they can be found on the globe.
Liverpool, England, the artist exhibited *War Veteran Vehicle*, projecting the accounts of British soldiers from a Land Rover, the English military vehicle of choice. A third iteration in Warsaw, *Projection of War Veterans*, 2010, was created out of the Polish vehicle used in Iraq and Afghanistan operations, the Honker Skorpion 3 (figs. 17, 18, and 19). As Wodiczko took the work to different sites, he modified the work to be as relevant as possible to the people that would see it.

**Wodiczko and His Contemporaries Address the Iraq War**

With *Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver*, 2008, Wodiczko joined the growing number among his contemporaries who had begun making work relating to the Iraq War. In 2003, the year of the American invasion into Iraq, Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn (b. 1957) created the installation *Drift Topography* at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York. In the work, slightly larger than life-size cardboard cutouts of soldiers fenced in a landscape of books and ephemera covered in bright signs, papers, and packing tape (figs. 20 and 21). The menace of the soldiers is alluded to by the giant, foil mushrooms evoking nuclear disaster. The scene seems to point one finger at advertising, blaming the hyperreal world of reproducible imagery for watered down versions of reality, and another at the materialism of the developed world. As opposed to stepping into the experience of *Out of Here*, Hirschhorn’s work is a microcosm unto itself. The backs of the soldiers in *Drift Topography* completely hem in the work and partially block an

---

observer’s view from every side. This exclusion suggests that war is an insular experience, whereas *Out of Here* admits multiple people at once and requires them to endure the installation together.

In 2009, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York hosted an exhibition of Jenny Holzer’s work titled *Protect, Protect*, which contained several works about the Iraq War. For example, her *Redaction Paintings* (2005-2009) are composed of silk-screen enlargements on canvas of declassified government documents pertaining to the war in Iraq (fig. 22). The unseen hand of a nameless bureaucracy blots out information, but what draws viewers in is what is left behind; true, yet partial stories from the war. Holzer employs these official documents and individual dramas to criticize the censorship and violence enacted by systems in power. Her *Redaction Paintings*, like *Out of Here*, are faceless, yet highly personal.

The content of the documents in the *Redaction Paintings* series is part of a chain of evidence passed along from the artist to viewers. In contrast, *Out of Here* gives a picture of the war that reading about it never could. The only ones who could create an experience that mirrored life on the front lines were people who were there, the soldiers and civilians. In *Out of Here*, three soldiers and an Iraqi, now living in the United States, communicated information that only they could give, while civilians listened to what they had to say.
Out of Here: Iterations, Alterations and Implications

This thesis provides the reader with the history of ...Out of Here: The Veterans Project, and explores the dialogue that emerged between the artist, the institution, his consultants, and the community. Chapter One examines the visual and audio components of Out of Here. Symbolism is broken down, such as light and flame, to reveal how Wodiczko went about achieving his goals for the work. Chapter Two details the origin of the work, highlighting the role of the ICA. Interviews with museum personnel and veteran consultants show the extent of collaboration involved in Out of Here. Finally, Chapter Three looks at the media and critical responses to Out of Here, as well as the answers to the questionnaire created by the author.

As an exhibition, Out of Here was more than a single installation at the ICA. When it traveled from the ICA in Boston to Galerie Lelong in New York, the accompanying works on display differed and the video/audio loop was altered. In the entryway to the ICA’s gallery, television monitors displayed clips of three corollary Wodiczko works, Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver, 2008, War Veteran Vehicle (Liverpool), 2009 and Veterans’ Flame (Governor’s Island, NY), 2009 (fig. 23). These artworks were reduced from experiential installations to 2-dimensional pictures with headphones. Though viewers lost the opportunity to experience these two works, they were able to watch and listen to Wodiczko’s other works with American soldiers.

When Out of Here appeared in February 2011 at Galerie Lelong, a prominent dealer and supporter of Wodiczko’s art since 1996, the smaller gallery
space included *Veterans’ Flame*, but neither of the other two works. Another change to the artwork was in the audio track. At the ICA, *Out of Here* contained a short excerpt from a speech by President Obama about the perseverance required to accomplish the mission in Iraq.\(^{34}\) In Galerie Lelong’s version, one year later, an excerpt from a different speech by the President mentioned the end of the war and the gradual withdrawal of troops.\(^{35}\) In both versions the speech lasted only a few seconds, and before the meaning of the words sank in, President Obama’s audible cameo was completely overshadowed by the sequence of events. Speaking on the changes, the artist commented, “It made the work more up to date…but the irony is that this project didn’t have to change much.”\(^{36}\) Wodiczko cited the locations, Boston and New York, as sufficient to garner different readings of the work. “The works in Boston and New York have different publics. New York’s character and the [art] shows gave *Out of Here* a big international audience as opposed to the more local audience in Boston.”\(^{37}\) While New York’s population is more diverse, the ICA is a larger institution than Galerie Lelong, with wider reaches into the community.

Data collection for this study was mindful of both breadth and depth. Both iterations of *Out of Here* are included in this analysis. None of the four veterans with whom Wodiczko collaborated to create *Out of Here* saw the work in New York, so their comments are joined mainly to the Boston iteration. Interviews conducted by the author were collected from people who saw the work in both

\(^{34}\) Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
\(^{35}\) Ibid.
\(^{36}\) Ibid.
\(^{37}\) Ibid.
New York and Boston. Of the American military veterans interviewed by the author who gave responses to *Out of Here*, all viewed the New York version and come from a student-based club for veterans of the armed services, City College Veterans Association at the City College of New York. Care was taken to select soldiers who had experienced combat, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as soldiers who had not seen combat. Among the larger pool of those surveyed by the author, women were interviewed as well as men. One interviewee served in the military in his native Taiwan and did not experience combat. Another interviewee was born and raised in the Middle East, in Egypt, and now lives in the United States. Altogether, there are seven interviewees, in addition to the four consultants Wodiczko worked with; three veterans of the United States military, and one Iraqi-born woman currently living in the United States. Together they represent soldiers and civilians, men and women, Americans and Iraqis. Despite their differences, each person seemed to read the artist as someone who cared about Americans and Iraqis, though they had various interpretations of Wodiczko’s opinion about war.

Wodiczko was born in a time and place defined by conflict, gruesome in its scope, and has in one sense, regarding the subject matter of his artwork, remained in that place. His work questions conventions, such as, how does a society recover from war, while operating on the basis of ethical convictions. Although Wodiczko’s past is wrought with trauma, he operates on the belief that meaningful contributions to society need not come solely from those who have endured affliction. Communicating with combat veterans who may have Post-
Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can be enacted by anyone with the sincere desire to meet the traumatized on their level. Veterans suffering from PTSD often construct emotional and psychological walls between themselves and their loved ones or their society. An inability to breach these obstacles leaves a gap in communication and understanding. In the lives of homecoming veterans, that gap is too often filled with homelessness, addiction, or suicide. Addressing the needs of the men and women currently facing these adversities, as well as initiating contact with those who are at the greatest risk of falling into those same difficulties is Woidczko’s goal in Out of Here.

Digging deep enough into the building blocks of Out of Here releases a whiff of utopianism. It comes from the disregard of taking sides and sympathizing with all involved. Alternatively, the work teaches that a true understanding of war or trauma by those who have not been through it is impossible. However, merely acknowledging that complete comprehension of a person’s experience is beyond reach can be a significant step in the right direction.

In Out of Here, Woidczko strove to help participants let go of some of the pain caused by war, and teach audiences something about what survivors go through. Additionally, at least a partial healing may be facilitated for the many soldiers and civilians that experienced combat in Iraq but did not share their stories with Woidczko. Healing for these men and women can come because the hardships and trauma among survivors links them with each other. It is also true that as the individual shares his or her story, the multitude can either nod in agreement or sympathize. The artist asks viewers to confront the realities of war
and acknowledge a dependence on its witnesses to understand this significant event affecting so many people so profoundly. Finally, Wodiczko beseeches that survivors of the war in Iraq be treated with respect as bearers of a rare body of knowledge from which all may benefit.
One: Artist and Artwork

This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of *Out of Here* and explore the artist’s symbolic, technological, and psychotherapeutic tools to reach his goals for the work. The characteristics of this technology-based, experiential installation will help explain Wodiczko’s motivations and his intention for the work. To begin with, the present section will offer a visual analysis, as well as what is increasingly important for works of new media, an audio analysis. Symbolism is interpreted, for example, light versus dark, windows, and what the author calls an out-of-reach protagonist. Furthermore, the complexities inherent in Wodiczko’s projection artwork, along with his arguable role as director, are discussed in light of the collaborations required to create *Out of Here*.

Wodiczko’s oeuvre serves as a backdrop to put the current work in perspective. The progression of his career, if viewed alongside the milestones of his life, can yield considerable insight into both the work and the man. For example, 2008, the year of Wodiczko’s first work with veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, is the year that marked Wodiczko had spent more than half his life in North America. Wodiczko left a communist-ruled Poland for North America in 1975, and has spoken at length about his life-long quest to understand and create democracy.

38 With 32 years in Poland, seven in Canada, and 26 years in the U.S., he now had permanent legal residency in all three countries. Wodiczko also spent one year living in Australia, and holds permanent residency status in France as well, where he has often worked for extended periods.

39 What more fitting manifestation of a feeling of protectiveness for his new home could there be than through the military – the
symbolic and literal force of protection for a country and its citizens, adopted or otherwise?

Finally, Wodiczko’s intentions, if true to form, are most likely an attempt to wield a two-edged sword. On the one hand, Wodiczko seems to be after a way for veterans to find healing through expression. On the other hand, as an appeal to viewers, Wodiczko seems to desire a sympathetic humility on behalf of veterans, for it is “through the exhibition we come to understand how little we understand.”\(^{40}\) Although there are many levels of meaning in *Out of Here*, carefully peeling back one layer at a time will reveal insights hidden underneath the surface.

**Visual Analysis**

Exiting the elevator on the fourth floor of the ICA, at first nothing appeared out of the ordinary. Then, rounding a corner revealed that the lights were off in the *Out of Here* gallery. Pale light illuminated the introductory wall text, then darkness. Upon entering the gallery, light spilled in from the hallway, allowing only enough visibility to avoid bumping into anyone or anything. Except for a few people scattered around the room, either by themselves, in twos, or threes, the room appeared relatively empty. This lack of anything familiar echoes the experiences of outsiders, for example the immigrants and refugees Wodiczko has spent decades working with, or Wodiczko himself. Visitors either sat on the floor or stood leaning up against a wall. If they knew what was in store they gave

no hint. What could be the reason for the sign outside the gallery warning those susceptible to shock? What was the purpose of all those counseling, therapy, and trauma relief sources in the brochure?

No one made a sound or movement. Soon light materialized from unseen projectors attached to the high ceilings. Video projecting two horizontal rows of windows appeared high on three of the four gallery walls, in hazy and dull colors. The “windows” were about three feet in height, but spanned the length of each gallery wall, some thirty feet on each wall, the bottoms ten feet off the floor. The projections were not big, nor were they bright. Suddenly, the illusion that visitors were inside a darkened warehouse with sunlight providing illumination beyond the windows emerged.

At the outset, an indiscriminant sound of children giggling, followed by the sounds of a rural street with thoroughfare consisting of cars, trucks, and pedestrians persisted for a few minutes. Behind the windows, clouds that floated slowly across the sky made up the only visible movement at the time. A speech by President Obama delivered over a radio advised that “we need to use diplomacy to resolve our problems wherever possible,” suggesting that the war in Iraq could have been resolved by better diplomacy. Another voice over the airwaves reported that “a senior Hamas official has told Al Jazeera that this is a Martin Luther King moment.”41 Two unseen adolescent boys talked casually in Arabic as they bounced a soccer ball into the air. After several glimpses of the ball arcing into view, it shattered a window pane but caused no additional commotion. The boys

---

and the ball disappeared, leaving a scarred window as both vestige of their presence and warning of what was to come.

The journey of an outsider, someone on the fringe of society, is so central to Wodiczko’s work that it is recreated in the details as well as the larger picture. In other words, it is seen in both the trees and the forest. Taking in the information, viewers can understand more what an outsider’s journey is characterized by. Experiencing the installation, visitors allow Wodiczko to take them on a journey as outsiders themselves.

A muezzin called the faithful to prayer, but his rhythmic intonation was drowned out by another repeating cadence. Softly at first, then louder, the sound of an approaching helicopter signaled the arrival of U.S. forces as the craft drifted in and out of view. In the bank of windows to the viewer’s right, the helicopter appeared to hover 30-40 feet off the ground for a few minutes, did not quite land, and then took off again.

A heavy vehicle, which a trained ear might pick out as a U.S. Army Humvee, rumbled up to a location close to the warehouse. Abruptly, male voices cut in to the acoustic landscape. The American soldiers spoke in concise English phrases with no extraneous verses. All communication was matter-of-fact, business-like, yet went beyond the mere efficiency of the type of language lauded by Wall Street. The tone of voice and feel of the conversation from the soldiers betrayed a fear, or at least an awareness, of the fragility and unpredictable nature of death in a war-zone. The words seemed to be those of men living one moment

---

42 The silhouette of the helicopter matched that of an American Army UH-60 Blackhawk, one of the most common types used in the Iraq War, and the subject of popular attention as with the film Blackhawk Down, directed by Ridley Scott, Jerry Bruckheimer Films, 2001.
at a time. A second voice, just as terse, answered the first. They were sweeping
the inside of the warehouse for enemies and explosives. Tension and alarm in the
voices were exacerbated as the voices grew simultaneously louder.

Suddenly, a bomb exploded somewhere in the distance. The rumble of
devastating destruction mixed with gunfire. A few of the “windows” in the gallery
were pierced by bullets. Most remained inexplicably intact. Second and third
detonations accompanied shouts of terror. Most of the action was in the audio
track as opposed to the video projection. Gunfire and explosions continued to
punch holes in the walls. Smoke billowed heavenward from what near-blind
viewers might assume are vehicles engulfed in flames or craters in the ground just
beyond the warehouse walls. A soldier shouted, “Miller’s down!” Anchoring
the unpredictability of a war scene, a dog barked and snarled repeatedly. Fighting
the distraction someone yelled, “Shut that dog up!” With two shots and a pitiful
whimper, the silenced dog evoked sympathy on a different level than that
garnered for human veterans.

Between detonations and bursts of artillery an American exclaimed, “The
kid’s been hit!” Was it one of the boys with the soccer ball? This kind of
question without an answer, the kind that plays upon a viewer’s sympathy without
catering to his or her need for bias, to know who is right or wrong, to know who

\[\text{Quoted excerpts were taken from the source by the author.}^{43}\]
\[\text{Wodiczko’s interviews with veterans revealed one of the most consistently traumatic}^{44}\]
\[\text{occurrences was witnessing the injury of a child. After all, Wodiczko himself was a child during}^{45}\]
\[\text{World War II and can attest first-hand to the effects of war on a young life. It is not surprising then}^{46}\]
\[\text{that he would incorporate this element into a work about war. Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by}^{47}\]
\[\text{the author, April 29, 2011.}^{48}\]
he or she is rooting for, is part of the experience. Wodiczko gives some information, but not all.

Back in the commotion, a sergeant’s first reaction is for the safety of the men he is responsible for. Despite personal feelings, civilian casualties, even children, are a second priority. The sergeant gave his orders, “Leave the kid!” Shouts of “RTB” (Return To Base) are echoed among the soldiers. With the sound of a retreating Humvee, the skirmish ended. A pregnant hush hung in the air for a few moments as the viewer’s imagination filled in the details of the aftermath. Like a prairie dog poking its head out of a hole in the ground after a stampede, the sound of an Iraqi woman calling her son’s name apprehensively tested the silence. Another woman joined in the search by calling the boy’s name. There was no reply. Supposedly, the women rounded a corner and found the body. Our imaginations are able to fill in the gory details with all too much clarity. The mother’s wails are the last thing heard. The projection ends with an anticipatory silence. There were no visible human figures and not one drop of blood. The gallery went dark and the loop started over again.

**The Dark Emptiness**

Visually, the work gains its effect largely from two factors. The darkness lets the viewer know that he or she is about to partake in something different from the manicured white-cube experience that comprises most galleries and art museums today.\(^4\) Secondly, the emptiness draws attention to the space around the

---

\(^4\) Brian O’Doherty’s collection of essays first published in *Artforum* in 1976 and as a book the same year, “Inside the White Cube,” describes the devolved state of the infrastructure of the art
viewer. The visual impact of the work comes even before entering the gallery. Going from a maze of well-lit, white-washed walls to a darkened room is a noticeable change of scenery. This extra-awareness before even encountering the projection prepares the viewer and sets him/her in a posture slightly more ready to receive Wodiczko’s message.

The exhibition is manicured in a careful way to relate to the space. The windows and darkness contribute to the sense of being in an abandoned warehouse. Lighting is kept dim, which in contrast to the usual circumstances for viewing works of fine art, is the best way to experience most of Wodiczko’s work, whether indoors or outdoors, as projections are naturally based on lighting conditions. The windows are grimy and high revealing their functionality, not highlighting their aesthetic quality as it portrays mankind at its most violent.

Once inside the gallery it is not the anticipation of a new experience, which in this sense may be more subconscious than conscious, but the darkness itself that encourages the viewer’s mind to active contemplation. This transition is often a very subtle, but sometimes critical juncture in a viewer’s journey. What has come to be known as museum-fatigue, a visitor’s increasing weariness from the hours spent on his or her feet, is dependent on many different potential factors: time spent in the museum, the physical layout of the space, physical condition of the viewer, etc. Even lighting can play a part in this force. Darkness

world. “Unshadowed, white, clean, artificial, the space is devoted to the technology of esthetics.”


then, though related to the inherent necessities required by projection as a medium, has served to get the viewer’s attention.\footnote{Commenting on the confluence of exhibition practice and experiential art, Alex Alberro, Canadian historian of postwar art based out of New York insightfully observes: “Technological art objects have increasingly come to replace tangible ones in art galleries and museums, which have seen an upsurge in high-tech hybrids of all kinds, from digital photography, to film and video installations, to computer and other new-media art. The ‘white cube’ has begun to be replaced by the ‘black box,’ and the small-screen film or video monitor by the large-scale wall projection.” Without naming names Alberro unwittingly identifies Wodiczko’s methods and materials as ‘large-scale wall projections’ and ‘high-tech.’ Based on the darkened gallery and electronic equipment, black box certainly seems a more appropriate term to describe the site for \textit{Out of Here} than white cube. Alex Alberro, in response to a questionnaire about contemporary art by Hal Foster published in \textit{October} 130 (Fall 2009): 3. The responses, including Alberro’s, were posted under Hal Foster, ed. “Contemporary Extracts,” e-flux journal 12 (January 2010), under “Journal,” http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/98 (accessed March 16, 2011).}

A second characteristic perceived in \textit{Out of Here} is the initial emptiness of the gallery. The utter lack of any object is even more disconcerting than the darkness. Wodiczko appears to seek to present visitors with a riddled scene of war that builds slowly, takes a sudden turn, and reaches a crescendo of action. Yet when someone enters halfway through the video, the artist’s intentions momentarily give way to the confusion of receiving a partial message, similar to walking into a room and hearing a conversation that has already started. At the museum, such visitors must take in the sights and sounds, wait for the loop to end, and begin their experience anew from the start. These factors are important because they directly affect a person’s experience of the work and the successful, or not, transmission of the artist’s message. (For specific examples of viewer reactions to this quality of the work, see Chapter 3.)

The space resembles a utilitarian structure. The clean, smooth, flat surfaces of the wall feel sterile, quite unlike the atmosphere inside a potentially
dangerous warehouse. Rather than a focus on the negative space, one function of the emptiness is to draw attention to the abundance of space around the viewer. The emptiness evokes twin apprehensions, vulnerability and exposure. Through use of a large open space, as opposed to a small foxhole or a large cramped space, Wodiczko evidences his awareness of its effect. In the dark expanse, a viewer is meant to experience how a soldier or civilian feels in a similar circumstance at war. Vulnerability is something which the military mind is constantly looking out for. Exposure too, is a result of the barren void of the gallery. Wodiczko draws attention to survival and self-preservation; thoughts which do not often enter the minds of people going about their everyday lives, but which is a natural, logical, and essential reaction for the soldier.

In any case, this experience, without any (physical) art object, plays into Wodiczko’s attempts to bring the viewer to a state of loneliness in sympathy with that felt by American veterans and citizens of Iraq. A soldier experiences separation from that which is familiar; those he or she knows and loves. His/her sense of isolation is heightened when the gunfire or explosions erupt, because for the first few moments all a soldier can think about is his/her own survival. After the initial and instinctual response of self-preservation, his/her thoughts may turn to others in danger. The vacancy of the gallery may thus refer to the emptiness of emotion, the mechanical ways in which a soldier must react to wartime situations in order to preserve his/her life and accomplish the mission.

---

48 This sterility is a quality that Victoria Newhouse mentions in her study on the logistics of location and underlying psychological notions in Art and the Power of Placement as she deems it the “antiseptic museum space.” Victoria Newhouse, Art and the Power of Placement (New York: Monacelli Press, 2005), 13.
Narrative and Sound

The second formal technique with which Wodiczko communicates, and with greater effect than the first, is sound. In order to tell a story, the exhibition unfolds with an introduction, rises to crescendo, and leaves the viewer with a sober sinking feeling in the gut. At first, visitors “hear” silence, which turns into the pleasant sound of children’s laughter and morphs into the innocuous sounds of a marketplace. When the track turns to violence, it is quickly disorienting. This consequence is in part due to the lack of visibility beyond the projected windows, the place where all the action is happening. But even more, the impact is driven by the rapid sequence of events, for which visitors have no explanation.

Audiences are left to answer their own questions and fill in the gaps by their own imaginations, which, after all the war footage in the news, streaming online, and from movies, can be gruesome.

Another important characteristic of the audio component in Out of Here is the volume. Being in close to proximity to an exploding bomb can be deafening and often permanently damaging to a person’s sense of hearing, mental state, or susceptibility to recurring trauma, as when a flashback is triggered by fireworks. Wodiczko spares viewers this realism. Despite the logistical and legal nightmares of producing bomb-level decibels in a gallery, if Wodiczko had indeed turned up the volume to that degree, the work may have been more realistic in its simulation, but that quest for realism would also have defeated the more important goal, to heal and communicate the need for healing. Taking the volume
up to a level on par with an actual explosion would have given viewers a small slice of one aspect of war, but inflicted harm on viewers for the sake of bringing them to a place where they could learn to sympathize with veterans. Although that sympathy is the desired outcome, Wodiczko does not seek to create another event that people need to cope with. The desired action of introspection would most likely have been eclipsed by physical discomfort and actual trauma. By forming an experience that gives veterans an outlet for expression and teaches non-veterans about those expressions, Wodiczko aims to bring all involved up to the same level.

**Inside and Outside: The Window**

A third tool Wodiczko uses is iconography. One of the most accessible symbols is the window as point of junction between the inner and outer worlds. The artist plays with notions of ‘indoors’ and ‘outdoors,’ thus definitions of the two terms remain unsettled. Looking at the videos displayed in the exhibition, we see through windows to an outdoor environment: a blue sky, clouds; there is also a chain of events happening ‘out there:’ the helicopter unloads troops, explosions. While all this takes place ‘outside,’ non-veteran viewers are reminded of their status as outsiders to the world unfolding in front of them. The space becomes symbolic of the distance between what’s real and imagined; civilians, and veterans. It is extremely difficult for a person that has not been to war to

---

know what war is like, but peering into a window can give one a glimpse.

Viewers are brought to the world of veterans, but not into it; they remain outsiders.

The windows represent the acts of seeing and acknowledging, while the partially visible battle is a stand in for the partially understood and often invisible trials of a combat soldier. The symbol takes on a deeper meaning when one realizes that the windows are broken – and, one could argue, so is the soldier.

Wodiczko aims to teach the uninitiated about the sensory, intellectual, and emotional aftermath of war-related trauma. He does this through metaphor and metonym. In *Out of Here*, the vignette of a battle in the Iraq War stands for war in general. The small excerpt of life in Iraq represents the experiences of veterans (in the broad sense of the word). Wodiczko employs visual metaphors to reach audiences on the extremely complex topics of psychotherapy and sympathy.

**Wodiczko and Memorial**

In addition to the previous discussion on the interpretations of symbolism in Wodiczko’s work, particularly that of fire, a further reading is one that includes an eternally burning flame. The origins of a continuously burning torch to mark

---

50 I am indebted to Dore Ashton for linking the concept of metonymy to Wodiczko’s work in “If You See Something,” from *The Brooklyn Rail, October* 2005, [http://www.brooklynrail.org/2005/10/artseen/krzystof](http://www.brooklynrail.org/2005/10/artseen/krzystof) accessed January 26, 2011). Ashton explains that Wodiczko uses metonymy, where the part stands for the whole, to extend the reach of his use of metaphor, where one thing stands for another. She lauds Wodiczko’s use of metonymy as an ingenious use of a rhetorical device to communicate his message.

51 Author, professor, and internationally recognized authority on memorials James E. Young described the purpose of a memorial as something that “sear[s] memory into public consciousness.” The term “searing,” which often involves fire, implies a painful process of implanting a mark or memory. Likewise, *Out of Here* is not an aesthetically pleasing account to witness. It puts the experience of a mortar attack in front of visitors and remains in the mind as an
an important place or event supposedly began with the ancient Greek oracle at Delphi or the temple of Jewish antiquity in Jerusalem. Today examples are sometimes, but not always, found alongside tombs of the Unknown Soldier. When these memorials with eternal flames are viewed next to Wodiczko’s artwork since 2008, the parallels are enlightening (fig. 24). Though the stories with which Wodiczko presents viewers about the conflicts in Iraq are true, audiences are not given the identities of the veterans. In this way, Out of Here is a memorial to unknown soldiers, and although it easily falls into this category, Veterans’ Flame and Speaking Flame contain the added emblem of an eternal flame. In comparison to tombs of the Unknown Soldier and eternal flames made from stone and fire, Wodiczko constructs his memorials out of screen and wire, projectors and speakers.

Wodiczko’s symbolic use of flame is one technique to operate in the realm of memorials, but not his only method of doing so. Works such as Bunker Hill Monument and Hiroshima Projection take place on actual public monuments. Wodiczko’s artworks create new memorials on the sites of older memorials. The newer memorial may refer to the virtues, by way of a current injustice, which the older memorial stood for, but the efficacy of which has abated over time (fig. 25).

A difference between Out of Here and both Bunker Hill and Hiroshima

52 Most often, eternal flames are found around the world in remembrance of World Wars I and II (Berlin, Jerusalem, Chicago), tombs of the unknown soldier (Philadelphia, Paris, Moscow, Warsaw), and for specific people (John F. Kennedy in Washington D.C., Yitzhak Rabin in Tel Aviv, Gandhi in New Delhi, Martin Luther King, Jr. in Atlanta). This honor seems to be reserved for those who were assassinated, but is not always the case as with the eternal flame burning for Elvis Presley in Memphis, Tn. Other causes, events, and people are commemorated with eternal flames in various places across the globe; the ones mentioned are only a small selection.
Projectors is the former work takes place inside a museum on blank gallery walls. This largely negates the possibility of referring to previous monuments. Instead of referring to the past Out of Here touches on current repercussions of the Iraq War. Wodiczko’s other indoor projections, If You See Something... (2005) and Guests (2009), occur with similar repercussions (figs. 26 and 27). Wodiczko’s work invokes the tools of memorials, but in a new way. Memorials call attention to something, namely a memory of someone or something in the past. While the artist’s work calls attention to the subject, it is not a memory that is being pointed out, but what may be an ongoing, present-tense issue that still needs to be addressed (homelessness: Homeless Vehicle; inexplicably high murder rate: Bunker Hill Monument Projection; veterans and civilians with PTSD: Out of Here).

Out-of-Reach Protagonist

The symbolic device that Wodiczko uses with the most complexity in Out of Here is the presence of an out-of-reach protagonist. This agency is something which the artist relies on in earlier work as well. In If You See Something (2005)
at Galerie Lelong, and *Guests* (2009) at the Polish Pavilion of the 53rd Venice Biennale, large banks of frosted windows are projected onto indoor gallery walls. In the videos, despairing figures, though distinguishable as human, remain visually inaccessible through the milky glass. The content is delivered through the stories, mainly about immigration, and comes from either the speakers or the printed transcripts. In order to draw audiences to take a step towards the meaning of the work, Wodiczko leaves out a piece of the puzzle forcing witnesses to connect the dots on their own.

Likewise, in *Speaking Flame* and *Veterans’ Flame*, there are no human figures, not even a video with a sequence of events (fig. 28). The story unfolds as it is told through the audio track. As viewers listen, a flickering flame hypnotizes their attention. Again, Wodiczko resists a visual component tantamount to the acoustic. Viewers are left with no choice but to imagine the scene they are hearing, rapid gun-fire included. In a way that is unmistakably less than the overdramatized sensations of Hollywood war films, *Out of Here* still manages to present stories with heavy-laden emotion. Yet more than the emotionless transmission of statistics and data available on the nightly news, *Out of Here* gives first-hand accounts from witnesses of the events. All the components require assembly in the viewer’s mind. This mental exercise allows visitors to engage in a process of understanding the work that lies between the information Wodiczko offers and the ability of the audience to put the pieces together.

The artist’s trope, the out-of-reach protagonist, is one of his most prolific tools. By it, he gains more than the shock value Hollywood movies achieve, and
more than the one-sided statements in mainstream media. In *If You See Something* and *Guests*, the out-of-reach protagonists give accounts of injustices done to them or difficulties faced due to their status as outsiders, mainly as immigrants in these cases. With *Out of Here*, the out-of-reach protagonists do not merely tell their stories, they reenact them. In this instance, Wodiczko seems to beseech viewers to understand that war itself is the injustice perpetuated, while veterans, be they Iraqi citizens or American soldiers, are the victims. Wodiczko then, as both an immigrant and a veteran, is doubly qualified as an outsider to relate to his participants. Having lived to talk about and work through his traumatic wartime experiences (WWII and the Cold War), and gained citizenship in his host country, Wodiczko has accomplished much of what he wishes for those he works with. Yet continuing to help the underserved, Wodiczko continues to work on these issues in his own life, as is seen in *Out of Here*. Employing the views of others, creating an environment to experience something, leaving out information, and forcing attendees to come to their own conclusions, Wodiczko is uniquely able to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on war and its effect on society.

**Wodiczko as Veteran and Jew**

This thesis attempts to pull back the curtain revealing how Wodiczko’s role as a veteran plays out in his work. As a child born in Poland during World War II, Wodiczko’s Jewish heritage has had a direct influence on him as a veteran and an artist. To what degree can his half-Jewish and half-Protestant, but mostly secular past help clarify his body of work? Delving into Wodiczko’s ancestry may
lead to new ways of studying the installations he makes which tap into his spiritual genealogy. While there is an absence of explicit religious content in Wodiczko’s work, it is possible to find therein the buried currents of some ancient motifs.

Speaking Flame (2005), included in the exhibition If You See Something at Galerie Lelong in the same year, and Veterans’ Flame (2009), which took place on Governors Island in New York, are two examples of Wodiczko’s work that have additional interpretations independent from their status as symbols for veterans. Each work consisted of projections of flickering candles, the movement of which coincided with voiceovers of soldiers relating emotional monologues. While the projected candle literally gives light to the dim gallery, its iconography also stands for the light (read “goodness”) of the human spirit which burns against the tragedies of war.

To further examine the Judeo-Christian influences on Wodiczko exemplified in his work, one can look at religious texts. A popular proverb from Hebrew scripture maintains that “The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD...”54 The metaphor of soul and body is perhaps the best method of understanding the struggle between life and death as Wodiczko presents it to viewers. The projected voices in Speaking Flame and Veterans’ Flame tell listeners about the death which is around every corner in an embattled Iraq. Audiences hear the order to kill and the gunfire that executes it. Viewers might expect at any moment that the candle in the projection will be snuffed out, a trail of smoke wafting up to dissipate into the atmosphere. In his novel My Name is

---

54 From Mishlei (Book of Proverbs) in the Tanak, or Hebrew scriptures: Proverbs 20:27.
Asher Lev, author Chaim Potok clarifies the significance that the flame of a candle may take when read in a Jewish context.

The souls of Jews are like the flame of a candle…The flame burns upward; it seeks to be parted from the wick in order to unite with its source above, in the universal element of fire. Similarly, the soul of the Jew yearns to separate itself and depart from the body in order to unite with the Master of the Universe, even though this means that nothing will remain of its former nature as a distinct and separate entity. It is in the nature of the Jewish soul to desire this union with the Being Without End…

Though Wodiczko’s work does not operate explicitly in terms of a Jewish context, often the symbolism and visual clues he uses, such as the flame from a candle, can best be understood by looking to the conditions that influenced his development. Additionally, contemporary scholarship on familiar topics brings new, insightful theories to light. A deeper look at Christian symbolism, or that related to Wodiczko’s paternal heritage, contains numerous references to light and, more specifically, flame.

55 Chaim Potok, My Name is Asher Lev (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1972), 188. The novel describes the problematic intersection of a New York City community of Hasidic Jews and the art world.

56 As Kinga Araya explains in her doctoral dissertation on the artist, “Wodiczko talks extensively about the figure of the Wandering Jew.” Araya’s study focuses on the theme of exile as it is played out in the act of walking. She presents two works, Vehicle (1973) by Wodiczko, and Catalysis (1970-71) by Adrian Piper in which walking is the main performative activity and argues that the modes of action are outside of mainstream art channels. Connecting these artistic walks to the urban locations where they take place, Araya concludes by naming cities, specifically Warsaw and New York, as alienating and contributing to a perpetual exilic society for their inhabitants. Exile being a chief and defining factor in the history of the Jews, Araya’s thesis sets a strong precedent for religious interpretations of Wodiczko’s work, of which there are few. Kinga Araya, “Walking in the City: The Motif of Exile in Performances by Krzysztof Wodiczko and Adrian Piper” (PhD diss., Concordia University, 2004), [http://www.kingaaraya.com/papers/phd_thesis/Kinga_phdthesis.html](http://www.kingaaraya.com/papers/phd_thesis/Kinga_phdthesis.html) (accessed February 17, 2011).

57 In as much as they share the same beginnings, Judaism and Christianity share the story of God appearing to Moses in a burning bush, and eternal flames as a demarcation of hell. One instance where they differ is in the book of Revelations, which is not part of Jewish scripture, but in the Christian Bible connotes passion and power in the form of the Son of Man, or Jesus Christ as savior of the world. In the New King James Version of the Bible, for the story of Moses and the
In summation, without speculating on the extent to which his mother and father adhered to their individual religious heritages, or the effect of living in a country that is mostly Catholic, it is a shorter leap of logic to say that Wodiczko was affected by each parent, and thus he was swayed by the influences on those parents. These readings of religious ideas into Wodiczko and his work may explain the artist’s focus on people who have been hurt. The concept of charity is tantamount in many religions, and is a virtue that the three main mono-theistic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) have in common. That is why interpretations that read his work in such symbolic ways are easily within the bounds of reason, and it may be extrapolated even further that those spiritual underpinnings are perhaps what led him to pursue his art as a lifelong ministry of compassion for those hurting, which has led him to the subject of veterans.

**Origins and Intentions of Out of Here**

Wodiczko’s intentions with *Out of Here* are similar to those in his previous work. For as long as the artist has been working he has been ‘interceding’ on behalf of those that have been underrepresented in society. The new twist that *Out of Here* brings, as does each new project, is the “who.” By the time this work was created in 2009, Wodiczko’s sites had already been set on veterans of the Iraq War. His first work with veterans in 2008, *Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver,* grew out of an invitation to contribute to a public project linked to the Democratic National Convention, but also in the context of the city.

\[^\text{burning bush, see Exodus 3:2; for the punishment of God, connected to the concept of Hell, see Isaiah 29:6; and for Jesus Christ as Savior in the End Times, see Revelation 1:14.}\]
of Denver. The origins of *Out of Here* are found in *Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver*, and this work blazed a trail for all his subsequent work with veterans.

To begin with, Wodiczko studied the social problems Denver was facing at the time. Treating the city like a patient, Wodiczko diagnosed a troubling tendency and some key symptoms. Perhaps due to a heightened sense of awareness from past projects, he noticed the sizeable homeless population and large military base nearby, the United States Air Force Academy. Seeing a connection, Wodiczko said, “It became clear that we need to reach young veterans.” Denver too, it seemed, was putting the pieces of the puzzle together. Wodiczko described their efforts to prepare themselves. “They already designed special clinics, temporary housing for veterans, new buildings, even for traumatized veterans… The doors are semi-transparent so the veteran will know that someone is coming; because [the designers] understand the post-traumatic condition.”

Visiting homeless shelters, veteran hospitals, and sitting in on the obligatory weekly meetings between the homeless and social workers, the artist was able to observe and interact with these social support units. With the help of the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Wodiczko began his initial recordings with the veterans and the homeless, and even organized workshops for them to write their experiences and thoughts. When questioned about his selection process on whom to include in his projects, Wodiczko answered this way. “I don’t select

---

58 Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
people at all. They select themselves.”⁶¹ Presenting the project in the places that the participants were familiar with allowed them to decide if and how they would be involved. “People select themselves. They have an intuition on whether it’s worth taking part in this, whether it will benefit them in some way psychological, social. Maybe they are ready to make a leap from a psychotherapeutic situation.”⁶²

As many artists do, Wodiczko has returned to the subject several times. It is not too surprising then, to find that Out of Here is one among several artworks about Iraq War veterans since 2008. In fact, Wodiczko may have been working with veterans, though perhaps inadvertently, as early as the 1980s with his projects with the homeless of New York City, Homeless Projection (1986-87) and Homeless Vehicle (1988-89). The National Coalition for the Homeless, a non-profit advocacy organization whose mission is to end homelessness, reports, “Conservatively, one out of every three homeless men who is sleeping in a doorway, alley or box in our cities and rural communities has put on a uniform and served this country.”⁶³ Of these men, 47% are veterans of the Vietnam War.

While Wodiczko has not stated explicitly that he set out to work with veterans in the homeless of New York City projects, the potential degree of overlap points to possible repeating themes in American society of who is traumatized and from what. One may notice a direct correlation between

---

⁶¹ Ibid.
⁶² Ibid.
Homeless Vehicle (1988-89) and Wodiczko’s first work with veterans, Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver, from 2008. In a more conscious effort, the artist sought out such veterans at the 2008 Democratic National Convention. “Through organizations such as the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, The Cherokee House or Denver Human Services, Wodiczko worked with homeless veterans to make the public aware of the difficulties of the social reintegration of soldiers with a background of traumatic war experiences.” These projects, Homeless Projection, and Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver, attempted to provide a picture of reality in which the destitute could no longer be overlooked.

Wodiczko’s work with the homeless and veterans typifies the idiosyncrasy which reveals the foils of a society that cannot, or refuses to, see them.

Understanding what veterans go through is at once a clear trajectory for this body of work, yet as Wodiczko states, also impossible. He says in a brochure for Out of Here, “I believe that if there is any truth, it lies in realizing the impossibility of gaining full access to the truth of such an experience.” This reiterates the two-sided goal to teach nonveterans that they cannot achieve full comprehension of the reality of the Iraq War, but that if they strive for it anyway, they will achieve a greater level of appreciation for their fellow veteran-citizens.

64 Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver was commissioned by the city of Denver and exhibited in various outdoor locations alongside the 2008 Democratic National Convention in August of that year. Wodiczko, interview.
65 Lajer-Burcharth, Krzysztof Wodiczko: Guests, 131.
66 Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, “Krzysztof Wodiczko...Out of Here: The Veterans Project;” pamphlet, November 2009.
For Wodiczko, *Out of Here* operates in ways distinct from his other work, which also has psychotherapeutic aims. In an article by Sebastian Smee of the *Boston Globe*, Wodiczko reveals “The work I have made so far about veterans has been kind of ‘out there.’ I want this one to be more about ‘in here,’” he says, tapping his head.” What makes this project different from his other work with veterans, the artist admits, is the interior environment. “It refers to our psychological isolation from the outside world. It refers to another country far away.” Efforts to care for or identify with the person who went to war have fallen short. There is a thick wall, psychologically speaking, between veterans and non-veterans. Friends, families, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters may be living in the same house as one who went to war, yet they cannot sustain communication on the level required for healing. “Therefore this project is very different because it can convey the interior, that wall, better than other projects.” And awareness brings the possibility of addressing those challenges.

---

67 Wodiczko seems to imply that most of his work has some connection to psychotherapeutic intentions. See Eva Marxen’s “Therapeutic Thinking in Contemporary Art or Psychotherapy in the Arts,” *The Arts In Psychotherapy* 36, no. 3 (July 2009): 131-139.
69 Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid.
Two: Collaboration-Artist, Veterans, Institution

Wodiczko’s history and positive relationship with the ICA began with Bunker Hill Monument Projection in 1998 through the museum’s public art program Vita Brevis. Ten years later, when another opportunity arose, the artist and the ICA brought forth Out of Here. The level of engagement between Wodiczko, the museum, veterans, and local civic organizations played a crucial role in reaching their separate goals. For the artist, it was interaction between himself and all these players that allowed him to realize the fruit of his creativity. The museum maintained friendships (Wodiczko and visitors), and saw new relationships forged between organizations, professionals, and fresh faces from the community. Wodiczko’s collaboration with the ICA allowed him to bring forth his ideas on war and enact the process of healing veterans and their societies. As host, setting, and collaborator, the ICA provided neutral ground for veterans, Iraqis, the artist and the community to meet.

Illuminating the process of creating Out of Here and its impact is accomplished through several methods of research. Analysis of the exhibition and its accoutrements, (such as signage, literature, and events) is used in conjunction with personal interviews of museum staff and the artist. Furthermore, the curator and supporting staff attempted to provide links between the artist and veterans.

---

72 For an introduction to Vita Brevis at the ICA I thank my colleague and classmate Sierra Rooney and cite her insightful analysis on the subject, “Vita Brevis, Ars Longa,” M.A. Thesis, City College of New York, May 2010. For its ten year duration, Vita Brevis sought to synthesize the established audiences and credibility of the ICA with the spark of appeal generated by a temporary art installment as it shows up in the daily surroundings of people outside of the museum.

73 Randi Hopkins, interview by the author, February 24, 2011.
who could aid him with his work. All of this evidence will clarify the interactions between the artist, the veterans, and the museum, modes of working together and those of working separately but alongside each other.

The ICA’s Invitation

Although Out of Here was commissioned by the ICA, museum staff gave Wodiczko free reign in constructing the work.74 Randi Hopkins, the curator of the exhibition, described how the ICA reached out to Wodiczko. “We would love to do a project with you. What are you doing right now or what are you interested in?”75 The success of the institution’s first public artwork with Wodiczko, Bunker Hill Monument (1998), led to the solicitation of Out of Here on the 10th anniversary of the previous project. ICA Associate Curator Randi Hopkins added that Out of Here arose from somewhere between the remnants of Vita Brevis and an ongoing relationship between the artist and the institution.76

When the ICA first approached Wodiczko with the idea for a new project, the artist was undecided on what form this new work might take. Since the origins of Out of Here can be traced back to the previous year’s Veteran Vehicle

Projection, Denver, preliminary brainstorming for the new work revolved around

74 In 2008 the genesis of Out of Here fell to ICA curator Carole Anne Meehan. Soon after, Meehan left the museum for a curatorial position at the Houston Arts Alliance, which is when Randi Hopkins became the principal curator for the exhibition. Carole Anne Meehan, phone conversation with author, July 22, 2011.
75 Hopkins, interview.
76 Ibid. One of the earliest recorded accounts on Out of Here comes from an online article in the Boston Globe. Paul Bessire, ICA Deputy Director for External Relations, provided details for the work’s origins. “We began discussions with [Wodiczko] in 2006...He is developing an interior projection with veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan for an ICA gallery...Being able to offer a project of this magnitude over several months, rather than a few evenings as was the case in 1998 [Bunker Hill Monument], is one of the benefits we enjoy.” Geoff Edgers, “ICA, To Do or Not To Do, Public Art,” Boston Globe, April 16, 2008, http://www.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/exhibitionist/2008/04/ (accessed March 11, 2011).
the issue of soldiers returning home from the lines of battle.\textsuperscript{77} As the installation took shape, it showed characteristics of an “inside” view of a day in the life and psyche of a soldier in Iraq. Hopkins elaborates, “Originally we didn’t realize it was going to be this immersive recreation of war. We thought it might be more like the Bunker Hill project, where people are talking about their experiences.”\textsuperscript{78} 

\textit{Out of Here} started as a work quite similar to several of the artist’s recent projects with veterans, but quickly developed into something new.\textsuperscript{79} In a radio interview on Boston’s 89.7 WGBH, host Callie Crossley spoke with Wodiczko and two contributors to the show, veteran Michael Anthony and Iraqi Tala Khudairi.

Wodiczko explained that the work ended up as “a combination of a reenactment by those who went through it directly and also by people who supported this reenactment as actors.”\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Out of Here} became something new in Wodiczko’s oeuvre; that between the artist, the ICA and partnering institutions, and between survivors of real-life trauma and actors.

In an effort to give \textit{Out of Here} and Wodiczko’s work context, the exhibition team at the ICA included examples of the artist’s work on television monitors outside of the main gallery.\textsuperscript{81} Originally an elaborate installation including a modified Humvee with projections and audio, \textit{War Veteran Vehicle Projection} (2009), Liverpool, England, underwent a significant reduction to fit into the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{77} Hopkins, interview. \\
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. At the outset, \textit{Out of Here} shared the topic of veterans with his 2008 \textit{Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver}. Early developments revolved around allowing soldiers to tell their stories directly to viewers as with projects such as \textit{Bunker Hill Monument Projection} and \textit{Hiroshima Projection}. \\
\textsuperscript{80} Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by Callie Crossley, \textit{The Callie Crossley Show}, PBS, February 10, 2010. \\
\end{flushleft}
television format. Likewise, *Veterans’ Flame* (2009), Governor’s Island, NY, was originally a projection with audio components, and transferred to the smaller, less immersive format at the ICA. Yet, unlike *Out of Here*, these two works are meant to be watched on a screen. While television may not be the best medium to see them, their content can still be delivered, if somewhat crippled. However, the same transcription would not work for *Out of Here*. Viewing the scene on a small screen would not give visitors the sense of being inside a dark, unfamiliar place with confusion and explosions erupting all around them.

As Wodiczko’s collaborator at the ICA, Hopkins and her assistants initially sought contacts with Iraqis in the U.S., but found “that was a much harder community to penetrate. We didn’t have that many inroads into that.”\(^{82}\) Hopkins and her team found Iraqi groups in the U.S. not only less organized, but less interested in talking.\(^{83}\) Several factors could have contributed to this difficulty. One is that the community of Iraqi-Americans is much smaller compared to that of American veterans. However, what’s more likely the culprit is the fact that Iraqi-Americans are caught between two worlds. The land of their ancestry is at war with the land they have chosen to make new lives in, and there is no easy way to choose sides. Such a complicated issue is not easily spoken about and many first generation immigrants, no matter their birthplace, have mixed feelings about what they left behind for the promise of a better future.

Despite their differences, a cautious reticence is one thing that American and Iraqi veterans share. According to Wodiczko, “only 1% of war veterans speak

---

\(^{82}\) Hopkins, interview.

\(^{83}\) Ibid.
in public for various reasons.”

Why is this? Any answer is speculative as each veteran has a personal mixture of reasons. Could part of it be a fear of reliving the experience? Do they worry that others will not understand? Perhaps it can all be explained away as PTSD. What may not be considered as often, yet Wodiczko, Anthony, and others have hinted at, is the liability of re-traumatizing others as a deterrent in veterans sharing too much. Wodiczko has noted that disorders like PTSD can be inherited or transferred: “Trauma is transmitted across generations.” With this in mind, it should come as no surprise that veterans rarely speak about their experiences and issues in public or at all. In the aforementioned talk radio program, Anthony quoted Wodiczko as saying, “the average soldier that comes home with PTSD, they affect up to 7 other people, that is, civilians.” This startling ripple effect may be the best indicator of why, when veterans uncover their traumatic experiences, it is almost exclusively to other veterans. Anthony put it this way, “War veterans really only share stories with themselves. For this project, I called up a lot of friends and got their input...they shared with me because I am a veteran. But a veteran to open up to civilians, it just doesn’t happen as often.”

Wodiczko’s Collaborative Working Method

As with the film industry, a multimedia project such as Out of Here requires teams of people. A strong collaborative environment can strengthen the

---

84 Wodiczko, The Callie Crossley Show.
85 Ibid.
86 Anthony, The Callie Crossley Show.
87 Ibid.
final product. The artist met with Iraq War veterans and listened to their stories. Meeting with these veterans several times, patiently listening to their stories, and sharing openly himself, Wodiczko sought to gain their trust and draw out their experiences and feelings of the war. Collaboration, however, also comes with specific obstacles. While there may be one director of vision, the multitude of opinions may be hard to manage or synthesize. The artist has said, “I don’t tell people what they should say. I don’t know what they will say. They don’t know themselves.”

Although Out of Here comes off as a nationally neutral defamation of war, the American military veterans and the Iraqi veterans consulted for the project have wildly diverse backgrounds. It is virtually impossible that all involved would have identical attitudes towards such weighty matters. This point is made evident by the differences between Out of Here and the artist’s other work. While Wodiczko’s other projects often constitute straightforward transmission of the voices or bodies of his consultants (Tijuana Projection, Hiroshima Projection), Out of Here is an amalgamation of the consultants’ voices together, along with other fabricated audio components, such as the gunfire, bouncing soccer ball, and wailing. Having referred to himself as “a creative director,” it is clear that Wodiczko sees the need to influence, as with film, how the work would be interpreted.

---


89 For example, Tala Khudairi was born in Iraq and still has family there. She, through them, still feels the suffering of her home country. Jim O’Neill was born and raised in the Boston area, and marched in the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. With nothing personally against each other, theirs are stories that are truly from both sides of the bullet.

come to being a psychotherapist, but with *Out of Here* he is also blurring the line between creating projection art and directing for film.

As Wodiczko took new liberties in his working methods, such as hiring actors, the credibility of the script was essential if the artist wished to maintain previous standards of advocacy. Anthony describes how the valor, leadership, and clarity of mind presented in most war movies like *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *Hurtlocker* (2008) are far from the reality of life on the front lines. Instead, the nearest equivalent is something more like the television program *M*A*S*H* (1972-1983). The dark comedy, based on a mobile surgical hospital in South Korea similar to the modern day one Anthony served in, best reflects the absurdity of comic tragedy played out behind-the-scenes unbeknownst to the eyes and ears of the media. He goes on to say, “Where movies are sensationalized to sell the script, [*Out of Here*] is the real deal. These are true stories of what really happened over there.”  

Under the umbrella of *Out of Here*, all those involved could come together to work toward mutually beneficial goals: to provide a forum for veterans and civilians, Iraqis and Americans to discuss the war and its repercussions; to let each other know they are valued and worth understanding. For the ICA, it required facilitating Wodiczko’s work. For Wodiczko, it meant bringing all these people together. For the veterans and civilians, it was trying to see the situation from each other’s perspectives.

In addition to individuals, several local organizations with relevant expertise were also asked to be part of the team involved in *Out of Here*. The ICA became familiar with the types of resources where veterans and refugees could get help.

---

91 Ibid.
needed support for issues such as counseling and health care. In the *Out of Here* brochure, the ICA explains the nature of these collaborative efforts. “Reach Out: The following local and national programs offer support and assistance to veterans and refugees, provide education and research opportunities, and encourage dialogue and healing through art and art-making.”\(^\text{92}\) Some of these institutions had minor roles, such as agreeing to be listed on the brochure or offering their services to anyone in need that heard about their organization through the exhibition, which did not vary much from their day-to-day operations.\(^\text{93}\) Despite the potentially untapped resources of veterans with which Wodiczko could consult on projects, the artist did not draw contacts from these, mostly support-based organizations. Instead, most of his networking was done through his prior relationships with veterans, or the advocacy-based group IVAW. Hopkins recalls the idea behind these efforts was that “we tried to reach out to people that we thought would be interested in the installation that probably wouldn’t necessarily have the ICA on their radar.”\(^\text{94}\) In fact, Hopkins and other ICA staff connected with individuals and groups with whom Wodiczko never met or talked. The ICA’s relationship-building, independent of Wodiczko, shows the

\(^{92}\) Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston, “Krzysztof Wodiczko... *Out of Here: The Veterans Project*,” pamphlet, November 2009.

\(^{93}\) The organizations mentioned in this effort are exemplified by, but not exclusive to Veteran Services, City of Boston, the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, Bloomberg News Bureau, the New England Center for Homeless Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Strategic Outreach to Families of All Reservists, and the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma. In fact the list contains more than a dozen different supporting organizations, even breaking up the categories of support to include service and counseling, education, and arts-based programs, such as two arts therapy institutes as well as The Odysseus Project. The Odysseus Project offers exhibitions, classes, and other resources to foster communication and understanding “between those who have been to war and those who have not.” More information can be found at [http://www.nervegarden.com/odysseusproject/](http://www.nervegarden.com/odysseusproject/) (accessed April 14, 2011).

\(^{94}\) Hopkins, interview.
level to which they were invested and employing their own creative powers to make the most out of the opportunity.

Wodiczko took advantage of the circumstances afforded him by the ICA to experiment with several aspects of ambiguity. The artist explained his use of an inside versus an outside perspective in an article from National Public Radio, “It could be an interior of a soldier who came back from war and who is re-living, remembering, recalling some scenes and moments — perhaps similar to the one that I’m trying to create.”

Other ambiguities relate to the artist’s typical choice of outside/public sites, and the choice to bring *Out of Here* inside, in a more private realm. Asked about the viability of *Out of Here* existing in an outdoor setting for higher visibility, Wodiczko responded, “The interior [aspect of the work] must be understood as part of the project, because it refers to our interior, to our inner life, to our memories, and to our nightmares.” Wodiczko asserts that *Out of Here* cannot be moved outside, because the meaning of the work is derived from being situated indoors.

When Wodiczko creates an artwork for a public setting, he must make proposals and blueprints which are highly detailed (figs. 29 and 30). Specifications of the work must pass through the filters of appointed officials and committees. It is a process that can be slow, convoluted, and frustrating.

Regarding the artist’s thirty year history with such systems, it is of little surprise that Wodiczko has chosen three major projects in the past 6 years that take place

---


96 Wodiczko, *The Callie Crossley Show*. 
in a setting that allows him more authority. The ICA invited Wodiczko to create a work virtually uninhibited by the regulations normally imposed by those on official national, state, or local committees. The duties of those governing boards are to design rules that weigh concerns such as appropriate content for public audiences and disturbances of the peace. Inside their own building, museum staff and artists can have their way. Wodiczko’s projections in public places usually last three nights, and his museum exhibitions typically last between one and five months. Outdoor settings may allow for larger audiences, but the possibility of a longer duration in a museum potentially evens the playing field.⁹⁷

**Wodiczko’s Veteran Consultants**

Since accuracy of the war experience was instrumental in the work, Wodiczko sought first-hand input from the war’s witnesses. He began by reading reports from soldiers and gleaning information from the media on the experiences of civilians. One source for these reports was Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). IVAW is a non-profit organization that was launched in 2004, whose mission is to end military support for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, divert war

---

⁹⁷ Regarding practicalities, the physical location of a work, inside versus outside, creates concerns. One example is access. With a public artwork like *Bunker Hill Monument*, any person, whether intentionally seeking the artwork or not, may view the work at no cost and without going out of their way. Although the ICA is a public museum, an entrance fee can be a limiting factor of accessibility for some. The ICA has a general admission fee of $15. Even at this price, which is comparable to many of the highest priced museums in American cities with the highest cost of living, it is still not the most expensive date in town. Instead, the highest admission in Boston is at the Museum of Fine Arts at $22. This cost is still below both the Museum of Modern Art ($25) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (recommended donation of $25) in New York City. With museum governing committees increasingly looking to pull in revenue from self-generated sources such as membership, admission prices, and events, in addition to the more traditional avenues of donors, patrons, and fundraising, the museum field can expect that these developments, though still in a state of flux, will not regress to earlier conditions. Paralleling the shifts of a capitalist market, hosting a work inside an institution excludes some would-be-viewers in a way that an outdoor work would not.
funds into reparations for the nationals of those countries, and attain the benefits
and support of the U.S. government at home for veterans that oppose current war
operations.\textsuperscript{98}

\textbf{Michael Anthony}

Michael Anthony was one of these consultants who had just finished high
school when he joined the army, and was immediately confronted with his
impending deployment to Iraq. In a published memoir of his time in the Middle
East he described the tense atmosphere, “It’s week seven of basic training and my
drill sergeant is preparing us for war, and the possibility that we might soon be
dead. Eighteen years old and I am preparing myself to die.”\textsuperscript{99} The Army trained
Anthony as an Operating Room Technician, and consequently, he was actually
more prepared for the deaths of those on the operating room table than his own.
The diary Anthony kept while working, dodging mortar attacks, and attempting to
hold onto his sanity in Iraq became the basis for his memoir. Anthony mentioned
that Wodiczko read \textit{Mass Casualties}, but rather than exerting a direct influence on
\textit{Out of Here}, instead the exchange facilitated a deeper understanding between the
two veterans.\textsuperscript{100}

Returning home from the Iraq War, Michael sought out the comfort of
veterans who had been through similar life-altering circumstances. He connected

\textsuperscript{100} Michael Anthony, interview by author, March 25, 2010. When he worked on \textit{Out of Here},
Michael was a full time student, but has since graduated with a Bachelor’s in English and Creative Writing.
with some people at IVAW and it was on their website that Michael saw
Wodiczko’s invitation to soldiers to meet and speak with him about their
experiences. Wodiczko was looking for Boston area veterans to consult on a
project. There were no further details, and the point of contact was the ICA rather
than the artist himself or his assistant. Eager to jump into a project that had the
potential to help other veterans, Michael bemoaned the painfully slow pace that
characterizes large projects at large institutions. Taking matters into his own
hands, the young veteran employed his fluency with the Internet (common to
many of his generation), to find Wodiczko’s email address and contacted him
personally. Wodiczko responded by suggesting an informal meeting. Michael
remembers, “We had coffee and we didn’t even really talk about the project. We
just shared war stories and then we took it from there.”

In the spring of 2009 Anthony was in the process of writing and
publishing the book that detailed his experiences as an Operating Room
Technician with the Army Reserve. *Mass Casualties: A Young Medic’s True
Story of Death, Deception, and Dishonor in Iraq* is an exposé of corrupt
individuals and systems in the military with the names of implicated parties
changed. The young author was writing while he waited for his term of
enlistment to end. Perhaps it was Anthony’s initiative in enacting his own

101 Ibid.
103 Consequently, Anthony used a penname as he was still susceptible to a military code of justice
that could convict him of unlawful conduct on the grounds of disobeying orders, giving away
classified information, and other laws specific to the armed services.
healing through the catharsis of writing his story that drew Wodiczko to work with him.

Anthony commented on what it was like to help create the artwork. It required revisiting the scene of war in his mind’s eye, which for him was Mosul, Northern Iraq in 2006 and 2007. Anthony offered descriptions of ambushes, common reactions and procedures, suggested realistic dialogue, collected stories from friends, and sketched scenarios for Wodiczko to see. He reiterated the healing properties of self-expression, that such exposure washes the soul and memory, yet also does not quite rid a person of the lingering remnants that prey on his or her ability to lead a life free from anxiety. Twenty-three years old at the time, the hopeful writer spoke with a simple, confident manner. Quoting statistics of suicide rates among veterans, Anthony appeared to be informed and genuinely care about the lives of those the artwork would touch. The Department of Veterans Affairs Suicide Prevention Program reveals how tragically disproportionate self-inflicted deaths can be. While only one percent of Americans have served in the military, 20 percent of suicides in the U.S. are by veterans. Personally touched by incidences of suicide among fellow service members, Anthony recognized the urgency of fostering communication between veterans and civilians. He named his book and Out of Here as two examples that work towards that goal.

106 Anthony, interview.
While *Out of Here* was created through many months of developing relationships and talking to individuals and organizations, the end result was largely shaped by the memories and experiences of a small group of people. Once Wodiczko established contact indirectly through IVAW, he asked Anthony if he knew anyone else that could contribute to the project. The young army veteran recalled how he mentioned a friend from high school who had been deployed to Iraq with the Marines: “During one of the meetings I called up my buddy Alex [Hill] and we had him on speaker phone for about an hour and he shared some of his stories as well.”\(^\text{107}\) Wodiczko’s collaborative core grew and eventually comprised of four people: Tala Khudairi, of Iraqi upbringing who has been living in the U.S. for many years, Alex Hill, James O’Neill, and Michael Anthony, three combat veterans from the U.S. On the first day of production, Anthony, with his friend Alex on the phone, was in the studio working out the dialogue and sequence of events with Wodiczko. The main portion of the script was written and recorded in one day.\(^\text{108}\)

Hill’s motivation to help, similar to the response of Tala Khudairi, was based on friendship and the trusted promise of a worthwhile cause. “I agreed to the project to help a friend, and if my insight enabled a more accurate depiction of what it is like then I suppose that’s a good bonus.”\(^\text{109}\) There are two factors that drove both Hill and Khudairi to join the *Out of Here* project, and one resulting conclusion. The first impetus which led them to offer their time and knowledge was the desire to help a friend. The second driving force was their unique ability

\(^{107}\) Michael Anthony, e-mail correspondence with author, April 10, 2011.

\(^{108}\) Anthony, interview.

\(^{109}\) Alex Hill, e-mail correspondence with author, April 27, 2011.
to provide meaningful information to a cause that would continue to affect their daily lives and the lives of countless others.

In utilizing an inconspicuous network of veterans to create the work, Wodiczko’s method foreshadowed how the work would enact its healing powers too. *Out of Here* was soon conceived as an outreach to veterans, as Anthony explained, “What I tried to do was help Krzysztof make sure his [project] was as accurate as possible, so there would not be any veterans saying ‘this isn’t how it happened.’” The process for reaching this level of authenticity soon presented methods both familiar and foreign to Wodiczko’s other projects. Relationship-building at the outset facilitated information gathering, but from that point Wodiczko was in unchartered territory writing a script for and with participants. Anthony shared the proceedings matter-of-factly. “I met Krzysztof at the [sound-recording] studio and he told me what he wanted to do. He drew out a map of the scenario that he wanted to happen, so I told him the most likely responses to his scenario.” One element that was new for the artist was hiring two voice actors. After Wodiczko and the veterans came up with a plot and wrote the script, the actors arrived for recording. Different audio tracks were spliced together, including explosions, voices of soldiers, the helicopter, Obama’s speech, barking dog, etc, and a sound byte from Anthony as a soldier. Recordings were also added weeks later, such as one by veteran James O’Neill, who lent his voice as one of the soldiers.

---

10 Anthony, *The Callie Crossley Show.*
11 Anthony, e-mail correspondence.
**Tala Khudairi**

Another consultant and voice in *Out of Here* is Tala Khudairi, whose sound byte was added in after production began. Khudairi is Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math at Roxbury Community College just outside of Boston. Growing up partly in Baghdad and partly in the U.S., she has lived almost the entirety of her adult life in the U.S. Her parents and five siblings came to the U.S. shortly before the Iraq-Iran War began in 1980. Although Khudairi acted as the main consultant from the Iraqi perspective, she had never been eyewitness to such destruction. “I personally have not lived through war…I’m very fortunate.” Her family left Iraq before the 1980 Iran-Iraq War and she has resided in the U.S. throughout the current war in Iraq. Khudairi provided her voice as the wailing mother at the end of the loop. She was first incorporated into the project by her friend and colleague Salma Ayyash. Ayyash, Adjunct Professor at Roxbury Community College and co-founder/curator of the Boston Palestinian Film Festival.

Despite her enthusiasm, not even Khudairi knew how much she would be involved. “I went to the first meeting just open to the experience, not fully aware how it would evolve.” She expected to help with the dialogue and represent the average Iraqi, as well as coach the voice actors on the Iraqi accent and slang, but ended up taking on a much more integral role. She became so involved in the project that she helped Anthony, Hill, and Wodiczko write the script. Of her

---

113 Tala Khudairi, *The Callie Crossley Show.*
114 Ibid.
personal motivations, she noted that the project was described as something meant to depict a slice of the war from the perspective of the Iraqi civilian. “I wanted to be able to help bring a voice to the people who are truly innocent.” In helping to create Out of Here, Khudairi was able to not only sympathize with the Iraqis, but present their plight as that of her own. With family still in Iraq, she hears the stories, and sees the war’s effect first hand on her loved ones. Forced to reconcile with this unwelcome reality in the lives of those close to her, she devoted her efforts to Out of Here from a belief that most Americans “have forgotten that the Iraqi people are still suffering and dying from this war; that it has not ended.”

Alex Hill

The former classmate of Anthony, Alex Hill, entered service with the Marine Corp after high school and served as a Rifleman with the Infantry from 2005 to 2009. Deployed to both Lebanon and Iraq during those years, Hill endured mortar attacks and other violent combat experiences. Hill explained, “Michael told me [Out of Here] was a recreation of a fire fight in Iraq that would incorporate visuals and sound in a unique manner.” Anthony’s ability to tell Hill in advance what the setting and plot of the artwork would be shows that Wodiczko knew in which direction he would take Out of Here before the veterans helped him write the script.

---

115 Tala Khudairi, e-mail correspondence with author, May 19, 2011.
116 Ibid.
117 Ibid.
118 Alex Hill, e-mail correspondence with author, April 27, 2011.
As a Marine and an Infantryman, Hill’s life as a soldier in Iraq was distinctly different from Anthony’s. They had different jobs, were in different locations, and served in different branches of the military with different missions. Rather than contradicting Anthony’s experience, Hill’s input allowed the project to gain a wider sense of relevance for viewers. Hill’s comments illustrate his unique perception of events, a perception altogether separate from that Anthony tells of his own in *Mass Casualties*. Hill explains, “My contribution to the project was via a conference call. I advised them on topics such as military jargon, tactics, techniques, and procedures, and individual things like the adrenaline rush.”

His thoughts focused more on the inner reaction, both physiological and mental, that a soldier has to events such as a mortar attack. “In any combat situation there is a chemical cocktail at work in your body. Blood circulation decreases, adrenaline rushes through your system, there are feelings of fear, boredom, rage, etc., and I think that by sharing what I’ve experienced that could give the artist a better perspective.”

**James O’Neill**

James O’Neill’s coworker in a retail store was his initial link to Wodiczko. O’Neill entered military service in the year 2000 at the age of twenty-nine. By this time he had already completed art courses in Italy, and a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts at the University of Hartford in Connecticut. O’Neill was present for the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003. Since his time with the Army, he has completed a

---

119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
certificate at Boston’s The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and begun a Master’s in Fine Art at Tufts University. The veteran has created scores of artwork based on his experiences with the Army, and participated in numerous exhibitions and projects.

Returning home from the war, O’Neill found himself in school and working part time at a retail store. A coworker held an internship at Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art and mentioned that Wodiczko was undertaking a project about the war. The coworker suggested that O’Neill get in contact with Wodiczko to offer his eye-witness accounts. O’Neill half-heartedly agreed, but put the invitation in the back of his mind. Over the ensuing months, as O’Neill worked on his own artwork and classes, Wodiczko’s project resurfaced. O’Neill finally contacted Wodiczko in September 2009. At that point the animation portion was complete, but Wodiczko included O’Neill’s input regarding the dialogue and his voice for the recording. O’Neill told a story that perhaps gave collaborators more authenticity than they were ready for:

During the first dry run at the museum, everyone was there. Wodiczko, the curator, the director of the museum. They went through [the footage] and everyone looked at me and wanted to hear what I had to say about it. I thought it was pretty good, but it can’t be truly authentic without swearing. It’s not realistic to have explosions and people’s lives in danger and write a script that has everyone minding their manners.121

It was at this point that the team agreed to include two things. First, the artist, actors and veterans incorporated the more realistic language that O’Neill recommended, and second, museum personnel fabricated signs that warned visitors of strong language to be placed outside the gallery. The exhibition was

---

121 O’Neill, phone interview.
malleable to anticipate the reaction of the audience. The related programming, participants, and processes were characterized by the same sensitivity that Wodiczko and the veteran advisors sought in creating the work.

**Museum Events**

The ICA dedicated time, manpower, and money to hosting events related to the artwork. On February 28, 2010, Diane Levin of Boston University lectured at the ICA in conjunction with *Out of Here*, specifically addressing the war’s impact on children in the U.S., children in military families, or children that have been affected by hearing about the war through the media. On the final day of the exhibition, March 28, 2010, Dan Murphy gave testimony of his experiences and emotions as a reporter covering international conflicts for Bloomberg News Bureau and *Far Eastern Economic Review* and as a staff writer for *Christian Science Monitor.*

In a presentation to museum audiences, Director Kevin Bowen from the William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences shared their research, education, events and other initiatives at the ICA on March 14, 2010.

---

122 Diane Levin is a lecturer at the Boston University School of Management and Professor of Education at Wheelock College, author of books on the effects of media on children, and founder of childhood watchdog agencies TRUCE (Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children’s Entertainment) and CCFC (Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood).

123 *...Out of Here: The Veterans Project,*" pamphlet.

124 The Joiner Center was established in 1982 as an outgrowth of the university’s commitment to veterans. Healing from the wounds caused on both sides of the Vietnam War has taken the lion’s share of the center’s focus, but has addressed topics ranging from the world wars, to Bosnia, and most recently Iraq and Afghanistan. Since its inception the Joiner Center has hosted multiple exhibitions of artwork by Vietnam War veterans dealing with the conflict, including the devotion of shows to women and minorities in Vietnam. Receiving support from Congress, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the National Endowment for Humanities and other sources, the Joiner Center has sent delegations of veterans to Vietnam, sent medical supplies and equipment to hospitals and clinics there, and conducted surveys and studies of the harmful toxin known as
As part of the museum’s efforts to expand their reach and resources, ICA staff took the initiative to establish new links. Curator for Out of Here, Randi Hopkins outlines the process. “We, completely independent of Wodiczko, developed a relationship with the Joiner Center.”\footnote{Hopkins, interview.} The museum’s attempt to break new ground in visitor bases was largely done through the Joiner Center. “We started having conversations with them… [and tried] to make them aware of what we were doing or inviting them to be in the panels.”\footnote{Ibid.} This collaboration extended the resources past what even Wodiczko initially conceived. With a larger pool of people between them, the ICA and the Joiner Center reached new audiences and opened up the possibility for future collaborations.

What may have been the most informative event was the panel discussion held on Veterans Day, November 11, 2009; one week after the show’s opening. This program was moderated by Director of Programs at the ICA, David Henry, and participants included Wodiczko, Iraqi-American Khudairi, Dean of Sciences at Roxbury Community College and Fulbright Scholar, O’Neill, Iraq War veteran and MFA student at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, and Anthony, author and veteran (fig. 31). The subject matter dealt largely with Wodiczko’s motives behind the work and the function of Out of Here as a memorial, an artwork, and its potential to act as a forum for healing and mutual understanding. During the event the artist summarized his views this way, “I think it is right to confront

Agent Orange used by the American military during the war. A writer’s workshop, in which Michael Anthony participated, publishes poetry and hosts a residency for three-months to bring writers from four war-torn areas of the world. William Joiner Center for the Study of War and Social Consequences, “About Us,” University of Massachusetts, Boston, \footnote{http://www.umb.edu/joinercenter/about/} (accessed March 11, 2010).
these issues of war, and to try to pierce the wall of understanding between those
who know what its like and those who don’t. Everybody should get in on it.
Writers, filmmakers, artists…”127 Wodiczko’s openness to this multiplicity of
participants is apparent in the diverse organizations and individuals that were
included in the programming for Out of Here. Running with the idea in their own
way, the ICA made all events related to the exhibition free with museum
admission. As part of another push to reach even more people while at the same
time expanding their visitor base, the museum offered free museum admission for
active duty veterans of the U.S. military with appropriate identification.128

The give and take between artist and institution yielded accessible events
and a thoughtful exhibition program. In Out of Here, rather than acting as a
conduit for the voices of the veterans, as was more so the case in Veteran Vehicle
Projection, Denver (2008) and Veterans’ Flame (2009), Wodiczko took the words
of his interviewees and created a platform from which their messages could reach
far out into the community. In each setting, such messages are presented with a
unique synthesis of the information, be it visual, audible, or tangible. When these
artworks take place out of doors, where Wodiczko’s installations contain
projected words or images onto monuments or architecture, they are akin to
collage; pasting disparate elements together for a unified result. In a situation such
as the ICA’s commission, with greater control of his environment than is typical
of Wodiczko’s outdoor work, projecting within a museum’s walls is more like
painting on a blank canvas. Only in conjunction with each other could museum

127 Krzysztof Wodiczko, Panel Discussion moderated by David Henry, opening program for Out
of Here, ICA/Boston, November 11, 2009.
128 “Out of Here: The Veterans Project,” pamphlet.
staff, American soldiers, Iraqis, and Wodiczko create a depiction that accurately showed life from both sides of the bullet.
Three: Audience Responses

To complete the three-legged stool upon which an informed perception of the work and its surroundings rest, the present and final chapter addresses audience responses. The feedback available is both in-depth and diverse, which shall aid in filling in important gaps such as how the work has been received and understood. Articles in the media as well as scholarly journals are included to show the range of written responses to the exhibition and how mention of it, or lack thereof, reveals its reception. An analysis of these sources, as well as personal interviews and surveys, offers a window to the thoughts of the professionals and amateurs that have interacted with Out of Here.

The rich texture of responses is made up by a wealth of sources. Media outlets from the Boston Globe to National Public Radio and more have reviewed the exhibition. Surprisingly, Out of Here was only reviewed in one art journal and two art magazines. The lack of an exhibition catalogue led to the close scrutiny of the accompanying pamphlet that the ICA published. The panel-discussion at the ICA on the opening night of the exhibition was a unique opportunity that allowed Wodiczko and his advisors to talk together in public and share their individual points of view. Based on interactions with those who witnessed Out of Here, interviews, phone, and email correspondence provide personal accounts of

the exhibition and events. These interviews range from non-veteran American civilians, to Middle Eastern-born American citizens, to veterans who have not seen combat, to combat veterans. The compilation of these separate elements make up the spectrum of reactions to Wodiczko’s latest work and offers a view of the foundation for how the work will be understood for years to come.

Media and Critical Response

Surprisingly, only five feature-length articles covered Out of Here in Boston-area publications within the first two weeks of November 2009. One review from January of 2010 was based on the original version of Out of Here at the ICA in Afterimage: The Journal of Media, Arts, and Cultural Criticism. Art magazines Bomb and ArtReview included reviews of the New York showing in 2011, (March and May, respectively).

Jody Zellen’s article in Afterimage cited the progression of the artist’s work from vehicles for the homeless to vehicles for veterans. Another key aspect of the work she emphasized is the collaboration between Wodiczko and the veterans who volunteered to tell their stories and help construct the work. Zellen’s review points to the dual protagonists of the civilians (the mother who cries for her dead child) and the veterans: “The piece highlights the impossible choices that confront soldiers in war.” Touching upon both target audiences, Zellen observes the end result of the installation is that “Wodiczko creates a space to

---

132 Zellen, 26.
contemplate the horrors of war from the perspective of both soldiers and civilians.”133

One of the art magazines that reviewed *Out of Here* was *Bomb*, a multidisciplinary publication that reviews art, literature, film and other fields.134 Writer and art critic Kathleen MacQueen elaborates on Wodiczko’s choice to exhibit *Out of Here* in different times and places, a move most often avoided with site-, time-, and someone-specific art (though artists seem to be avoiding it less and less these days). She comments that “each and every venue and audience demands a different consideration and provides a unique opportunity.”135 MacQueen makes the point that while the ICA version included examples of the veteran vehicle works and a veteran’s flame work on television screens, the New York *Out of Here* only kept the flame piece. Her conclusion is that this reduction “distills the artist’s visual vocabulary to the barest minimum.”136 This method or tool for reaching audiences is characteristic in Wodiczko’s practice as teacher and/or psychotherapist. MacQueen adroitly picked up on these cues, adding a comparison between *Out of Here* and video games, as well as between *Out of Here* and a theatrical or cinematic event. In these frameworks, she has examined the exhibition and its meaning in ways that other reviewers missed.

The final art magazine article was found in *ArtReview*, a publication devoted to contemporary art and the art market. Writer Jonathan T.D. Neil observed that, whereas painting was ubiquitous during the Renaissance, it is no

---

133 Ibid.
134 MacQueen, “Shifting Connections: Krzysztof Wodiczko,” *Bomb*.
135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
He pointed out that today video and screen have more right to claim that status as portal, but largely neglected to comment on this inheritance. Wodiczko’s Out of Here, Neil acknowledged, actively engages with this metaphor. The short review concisely reported details of the installation in New York and included Wodiczko’s Guests and If You See Something as precursors to Out of Here. Yet Neil’s greatest contribution through the review is lining Wodiczko up with those who have intelligently questioned the ideas of illusion, windows, and screens, such as Alfred Hitchcock with Rear Window (1954), and Richard Serra with Frame (1969).

The first news article came from Boston Globe chief art critic Sebastian Smee on November 1, 2009, three days prior to the opening of the exhibition at the ICA. Smee shared the insights he gleaned from Wodiczko and seeing the exhibition. For example, while Randi Hopkins remarked that the continuous running of the video/audio loop referred to a war with no end in sight, Smee likens the loop to a recurring nightmare. Citing the artist’s place of birth, in Communist Poland, Smee correlates the freedoms of a democratic society as those by which Wodiczko pursues in his art and also how healing will be initiated by a project’s participants. In an attitude of sincere appreciation taken for granted by most citizens, Wodiczko is cited saying, “You don’t find democracy, you make

---

it.” Smee seems to fully grasp Wodiczko’s oeuvre, and pinpoint an essential quality of *Out of Here*, when observing the performance dramatics of this interrogative style. In the article’s title, “Theater of War,” the author hints at what he later says outright. “For people to speak about the unspeakable, some kind of theatricality is often necessary.” Smee also quotes Anthony as a contributor to the accuracy of the message, noting the veteran’s role in suggesting dialogue, realistic scenarios, and as conduit for Wodiczko to other veterans.

An equally insightful article comes from arts correspondent Andrea Shea of *National Public Radio’s WBUR 90.9fm* at Boston University on 10 November, 2009. The author interviews veteran contributor to *Out of Here* James O’Neill, observing the hesitance veterans feel in talking to others about their experiences. The reluctance to share personal feelings and history is symbolized, Shea tells readers, by the walls on which Wodiczko projects his latest work. The situating of the work in an interior, instead of Wodiczko’s usual outdoor sites, is crucial to understanding the work as an interior of a soldier’s psyche. She quotes Wodiczko, “It could be an interior of a soldier who came back from war and who is re-living, remembering, recalling some scenes and moments – perhaps similar to the one that I’m trying to create.”

Art critic for the *Boston Phoenix*, Greg Cook drew a literary picture of *Out of Here* that revealed the disparity between the statistics normally reported in the media, and Wodiczko’s use of some of the same means of transmitting data, audio

---

139 Ibid.
140 Ibid.
and video, to mold an emotional reception of the war. “Most of our reporting is data, not narratives. That is what makes Krzysztof Wodiczko’s new video installation…so powerful, and so necessary.” As the Phoenix piece centers on the narrative quality of Out of Here, Cook’s dramatic wording, including uncensored portions of the artwork’s cursing soldiers, leads readers into an understanding that “rather than recounting a memory, Wodiczko involves us in a visual and audio experience that becomes our memory.”

This act of rendering new memories is also what Anthony somewhat flippantly refers to when, in an article for the Metro Daily News, he is quoted as saying, “If [Wodiczko] made it any more accurate, people would be leaving (the ICA) with Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome.” The article is dually focused, contrasting Wodiczko’s exhibition on violence with one about tranquility by Taro Shinoda at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Bergeron’s writing lacks the theoretical insight or opinionated punch of the previous articles, but begs the question of how, “Through a fascinating confluence, these just-opened exhibitions in very different Boston museums use sound to evoke a chaotic firefight…and moonlit introspection…”

The last review comes from the Bay State Banner by freelance and frequent arts writer Susan Soccoccia. Written on November 19, 2009, this article

143 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
146 Ibid.
differentiates *Out of Here* from Wodiczko’s other work. “Unlike most of Wodiczko’s other installations, which present eyewitness testimonies, this installation is a work of fiction, but no less truthful…”147 Her observations, and the rest of these critical responses, reveal the sensitive, yet important nature of the topic that Wodiczko has chosen. Though the previously mentioned sources exist to inform the public, their institutionalized voices cannot substitute for the opinions of individuals.

**Non-Veterans and General Population Exhibition Visitors (a small portion of which may include veterans)**

Of the interviews conducted, concern was taken to include Americans, foreigners living in the US (some being Middle Eastern), veterans, students, professionals and more. Some of the participants were previously known to the author, others conversations were the result of new connections. The interviewees represent a range of geographical regions, political and religious orientations. Several of them belong to the City College Veterans Association (the author included), where membership is comprised of many Iraq & Afghanistan War veterans, as well as veterans that have not seen combat (the author being described by the latter). A brief background will be provided for each respondent, along with his or her comments on the form, content, and success of the work.

ChangChia Liu

The first participant is Liu.\(^\text{148}\) 28 years old, Liu was born and raised in Taiwan, serving in the Taiwanese military for sixteen months. There were no military conflicts during his term of enlistment. Currently, Liu lives in New York City, but saw *Out of Here* in Boston. What struck Liu, a frequent visitor of exhibitions, upon entering *Out of Here* at the ICA was that a significant percentage of visitors were sitting on the floor against walls. While there is more than one way of looking at this phenomenon, Liu, who has a graduate degree in psychology, takes the more psychological viewpoint.\(^\text{149}\) “My explanation is that you always find some cover…like under something or behind walls in gun fights. So it’s very natural that people should not expose themselves in the middle of the room.”\(^\text{150}\) Liu’s conclusions point to reactions by visitors, that may even be subconscious and to the ability of *Out of Here* to present a realistic war-like scenario to viewers.

While Liu was convinced that *Out of Here* portrayed an accurate representation of war, he was skeptical about the motivations for doing so. Based on a perceived “patriotic theme with the exhibit,” Liu felt led to believe American soldiers were all bravery and self-sacrifice.\(^\text{151}\) Despite these rebukes, Liu expressed appreciation that the work “successfully initiated certain levels of

\(^{148}\) ChangChia Liu, interview by author, 18 April, 2011.
\(^{149}\) When asked why visitors might choose spots on the floor at the room’s perimeter, Wodiczko admitted that, given the high placement of the windows on the wall, it is easier for a viewer to crane his or her head upwards when resting it against a wall. Additionally, the sitting position, supported by resting against a wall is a more comfortable position from which to watch several loops of the video. Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by the author, April 29, 2011.
\(^{150}\) Liu, interview.
\(^{151}\) Ibid.
conversation about the war." Realizing the difference between Wodiczko’s way of informing audiences about the war and the media’s recitation of numbers and facts, Liu likened the experience at the ICA to a narrative, more like a theatrical experience.¹⁵³

**Emily Thurston**

Thurston, 27 years old, is a registered nurse from a suburb of Boston, which is where she attended Wodiczko’s exhibition. She recalled a feeling of being trapped in the *Out of Here* gallery. Psychologically, she was convinced for the duration of the artwork that the structure was real and that she was in it.

Noting the reactions of others, Thurston commented on how quiet the room was. She perceived that people appeared to be hunkering down during the loop, ducking during loud explosions as if they were in danger. “Everyone seemed to be hiding.”¹⁵⁴ When asked what the artist might have been trying to achieve with such a realistic, experiential artwork, Thurston was able to read into Wodiczko’s goals. “He wanted to bring you to the place, bring you to the war rather than show you a picture of it.”¹⁵⁵ Confident of her interpretation of the artwork, Thurston saw *Out of Here* as antipartisan, neutral, not for or against the war. Yet when asked who might benefit the most from seeing the exhibition, she related that the intended audience was most likely the American public, and specifically, not Iraqis.

---
¹⁵² Ibid.
¹⁵³ This quality of storytelling rather than number crunching has already been pointed out in Smee’s article from the *Boston Globe*, “Theater of War”.
¹⁵⁴ Emily Thurston, phone interview by author, April 6, 2012.
¹⁵⁵ Ibid.
Amber Bybee

Another respondent was 28-year-old Bybee.156 A native of Fresno, California Bybee lives and works in New York City, which is where she witnessed Out of Here. With a career in marketing and acting, Bybee enjoyed stepping into the work as an immersive experience. For her it was a convincing transformation of a museum gallery into a space that felt neutral, where she could watch the chaos from a safe vantage point. Also commenting on the reality of the experience and the tendency of viewers to avoid the open areas of the exhibition space, she said that if it actually were a dangerous scene, “I would certainly not be standing up. I would be in a corner.”157 Like Liu, Bybee noticed a difference between Out of Here, which she thought attempted to humanize all combatants, and traditional media, documentaries, and war movies, which dehumanized, or even demonized an enemy. Lastly, an important concept that Bybee took away was that the artist seemed to target younger generations.158 Through his use of computer imagery and the latest technology, rather than painting, sculpture or the printed word, Wodiczko spoke a message that could be widely understood, yet did so in the language most familiar to those still coming of age.

156 Amber Bybee, interview by author, April 8, 2011.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
Eirini Louis

A third interviewee is Louis.159 Born in Cairo, Louis moved to the U.S. at age 14. Currently, she lives and works as an accountant in the New York Metro area, which is where she saw the exhibition. While Louis observed that the tactical speech and action of the soldiers evidenced their loss of individuality to accomplish missions, she also stated a belief that the artist was trying to re-humanize the war’s participants. Although there are losses on all sides in a war, Louis was impressed by the recollection that war’s agents are always real people. She recognizes the trauma that accompanies war as she realizes that Out of Here closely relates to the PTSD of an actual veteran. Expressing sympathies with the Iraqi people more than the other respondents, Louis acknowledges that when war is fought in someone’s homeland, “It is not just an invasion of safety, but a normal way of life can never be the same again.”160 She also believes the work was created with a specific message to younger generations. Louis interprets the work as a call to action that encourage voting among young people, speaking out against the questionable practices of an established regime, and communicating such messages across social and national layers of the global population.

Fluent in both Arabic and English, Louis translated the soul-wrenching wails of the woman at the end of the audio track, yelling into the hot, dusty sky as she supposedly mourns the death of her son from the crossfire of the mortar attack and gunfight. Before the loop resets and starts again with the carefree laughter of children, it is the last thing visitors hear.

159 Eirini Louis, interview by author, February 18, 2011.
160 Ibid.
“What have you done? And what have we done to you?”

“You Sons of Bitches!”

(Asking another woman) “Is he breathing?”

“He’s not breathing. What have we done to you, you Sons of Bitches?!?

My Lord, my Lord!”161

Is the woman shouting at the long gone American soldiers? Maybe she yells at the insurgents who have run and hidden someplace nearby. Louis condenses Wodiczko’s thesis down to one important question: “Does this have to happen?”162

**Veterans Respond**

As veterans constitute the main subject matter, and are one of the most important target audiences, their feedback is particularly informative. The reactions from men and women who lived out the real-life scenario of *Out of Here* offer insight into the psychological depths that Wodiczko attempted to probe. Collectively, their responses give a picture that non one else could provide and clarify the creation, interpretation, and legacy of *Out of Here*. Yet at the same time, these are people just like everyone else. Despite their close involvement in the war, many are still struggling to make sense of what they saw and the implications that continue to ripple through the world.

---

161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
**Steven Conde**

Conde is a veteran of the Army who served 15 months in Iraq. As a machinist and metal fabricator he was assigned to convoys, which were constantly on the move. He formerly worked in the bookstore at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and frequently attends exhibitions, including *Out of Here* at Galerie Lelong in Manhattan. Currently, he is attending City College of New York where he is a member of the City College Veterans Association. Conde’s familiarity with the setting prompted him to explain that although he has never been in a mortar attack, he has experienced rocket attacks. The difference, while imperceptible to most, is commonplace to veterans of war. Nevertheless, Conde imagined the scenes have similar feels.

As the video is run on a continual loop, starting over immediately after it finishes, viewers often enter the gallery when the scene has already started. In Conde’s experience, catching the loop in the middle added to the sense of confusion inherent in the work. As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, the substantial onslaught of audible information and lack of visible information led to a feeling of vulnerability. This kind of disorientation, he added, is a realistic expectation to have in a war zone. Furthermore, the veteran commented on the authenticity of the scene as a whole. The setting was believable and the soundtrack offered a valid snippet of such chaos.

While Conde judged that the intended audience was the American public, he added that everyone could benefit from seeing *Out of Here* and would

---

163 Steven Conde, interview by author, March 28, 2011.
164 Mortar attacks are aimed at stationary targets, such as military bases. Rockets or missiles are fired upon moving targets, such as convoys.
recommend they do. “People are curious and want to know what these experiences are like. Veterans especially would be grateful that someone took the time to construct a recreation of their experiences.”\textsuperscript{165} The veteran’s interpretation of the unseen protagonist, those he was led to sympathize with, was “from the point of view of ‘the other guy.’”\textsuperscript{166} Based on his experience of \textit{Out of Here} Conde imagined Iraqi insurgents occupying the inside of the warehouse. In his interpretation it was the antagonists labeled as terrorists by the U.S. that were shooting out at the American military forces on the outside. Wodiczko’s artwork has contributed to an astonishing feat: the ability of one to put himself in the shoes of his adversary. Less than two years ago, this young man, Conde, might have been shooting his M-16 rifle at Iraqi insurgents inside a nondescript warehouse in the Middle East. Today, he identifies with that enemy and encourages others to do the same.

\textbf{Stanley Ko}

Ko is a former Navy service member who served from 2005-2010.\textsuperscript{167} Employed as a sonar operator on submarines, he volunteered to deploy to Iraq or Afghanistan, but was not granted the opportunity. At 23 years old Ko is attending school in New York City where he is an Environmental Science major. After serving 4 years in the military, he returned to New York and that is where he witnessed \textit{Out of Here}. Ko, like so many young men and women of his generation, is quite familiar with electronic media and its applications. As each

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{165} Conde, interview.
\item\textsuperscript{166} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{167} Stanley Ko, interview by author, February 20, 2011.
\end{footnotes}
succeeding generation becomes adept with new gadgetry at an earlier age, their exposure to audio, visual, and information stimulation grows too. This ubiquity of media in the lives of most young people is a major contributing factor to one way Ko interpreted Wodiczko’s technologically advanced work, that of assimilating it to movies and video games.

Having entered the gallery in the middle of an *Out of Here* loop, Ko experienced confusion at first, and later questioned why the artist would allow people to perceive his work in what Ko saw as poor timing. Finding the audio track hard to hear at times, the veteran suggested better speakers. He also commented that the computer graphics, specifically the soccer ball that arcs into view through the windows “felt real, like a really good video game.”\(^{168}\) Ko, having never been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, digested Wodiczko’s thorough rendering of the wars in the Middle East and made several conclusions. He could not understand *Out of Here* in the context of the actual war, because he had never been to the front lines. His life in the military was not an applicable framework to assimilate the information, because little if any of that life resembles the action in *Out of Here*. Ko did differentiate *Out of Here* from Hollywood movies about war. The young veteran expressed skepticism pertaining to the accuracy of movies that purport to depict life in war-torn Iraq. Ko inadvertently hit upon the issue that although Hollywood’s movie-making teams may perform due diligence in fact checking, their method of narrative and plot in pursuit of creating the next blockbuster hit often overshadows what might otherwise be an accurate picture of war. The veteran was also able to put *Out of

---

\(^{168}\) Ibid.
Here in context based on the video games he had played. In fact, Out of Here contains striking similarities to some contemporary video games (fig. 32).\(^1\)

Ko described a sense of calm at the beginning of the video, which came from the clouds drifting slowly past the windows and the voices of the children casually talking in the background. His observation points to an often overlooked perspective. Even in Iraq, a country held hostage by two opposing forces warring within its boundaries, there are tame moments where residents forget to look over their shoulders. There are moments of tranquility and normalcy, yet these moments are often suddenly and violently obliterated by iterations of war. Ko went on to conjecture that the setting is a dark warehouse. The viewer might be a prisoner, either American or foreign, hidden away in the building. Hearing Obama over the radio, Ko assumed it meant support for American troops to continue fighting in Iraq. Ironically, if Ko saw the work in Boston, his assumption would have been correct. As it was, Wodiczko outlined that the change to the Obama speech between Boston and New York was that the President talked about the end of the war and withdrawing troops in the later version.\(^2\)

The sudden explosions and restricted visibility lend to a feeling of vulnerability, Ko believed. Because the speakers are placed around the room, “you are constantly turning your head to follow the sounds and movements,

\(^1\) Out of Here shares many fundamental aspects with a popular video game entitled Call of Duty: Modern Warfare. The setting for Out of Here is Iraq; for Call of Duty it is Afghanistan. While the setting for Call of Duty can change, the origin point for the narrative is Afghanistan. American soldiers are the protagonists in both works. The sound of shooting, explosions, and military lingo is integral in Out of Here and Call of Duty. Call of Duty contains many instances where the player is hiding behind objects, shooting from behind blockades or keeping out of harm’s way, where his or her view is restricted. Out of Here puts the viewer in a place of limited visibility where one observes the chaos, but is not harmed by it. Both Out of Here and Call of Duty (as a game in the first-person shooter genre) contain an out-of-reach protagonist.

\(^2\) Wodiczko, interview.
which adds to the paranoia."\textsuperscript{171} Ko made an emotional connection between the killing of the dog and the cruelty of war. He used this as a basis to conclude that the artist was against the war in Iraq and hits upon the dual, perhaps contrary nature of Wodiczko’s position: that “you work towards peace being peaceful.”\textsuperscript{172}

Ko picked up on a reference to PTSD and the long term implications of this disorder for veterans. “The guy who wasn’t allowed to save the kid could end up traumatized by that.”\textsuperscript{173} As a viewer of Out of Here, Ko’s imagination allowed him to place himself in the scene. “I feel sympathy for the prisoner in the warehouse, which could be myself. It makes me want to support the troops more.”\textsuperscript{174} Ko assumed the artwork was directed at people who support war operations in Iraq, to provide the perspective for people who are against such tactics.

\textbf{Bradley McNamara}

McNamara spent 15 months as a paratrooper with the 82\textsuperscript{nd} Airborne Division in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{175} He visited the Out of Here exhibition in New York and responded to Out of Here with an onslaught of questions for Wodiczko about his methods and meaning, as well as new perspectives from which one could view

\textsuperscript{171} Ko, interview.
\textsuperscript{172} The artist has made this statement many times, most notably referenced in an interview with the artist on the PBS Art21 website which contains videos and transcripts from the Season 3 (2005) episode Power of the Art in the Twenty-First Century television series. More recently the artist made the assertion again at the College Art Association annual conference interview in New York, February 2011.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} At the time of this interview McNamara was a double major in studio art and art education in New York City and president of the campus veterans association. He has since graduated and currently teaches art education at a New York City charter school. Bradley McNamara, interview by author, February 27, 2011.
the work. Immediately after exiting the gallery, McNamara wanted to know if the sound recordings were taken from actual experiences or choreographed. Did the artist create his interpretation of events from information disseminated by the media or from veterans who were there? How many soldiers were involved in the firefight? What was their mission? Were they out on patrol? Gathering intelligence? McNamara acknowledged that not all depictions of events are based on truth. “Things can be portrayed as incorrect/surreal or credible/factual.”

McNamara challenged the perspectives from which *Out of Here* was created and could be understood. For this young veteran, it was not enough that the authenticity be measured by veterans that served in these areas overseas. Speaking of combat scenarios, he explained, “Some soldiers never know of incidents as such, other soldiers, with those ‘Go Get ‘Em’ jobs know a lot more as to what happened.”

McNamara listened to *Out of Here* five times in all. After the first iteration, he ran throughout the gallery from speaker to speaker to follow the noises in order to hear them more clearly. His concerns echoed those of other veterans. Along with Ko, McNamara noted the desire for a better sound system. Like Conde, McNamara commented on viewer’s propensity to enter the gallery mid-loop and suggested a timer to acknowledge the start and end points of the piece. Overall, McNamara expressed a positive reaction to the work. “I personally want to thank (Wodiczko) for introducing to the general public the exact unknown

---

176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.
elements to war and conflict.”178 When asked about who would benefit most from seeing Out of Here, McNamara hoped that the “right” people would see it. The right people as defined by those with the agenda to prevent war at all costs and the influence to carry it through. “I hope the benefits to viewing the installation are that Americans never experience war and conflict on our soil. Crime and punishment is one thing, an act of war is far worse.”179

While Wodiczko has not clearly expressed his opinions on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, his depiction in Out of Here shows their damaging toll on both sides. Additionally, the artist has voiced the connection of his practices to psychotherapy, the healing of the mind. Wodiczko’s focus on the conditions that create the need for healing in Out of Here is the spark that fostered McNamara’s reaction, that war should be avoided so that there would be no need for such recovery. At least in this outlook, McNamara and Wodiczko seem to agree.

**Wodiczko’s Consultants Respond**

The veterans who assisted Wodiczko have been open about and commented on their experiences of Wodiczko’s work. As collaborators, their involvement served two functions. First, there would be no accuracy to the level of detail achieved without them. Their willingness to offer up this information and go back into the memory to retrieve it goes against the instinct of so many that try to forget it. Furthermore, this cooperation allowed them to be heard. Wodiczko was advocating that what they had to say was valuable for others to hear, and one

178 Ibid.
179 Ibid.
can conclude that the veteran collaborators themselves saw something worth getting out of the experience.

**Tala Khudairi**

Tala Khudairi, who played the part of an Iraqi mother in *Out of Here*, related the experience to her role as a parent in the U.S. “As a mother in the installation, I’m a mother with children; and I *am* a mother with four children, so I tried to see myself in that situation. God forbid, my son being shot by a sniper – I have to think the civilians are in this not by choice.”

The lack of choices or viable alternatives appears most haunting to Khudairi, who points to the fact that the only choice in case of war is for Iraqis to leave all they know in their homeland or possibly become casualties. While many Iraqis stay, tough it out, and learn to live amidst the turmoil, for too many others fleeing to relative safety is the best option out of their dismal choices.

Khudairi took some of her family and friends to see *Out of Here*, although some chose not to go. “I think they thought it would be too upsetting. One person had to leave in the middle, as it brought back memories of a raid that he experienced as a child that were too painful.” The moment at the end of the loop of a mother wailing over the body of her own offspring is perhaps the most dramatic point in the entire piece. As viewers don’t see, but only hear the scene unfold in *Out of Here*, they are left to imagine it.

---

180 Ibid.
181 Tala Khudairi, e-mail correspondence with author, May 19, 2011.
Admittedly lacking any artistic inclination himself, Hill was intrigued by *Out of Here* as a mode of communicating the reality of war to the masses, and hopefully its often unrecognized effects. Hill gave his view on the artist’s intention and target audience. “I’m not too sure about what the artist was trying to say, I was more interested in an accurate representation.” Over and over again this notion crops up that veterans, in Wodiczko’s expanded sense of the word, seek to give freely of their understanding of war for the benefit of those who would hear them. Hill agreed, “I think people who have never been in either combat or to Iraq would benefit from seeing the project.” Though his involvement with *Out of Here* ended when Anthony and Wodiczko hung up the phone in the studio, Hill was satisfied with his contribution. “I never met Krzysztof, my voice was not recorded for the sound portion of the project, I did not attend any of the museum discussions, and I did not see the finished project, but Michael didn’t raise any issues with it…so that’s good enough for me.”

**James O’Neill**

O’Neill saw his contribution as an opportunity to educate people who, without *Out of Here*, could have no idea what it was like to act in combat. He listed examples of the intended audience. “[*Out of Here*] was definitely directed towards civilians. I don’t need to go see something like that. Michael [Anthony]

---

182 Alex Hill, e-mail correspondence with the author, April 27, 2011.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
doesn’t need to go see something like that...My parents do. Other civilians do.”

While he recognizes that most civilians lack this information, O’Neill also gives them the benefit of the doubt. He doesn’t blame civilians for not understanding what goes on over there. He doesn’t understand it himself. On his own website O’Neill attempts to explain the ability of art to transcend other forms of communication on difficult topics. “While I was deployed, all I could think of was being home. What I did not know then was that Iraq would come home with me.” While Wodiczko put O’Neill’s expertise to use in molding Out of Here, O’Neill used Wodiczko’s project to make sense of his own experiences. Along with Tala Khudairi, Michael Anthony, Wodiczko and an ICA moderator, O’Neill was a speaker at the panel discussion presented on opening night of the exhibition. In dialogue with the other panelists and the audience, O’Neill expressed a hope that his efforts through Out of Here would help other veterans clarify thoughts and feelings about their tours of combat.

Michael Anthony

Anthony remembered his surprise and satisfaction at how well the project came together in the end. He was particularly interested in observing people, and touched by their reactions, as they exited the exhibition on opening night. The veteran talked with Emily Thurston, the young nurse from Boston who attended Out of Here on opening night at the ICA. He was impressed by her openness to

---

the message and perception of details.\textsuperscript{188} Afterwards, Anthony talked to other veterans who were also fascinated with the responses of museum visitors. “I know a few veterans who went to the show, and for them, they told me that the best part was listening to the people after they went through the exhibition.”\textsuperscript{189} One of these veterans told Anthony, “It was interesting to hear someone’s point of view about what I’d gone through.”\textsuperscript{190} Another veteran said to Anthony that \emph{Out of Here} put into perspective an experience that he hadn’t been able to describe to his friends and family.\textsuperscript{191} The exhibition said what veterans couldn’t even say. Veterans are often confronted with a myriad of unanswerable questions. What was it like being in war? What did you do? What happened over there? \emph{Out of Here: The Veterans Project} finally allowed them to say, “This is what it was like…”
Conclusion

The majority of veterans and civilians that have lived through a war zone are suffering silently. As these survivors come back from war with different needs than they had before leaving, needs different from everyone else, the rest of the population must recognize this fact and adapt. Unfortunately, it is an adaptation that will require coming face to face with the horrible evidence of the war in Iraq. Broken people serve imperfect governments in troubled countries. In acknowledging this need, Wodiczko has led the way. The example set by Out of Here has blazed a path for the dialogue needed to address the challenges of the war. Traumatized citizens, diplomatic policies, and the desire for peace are issues that Out of Here has attempted to probe. Recognizing that these victims of trauma are hurting and require more understanding than they are getting, the artist has asked them for the insight only they can give. The role of the artist has been one of intermediary. His familiarity with both sides, veterans of combat and civilians, has allowed him to speak to each party and facilitate communication between the two. The result has opened up new fields of information and pathos to larger publics, and fresh approaches to creatively engineer art forms for Wodiczko.

The collaborative process of creating Out of Here was crucial to both the final product and its effects. The exhibition hosted the voices and opinions of those from the soldier and civilian perspectives. Each response to the exhibition focused on something different, revealed the various opinions, and showed the ability of Out of Here to speak to a wide audience. Organizations, such as IVAW
and the Joiner Center, bring veterans and civilians together for support and social action. While some veterans seek the help of licensed professionals, other individuals enact healing on their own. O’Neill, who was a former member of the Board of Directors of the Monotype Guild of New England, spoke about his own efforts at art. An excerpt from the artist statement on his website reads, “By reconstructing my combat experience in visual terms it becomes possible to express something that I cannot articulate in words.”

Through drawings and graphic work, he has sought to bridge the gap between those with war experience and the uninitiated, as well as to provide an outlet for the unspeakable emotions that boil within him (fig. 33). For some, the best therapy is creating artwork, while others may find writing as a suitable outlet. Yet some people require even more advanced forms of aid (fig. 34).

Not only was Out of Here created with soldier and civilian veterans of combat, these demographics were also the target audience. Wodiczko’s ambition

192 James O’Neill Art, “Artist Statement.”
193 With Out of Here, O’Neill’s and Wodiczko’s ambitions come side-by-side. Though both of these artists are at vastly different stages in their lives, they have approached (and independent of each other, continue to approach), the challenges of addressing war and its results on the human psyche. One a young Iraq War veteran with something to say, the other an elder with the ability to foster the exchange of information, their collaboration, with help from the ICA, generated a synthesis that could not be achieved alone.
194 Using some of Wodiczko’s same ideas and methods to reach sufferers from PTSD from within an academic institution, The University of Southern California (USC) has an entire department dedicated to helping veterans recover from wartime trauma. The school hosts the Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families. The Center’s collaboration with USC’s Institute for Creative Technologies has pioneered a virtual and interactive software program for graduate students of the School of Social Work. In the L.A. Times on March 27, 2011, Alexandra Zavis noted, “Since Sept. 11, 2001, more that 2 million U.S. troops have deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly a third report symptoms of PTSD, severe depression or traumatic brain injury when they return, according to a 2008 study by Rand Corp.” The author goes on to quote Marilyn Flynn, Dean of the USC School of Social Work. “‘This, as everybody knows, exceeds the capacity of the existing institutions or the existing professional workforce’ in both military and civilian settings.” At USC, the new system uses computer simulated characters to allow students to train to “interact with military personnel and identify the signs of post-traumatic stress disorder.” These efforts point to the steps being taken by civilians, with similar goals as Wodiczko, to reach out to veterans and offer healing.
for the work was two-fold: awareness and healing. Expression (writing, painting, or simply sharing information) is one example of how to process the experiences. Another one is acknowledgment of the situation from someone else’s perspective. Even though many people may not be able to understand what the traumatized have been through, to know someone is making an effort can reassure veterans of the valuable insight which they hold.

**Exposure Therapy**

Wodiczko’s procedures are reminiscent of what is perceived as the most effective method of confronting one’s trauma, combat-related trauma in particular, Exposure Therapy. This type of behavior therapy aims to reduce the anxiety caused by a traumatic event or fear. A therapist may use this technique on someone that has acute stress disorder to prevent their condition from developing into post-traumatic stress disorder, or it may be utilized to treat an already existing case of PTSD. This technique calls for the patient to relive the event in their mind’s eye while he or she is verbalizing the scene to the therapist. In *Out of Here*, Wodiczko asked soldier and civilian veterans to help him recreate their experiences. With no formal training as a therapist, Wodiczko has taught himself the tools, such as Exposure Therapy, through a lifetime of examining the psychologically wounded.

In Exposure Therapy, there are two mainstream methods. The first is the older and more traditional Imaginal Exposure Therapy, in which the patient

---

engages his or her imagination or memory to relive and retell the scene. The second, newer method is Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy (VRET). This strategy utilizes the latest technology to put the patient in an environment with actual sights and sounds to accompany their narration of traumatic events. Some clinics even go so far as to provide dummy military rifles for the patient to wield, or apparatuses that simulate the driving or riding in of a military vehicle (fig. 35).\footnote{Lorin Smith, “Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy to combat PTSD,” The United States Army, article posted on January 19, 2010,[http://www.army.mil/article/33128/](http://www.army.mil/article/33128/) (accessed February 20, 2012).}

\textit{Out of Here} closely resembles the latter method, VRET. Earlier works, such as \textit{War Veteran Vehicle}, even include props, such as actual military vehicles.

A third iteration of Exposure Therapy, which Wodiczko also enacted, is to sit and share in small groups; what is often labeled as Group Therapy.\footnote{David J Ready et al., “The Impact of Group-Based Exposure Therapy on the PTSD and Depression of 30 Combat Veterans,” \textit{Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy} 4, no. 1 (2012): 84-93.} These sessions are most often led by a psychologist or social worker (again played by Wodiczko), and include veterans undergoing treatment who listen and support each other. Creating \textit{Out of Here} provided the impetus for a small selection of war’s witnesses to get together and talk about their experiences. The panel discussion, lectures and other museum programs facilitated by the ICA gave place for these sessions to have public audiences. The exhibition and related events encouraged all interested parties to congregate and discuss the topic. Without proper coaching Exposure Therapy can be traumatic in its own way. Well-intentioned family and friends that press their veterans to share, to understand what they went through, can end up pushing their loved ones away. By engaging
with these witnesses of war as a fellow witness and then encouraging them to
share, Wodiczko opens the door for veterans to discuss their thoughts and feelings
with others willing to listen.

Exposure Therapies point to the recognition by psychological
professionals that communication from both sides, the traumatized and the
listener, is a critically effective means of treating veterans, reducing long-term
health costs, and addressing the multi-faceted needs of individuals, groups,
institutions, and society as a whole. In fact, so convinced are some professionals
about the efficacy of Exposure Therapy, studies have been done to discover the
extent that these therapies are underutilized.198

Wodiczko as Clinician

With the potential repercussions of these psychotherapeutic methods laid
out, one could take issue with Wodiczko’s lack of formal training. His goals of
empowering people to heal themselves and helping them through the process are
noble—but what of the risks? What if Wodiczko probes too deep into the
minefield of the traumatized psyche? If Wodiczko has not yet pushed too far in
his sessions with the homeless, immigrants, veterans, or others, one might ask
whether he is even aware of the dangers that could arise from his well-intentioned
encouragements. Dialoguing with Patricia C. Phillips, editor-in-chief of Art
Journal, on the hazards faced by those who participate in his projects, Wodiczko
explained, “Once they have thought about the act of speech, they need to calculate

198 Carolyn Becker, Claudia Zayfert, and Emily Anderson, “A Survey of Psychologists’ Attitudes
Towards and Utilization of Exposure Therapy for PTSD,” Behaviour Research and Therapy 24
what is more risky, to speak or not to...Everyone has a choice to stay or to leave. Sometimes loss moves them to speak. Sometimes people are not ready to give their testimony." Cognizant of the uncertainties in such a procedure, Wodiczko is able to take calculated steps to engage with a person’s history. Considering his personal experiences and decades helping people advocate for themselves, Wodiczko realizes his limits. “This is not a clinical situation. I am not a licensed clinician. I am an amateur in this field who understands the significance of these situations.”

In creating Out of Here, Wodiczko modeled the behavior he urges global audiences to adopt. He has shared his experiences as a veteran with those willing to listen, then sought out and listened to the stories that other veterans had to tell. His mantra is this: If others will do the same, all will be advantaged. Veterans will benefit as they are recognized and valued as the only ones who have the information to truly understand the war in Iraq and its repercussions for the United States. The rest of the population, non-veteran civilians, will benefit from the dissemination of this information, and the cohesion that is made possible by citizens working together. Through Out of Here, veterans have shown that they want to impart their knowledge by partnering with Wodiczko and speaking out.  

199 Based on the evidence it would seem Wodiczko is better able to see the potential pitfalls and challenges than most people. The most convincing indicator that Wodiczko is aware of the risks that are present when one does not confront their afflictions is that the artist has been through traumatic experiences himself. Wodiczko, by way of his artistic techniques that help people confront their own struggles, continually deals with his adversities. Does he do it because he never had anyone help him through his own traumas? Is he also healing himself through these exchanges of vulnerability? Speaking on the mistrust and/or hostility encountered from participants, Wodiczko understands their caution. “Does someone want to make money from them? Do I want to become famous through them? Is someone after a sensational story? These are legitimate questions.” He perceives that his status as an outsider (from American society) helps his case. “The project becomes less threatening. They begin to accept that the project will not retaliate. It can, in fact, be used by them.” Phillips, “Creating Democracy.” 

200 Ibid.
Civilians have demonstrated that they want this information from veterans by the positive reception Out of Here received.

The underlying fact brought to the surface by Wodiczko through Out of Here is that people who have not witnessed war don’t know how to ask veterans about their experiences and veterans don’t know how to answer. There is this missing dialogue, like an empty box, an empty warehouse, a vacant stare. Wodiczko work fills the gap and brings the two parties to understanding, communication, or both. Yet even he has admitted the possibilities that go far beyond his own work to those who are willing to seek them. “There’s an enormous amount of things that artists could do to be an inspiring force in creating conditions for others to communicate the most difficult things to those who might not be immediately ready to listen.” 201 James O’Neill seeks this end with his graphic works and continued artistic endeavors. But it is perhaps Michael Anthony that best sums up Wodiczko’s latest efforts working with veterans and embodies the exchange of information and support:

As a writer, I could paint such a vivid picture of war that you will feel you are there. But I don't want to do that right now. I don't want you to have to feel the pain of war, although there is no better way to understand it than through the pain -- emotional, spiritual, physical and mental pain. Instead, I present you with the following facts -- and if these facts are painful, too, well, trust that in the end it will be worth it to you -- and to our returning veterans - for you to know them.202

---

201 Krzysztof Wodiczko, interview by Maria Hinojosa, Maria Hinojosa: One-on-One, PBS, January 22, 2010.
FIGURES

Figure 1. Krzysztof Wodiczko at the opening of his exhibition *Guests*, at the Polish Pavilion of the 53rd Venice Biennale, June 4, 2009

http://soundslikevenice.wordpress.com/2009/06/21/krzysztof-wodiczko-guests/
Figures 2 and 3. *Out of Here: The Veterans Project*, installation view, 2009, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston

http://www.icaboston.org/photo-album/wodiczko/view-photo?image_id=11767004
Figure 4. Francisco Goya, *The Third of May 1808*, 1814, Prado Museum, Madrid

http://smarthistory.khanacademy.org/romanticism-in-spain.html

Figure 5. Edouard Manet, *The Execution of Emperor Maximilian*, 1868-69, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

Figure 6. Pablo Picasso, *Masacre in Korea*, 1951, Musee National Picasso, Paris


Figure 7. Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913, Museum of Modern Art, New York

[Image: http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A624&page_number=15&template_id=1&sort_order=1]
Figure 8. Jean (Hans) Arp, *Untitled (Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance)*, 1917, Museum of Modern Art, New York

http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3A%AE%3A11&page_number=6&template_id=1&sort_order=1

Figure 9. Otto Dix, *Wounded Soldier – Autumn 1916, Bapaume* from the series *The War*, 1924

http://www.ottodix.org/index/catalog-item/133.006.html
Figure 10. Otto Dix, *Stormtroops Advancing Under a Gas Attack* from the series *The War*, 1924

http://www.ottodix.org/index/catalog-item/133.012.html

Figure 11. Francisco Goya, *A Heroic Feat! With Dead Men!* from the series *The Disasters of War*, executed 1810-1814, published 1863, various locations

http://pictify.com/234/francisco-jos-de-goya-y-lucientes-the-disasters-of-war
Figure 12. Eddy Adams, *Execution of a Viet Cong Guerilla 1968*, 1968

http://www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0309/lm12.html

Figure 13. *Homeless Vehicle*, 1988-89, New York, NY

http://alicectphoto.wordpress.com/
Figure 14. *Bunker Hill Monument Projection*, 1998, Charlestown, Boston, MA

http://www.kirksavage.pitt.edu/
Figure 15. Swastika projected onto the South African Embassy, 1985, London, England

http://www.thecommentfactory.com/the-global-art-uprising-how-the-revolutionary-spirit-transformed-creativity-6220/

Figure 16. *Grand Army Plaza Projection*, 1985, Brooklyn, NY

http://imagearts.ryerson.ca/imagesandideas/pages/artistpicture.cfm?page=174
Figure 17. *Veteran Vehicle Projection, Denver*, 2008, Democratic National Convention, Denver, CO

http://www.interrogative.org/projects/2008/veteran-vehicle-project/media/48

Figure 18. *War Veteran Vehicle*, 2009, Liverpool, England

Figure 19. *Projection of War Veterans*, 2010 Warsaw, Poland

http://www.fundacjaprofile.pl/tree.php?id=449


http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/hirschhorn-drift-topography-t11885
Figure 22. Jenny Holzer, from the series *Redaction Paintings*, 2005-2009
Figure 23. *Veterans’ Flame*, 2009, Governors Island, NY


Figure 24. War Memorial to World War II, Eternal Flame, Sarajevo, Bosnia

Figure 25. *Hiroshima Projection*, 1999, Atomic Bomb Dome, Hiroshima, Japan

Figure 26. *If You See Something...*, 2005, Galeie Lelong, New York, NY
Figure 27. *Guests*, 2009, at the Polish Pavilion, 53rd Venice Biennale

http://soundslikevenice.wordpress.com/2009/06/21/krzysztof-wodiczko-guests/

Figure 28. *Speaking Flame*, 2005, Galerie Lelong, NY, NY
(Image taken from *Speaking Flame* shown in Poland the same year.)

http://www.mots.org.il/eng/exhibitions/WorkItem.asp?ContentID=19
Figure 29. Schematic for incomplete project: *Communicating Through Statues: A Proposal for a City of Strangers*, 2004

![Schematic for incomplete project](image)

Document shared with the author by the artist

Figure 30. Budget for incomplete project: *Communicating Through Statues: A Proposal for a City of Strangers*, 2004

**Equipment Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment for the statue:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video camera</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video projector</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>projector-screen forms</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>statue to projector armature</td>
<td>2,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screen form armature</td>
<td>1,600.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>speakers with armature</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>microphone for interlocutors</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment for the statue-animators:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video camera</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED lighting</td>
<td>160.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headgear/armature for camera</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCD monitor</td>
<td>700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headset microphone</td>
<td>150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment for animator-preparation:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>video camera</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LED lighting</td>
<td>140.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headgear/armature for camera</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCD monitor</td>
<td>700.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headset microphone</td>
<td>150.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer for image processing</td>
<td>2,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support equipment:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gas generator rental</td>
<td>1,400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amplifier/mixer board rental</td>
<td>1,200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outdoor structure</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>technicians and support crew</td>
<td>5,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cables</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** $ 35,000.00

Document shared with the author by the artist
Figure 31. Panel Discussion, November 11, 2009 (Veterans Day), ICA, Boston, MA


http://www.wickedlocal.com/bridgewater/features/x313362200/B-R-solidier-helps-bring-war-home-in-exhibit?photo=0#axzz1ICsyirMt
Figure 32. *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*, screenshot, 2009, developed by Infinity Ward, published by Activision. (Video gamers are briefed that their starting point for the mission in *Modern Warfare 2* is Afghanistan. This opening scene, with troops exiting a helicopter, is closely reminiscent of the helicopter and troop landing at the opening of *Out of Here*.)


Figure 33. James O’Neill, *Tower 12, Tikrit, Iraq*, 2009, Monotype

https://jamesoneillart.com/Artist_Statement.html
Figure 34. ‘Petty Officer Sarax’ dialogues with social work students in a demonstration of the Virtual Patient technology. Institute for Creative Technologies, University of Southern California

http://cir.usc.edu/archives/1707#/-1/

Figure 35. Department of Defense National Center for Telehealth and Technology. Sufferers from PTSD can be treated with a computer simulated Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy program, including a dummy military rifle.

http://www.army.mil/article/33128/
APPENDIX

Questionnaire created by the author with sampling of answers by people who saw ...Out of Here: The Veterans Project

What were your initial impressions, feelings, and thoughts of the work?

Bybee: “[The artist] is trying to get you to experience a small part of war. Not necessarily bloody and gruesome. You have to use your own imagination, because you can’t see out the windows, which helps you generate your own experience of the war. It is more meaningful when he leaves something out, because you have to figure out the answer for yourself.

Who do you think the artist’s intended audience was for this artwork?

Louis: The artist’s message is not directed at politicians, because they care about numbers and there are no numbers in it. The artwork is for younger generations. It hopes to invoke the younger generations to vote. To create a movement among them to say, “Hey, we’re not for this war,” and maybe through us we can push the message further out to the rest of the world.

Who would benefit most from seeing Out of Here?

McNamara: I only hope the benefits to viewing the installation is that Americans never experience war and conflict on our soil. Crime and punishment are one thing, an act of war is far worse.

What do you think you can tell about the artist based on the artwork?

Liu: It was just one more thing that tried to tell Americans how “dangerous” or “tough” this war is. I guess I kind of connected a little patriotic theme with the exhibit.

Would you recommend seeing the work to others?

Bybee: Yes!
Louis: Yes!
McNamara: Yes!
Liu: Yes!
Ko: Yes!
Conde: Yes!
Thurston: Yes!
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Additional Sources Consulted
