

IMAGES OF THE UNIMAGINABLE

Art from the First World War

THE FIRST WORLD WAR (1914–1918) had a great impact on all spheres of European life for decades. It marked the end of the autocratic structures that had dominated Europe for centuries, and introduced the massive use of war technology, which by the war's end had caused some 40 million casualties. This "seminal catastrophe" of the twentieth century began on June 28, 1914, with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria and his wife, Sophie, in Sarajevo. Owing to a complicated system of military alliances in Europe, a cascade of war declarations followed in the ensuing months. As a consequence, the conflict spread all over the Continent, eventually involving European colonies and, during its last year, the United States.

While most people were supportive of the war, they reacted to its outbreak with fear. The British foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, famously declared, "The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime." Governments quickly realized the only motive that would resonate with their citizens was defense against a war of aggression. War propaganda, along with censorship, created a false impression of the population's enthusiasm for the war. In contrast, the reality on the battlefield was daunting: heroic soldiers were powerless amid trenches, barbed wire, machine guns, tanks, airplanes, and poisonous gas, which led to grueling warfare.

This exhibition commemorates the 100th anniversary of the start of the war, featuring artworks and documents created in France, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, and the United States. The works on display reflect various aspects of the war: support, propaganda, cruelty. Artists include Natalia Goncharova, Olga Rozanova, Félix Vallotton, Waldo Peirce, Childe Hassam, and George Bellows. Their works are not only moving reports of the situation, but also testimonies of their unique styles and techniques.

This exhibition was organized by Bettina Jungen, Thomas P. Whitney, Class of 1937, Curator of Russian Art. Made possible with generous support from the David W. Mesker, Class of 1953, Fund and the Hall and Kate Peterson Fund.

Hallucinations: Bellows's War Prints

Although George Bellows enlisted in the army in 1917, he was never sent overseas. In 1918 he created a series of twelve lithographs based on reports and articles about the 1915 German invasion of Belgium that were widely distributed in the United States. Most of them described how the Germans terrorized local Belgian citizens, with particular focus on the cruel treatment of women and children. While Bellows expressed his "profound reverence for the victims," his pictures not only incited outrage and sympathy, but fed the American appetite for atrocity stories.

Several of his war prints appeared in magazines and journals. *Gott strafe England* was published first in the November 1918 issue of *Vanity Fair*. It shows Germans nailing British soldiers onto doors and is based on a report detailing alleged German atrocities written by the British academic and politician James Bryce. New research, however, states that the most violent scenes in the report, including this one, were invented. A version of *The Base Hospital* appeared in *Vanity Fair* in August 1918. Bellows modeled the situation on a photograph of "a church field hospital" that he saw in *Collier's Weekly*, an American magazine that reported extensively on the war. *The Belgian Farmyard* belongs to the most brutal scenes, for which Bellows chose an intimate scale and few characters. His note on the print reads, "The eternal crime when the animal is turned loose." In this print he uses the contrast of light and dark rather than the descriptive line to evoke the horror of the moment.

George Wesley Bellows
Columbus, Ohio 1882–1925 New York City

Base Hospital, No. 2, 1918
Lithograph

Gift of Charles H. Morgan
AC 1969.42



George Wesley Bellows
Columbus, Ohio 1882–1925 New York City

Belgian Farmyard, 1918
Lithograph

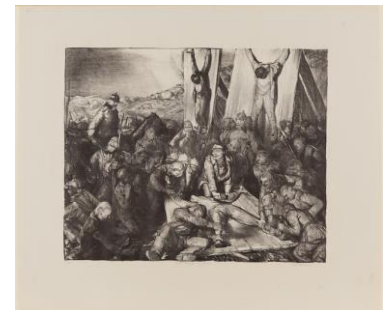
Gift of Charles H. Morgan
AC 1969.44



George Wesley Bellows
Columbus, Ohio 1882–1925 New York City

Gott strafe England (May God Punish England), 1918
Lithograph

Gift of Charles H. Morgan
AC 1969.51



Jules-Abel Faivre
Lyon, France 1867–1945 Nice, France

On les aura! (We will get them!), 1916
Lithograph

Gift of William W. Collins (Class of 1953) in Memory of Wortham
Collins
AC 1977.50



Mystical Images of War

Natalia Goncharova met the First World War like many Russian intellectuals, anticipating that it would serve as a catalyst for change and mark the beginning of a new era. Despite the impending catastrophe, the belief in Russia's strength and hope for reforms stimulated creative endeavors. Artists in particular expected the destruction of the academic canon to usher in an era of creativity.

In *Mystical Images of War* Goncharova casts the concept of war in literal and symbolic apocalyptic images based on a range of Russian sources, including church murals, images of modern life, and Vasiliï Koren's seventeenth-century illustrated Bible. Her most important inspiration, however, was the religious lubok—a mass-produced small-sized broadsheet that replaced expensive icons in poor families' households. Avant-garde artists at the beginning of the century discovered the aesthetic value of such popular religious art and appreciated its Russianness. Goncharova used this deep-rooted medium to convey the unfamiliar subject of war.

In order to render the aesthetics of the lubok, the artist returns to Neo-primitivism, a chunky figurative style popular in the first decade of the twentieth century. The sketchiness of the design is typical of Goncharova's lithographic work of the 1910s and creates immediacy between artist, subject, and viewer. The prints' intimate size allows for a personal experience of the troubling subject.

This work is one of Goncharova's last important contributions to Russian art before she relocated to France.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

Cover for "The Mystical Images of War," 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.1



Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

St. George, 1914
Lithograph

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.4



The legend of Saint George slaying the dragon is particularly popular in Eastern Orthodox imagery. George served as a soldier in the Roman army and was killed because of his Christian faith. He therefore counts as a martyr and is among the most venerated military saints.

In its allegorical meaning the dragon represents evil, in particular paganism and non-Orthodox beliefs, while Saint George represents all that is good, in the form of Christianity. In wartime, the motif was used in propaganda as well as artistic contexts, since it had strong identification potential for Orthodox Russians. By beginning her cycle with this iconic image, Goncharova demonstrates her belief in Russian victory and the spiritual superiority of Orthodox Russia.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The White Eagle, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.5



In this lithograph, the double-headed white eagle, the heraldic symbol of Russia, fights the forces of West and East: with one beak, he dominates the black eagle—the symbolic image of militant Germany—while clasping a crescent moon in the other, a reference to Turkey or the Ottoman Empire. The expressive strokes with which Goncharova renders the animals' bodies convey their fierce interaction. The dominating white eagle, with its white feathers radiating like light beams, indicates Russia's unquestionable triumph.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The English Lion, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.6



The lion has been used in England as a royal emblem since the Middle Ages, when it also stood for the courageous warrior. Referring to the lion's historic meaning as the king of beasts, this heraldic symbol denotes prudence, firmness, courage, and royalty, as well as generosity. In this lithograph, the lion represents England's power and strength as an important ally of Russia. Britain, France, and Russia were in the military-political alliance known as the Triple Entente.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The French Rooster, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.7



The Gallic rooster has been associated with France (Gaul) since the Middle Ages. During the French Revolution it became the unofficial symbol of the French nation. In the First World War France was Russia's first ally.

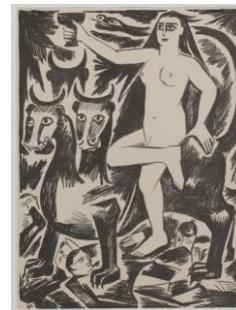
For this print Goncharova could draw on a rich Russian tradition of rooster imagery and symbolism, including its ancient association with sun, fire, and victory. The artist's depiction of the crowing rooster standing on the edge of a gun barrel and surrounded by flying cannonballs alludes to the nineteenth-century tale of the golden cockerel, in which a rooster quietly guards the peace until the threat of an approaching enemy, when it crows to announce imminent danger. The combination of traditional and modern elements distinguished Goncharova's art from other modernist artists.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The Virgin on the Beast, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.8



The Virgin on the Beast refers to the biblical whore of Babylon, mentioned in the book of Revelation. Since the Russian Orthodox canon began to accept the book of Revelation only in the fourteenth century, all related iconography refers to Western models, which already existed at that time. The nude proffers a goblet containing the sweet-tasting drink of evil deeds, and the beast's tail seductively transforms into the snake of Satan. Woman and beast embody the idea of universal evil. Here they symbolize the military forces against which the Allies are pitted and over which Christian faith alone would prove triumphant.

The title of the print indicates that Goncharova merged two female figures from the Bible: the whore of Babylon and the woman of the Apocalypse, who is associated with Eve and the Virgin Mary. In this print Goncharova also reflects the Russian fascination with Satanism that began with the Symbolists in the nineteenth century and continued throughout the first decades of the twentieth.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

Peresvet and Oслиabia, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.9



This image shows Peresvet and Oслиabia, two monk-warriors from the Trinity Monastery of Saint Sergius, the spiritual center of Russian Orthodoxy near Moscow. Each carries a morning star, a medieval weapon and symbol of God's power that gained currency again in the First World War.

The page is the first of a sequence of images in which Goncharova summons forth religious figures in order to declare the triumphant faith and pious justness of the Russian cause in the current war. Peresvet and Oслиabia were "well trained in military affairs and could command the army regiments; they also had strength and boldness, and courage." They fought the Tatars in the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380 and became venerated models of patriotism, inspiring everyone to arm themselves with bludgeons to defend the holy Russian soil.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The Archangel Mikhail, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.10



In the Orthodox tradition Archangel Michael is the Archistratig, the “supreme commander of the Lord’s Host” (Joshua 5:13–15). In Hebrew his name means “he who is like God.” Under his leadership the heavenly forces defeat the devil in battle. In Goncharova’s war series he stands for the justice and power of the Eastern Christian faith.

Goncharova depicts Saint Michael in the Russian iconographic tradition with attributes that refer to Revelation. He has wings like an angel and a rainbow above his head. The book in his right hand represents the Book of Life, containing the names of the chosen ones at the Last Judgment, and in his left he holds a censer. The trumpet refers to his function as a warrior and a judge at the Last Judgment. On his horse he seems to fly over the hellfire.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The Vision, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.11



The artist’s belief in divine presence, intercession, and God’s patronage to Russia is evident in this lithograph, where galloping soldiers come to an awed halt before the overpowering vision of the Blessed Virgin with Christ, their military mission blessed by the Son of God. Goncharova’s depiction of the Virgin Mary and the infant reflects the influence of traditional Russian iconography and emphasizes her deep connection with religious and folk art.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

Christian Host, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.12



Divine protection of Russia's army is the main theme of this image. In Goncharova's mystical view of the war heavenly forces play a direct role in the armed conflict. Angels protect the soldiers and guide them into the unknown sphere of war. The artist depicts the soldiers as a faceless dark mass sent to confront the enemy, yet powerless on their own, while she indicates the angels' leading function by showing their faces. With her rendering of the marching soldiers, she reflects the prevailing, yet inadequate, idea of war as an honest battle on the field, soldier against soldier.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

Angels and Aeroplanes, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.13



In this image, airplanes are a source of terror, bringing inescapable death to the people below. Angels appear to hold back the airplanes, implying that the technological achievements of mankind suffer defeat against heavenly forces. The confrontation of the divine and the human is shown as a clash of spiritual power and technological progress. By combining traditional religious iconography with elements of modernity, the artist creates an original and profound expression of war as a holy enterprise.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The Foredoomed City, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.14



In this print Goncharova refers again to the book of Revelation, in which the destruction of Babylon, the city of all evil—“the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird” (Rev. 18:2, KJV)—is foretold: “And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all” (Rev. 18:21, KJV). The doomed city, apparently the enemy’s place, is shown in darkness, while the angels are shining in heavenly light.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

Death on Horseback, 1914

Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.15



This lithograph shows the pale horse from Revelation: “And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:8, KJV). The eclipse in the background symbolizes death and the looming disaster of war. In Goncharova’s vision, this image embodies the theme of human sacrifice and death as indispensable companions to all war and strife.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

The Mass Grave, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.16



Goncharova based *The Mass Grave* on Vasili Koren's picture Bible from the late seventeenth century, most likely the depiction of the breaking of the fifth seal in the book of Revelation: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God. . . . And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season. . . ." (Rev. 6:9, KJV). The ravens on the right side are carrion birds associated with death. Yet in this print, death is interpreted as coming salvation. The angel holds his hands in the "orans" position—a praying gesture frequently found in early Christian catacombs and Orthodox iconography.

Natal'ia Sergeevna Goncharova
Negaevo, Tula Province, Russia 1881–1962 Paris

St. Alexandr Nevskii, 1914
Lithograph on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.17.17



Along with Saint George on the first page, Aleksandr Nevskii frames the portfolio. Goncharova borrowed the principle of “framing” from lubok books. The two figures are essential in the understanding of Russia as a chosen and victorious nation. While the artist begins the series with a reference to Russia’s divine, yet apocalyptic, destiny, she confidently ends on the heroic image of victory.

Aleksandr Nevskii was prince of Novgorod, a city-state that controlled lands from the east of Estonia to the Ural Mountains. In the early 1240s he defended his homeland against Swedish, Estonian, and German invaders and saved medieval Rus’ from a devastating invasion from the north. His victory laid the ground for the development of Muscovite Russia. Since 1547 the Orthodox Church has venerated him as a saint.

Childe Hassam
Dorchester, Massachusetts 1859–1935 East Hampton, New York

Avenue of the Allies, 1918

Lithograph

Gift of Mrs. Childe Hassam
AC PR.1940.11



Hassam's lithograph of the Avenue of the Allies appeared as the frontispiece to A. E. Gallatin's 1919 book *Art and the Great War*. He created it after his painting of the same year, now at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

The artist made several paintings and prints of New York City's Fifth Avenue during fall 1918, when it was decorated with flags for the Fourth Liberty Loan Drive and became widely known as the Avenue of the Allies. Each block from Twenty-Fourth to Fifty-Eighth Streets was devoted to a particular Allied country.

In this print, the Brazilian flag, between Fifty-Fourth and Fifty-Fifth Streets, dominates the scene on the left side. Hassam deliberately depicts the flags from street level to emphasize their large size and, in the corresponding painting, their bright colors against the blue sky. He undoubtedly was inspired by Claude Monet and other Impressionists' flag-celebration paintings. Interestingly, Hassam painted his first flag painting in Paris on July 14, 1889, Bastille Day.

Jean-Emile Laboureur
Nantes, France 1877–1943 Pénestin, France

A l'abri de la tempête (Shelter from the Storm), 1918
Woodblock

Purchased in honor of Edward C. Crossett, Class of 1905
AC 1974.37

L'aperitif de la garnison (The Apertif of the Garrison), 1918
Woodblock

Purchased in honor of Edward C. Crossett, Class of 1905
AC 1974.38

These two sheets are part of an eleven-print series, called *Images de l'arrière* (Pictures from behind the Front). The series depicts the life of soldiers of all ranks during their time off duty.

For much of his life Laboureur worked as a printmaker, illustrator, and teacher in Paris. He abandoned woodblock printing in the early 1910s in favor of etching. For the war series, he returned to the woodblock, as did Vallotton (on view nearby). By 1912 Laboureur was incorporating Cubist approaches into his work, which are still present in the flattened surface and the abstracted yet expressive figures in *Images de l'arrière*. He was mobilized in 1914, and, despite his service, continued to be artistically productive.



Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Postcard: "Wounded 'sitters' in the Vosges — on mule back,"
1916

Ink on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)
AC 1972.90.1

In 1915, two years before the United States entered World War I, Peirce joined the American Field Service, an ambulance corps that served on the French battlefields. He sent George Bellows postcards from the war, illustrated with sketches of what he observed. As curator and art historian Carol Troyen notes, "The lively, caricaturing style of Peirce's drawings belies their grim subjects. His annotations reflect both the intensity of the action ... and the extraordinary opportunity the war presented for artists ('no time to paint but what subjects')."



Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Postcard: "La Croix de Bois" — the wooden cross which is the easiest are of the lot to get crowned with out here — No time to paint but what subjects! 1916

Ink on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)
AC 1972.90.2



Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Postcard: When they land in the road, 1916

Ink on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)
AC 1972.90.3



Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Postcard: Algerian “cleaners up” of trenches, 1916

Graphite and crayon on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)

AC 1972.90.4



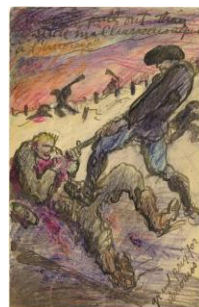
Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Postcard: Harder to pull out than to stick in “Chasseurs alpins a l'ouvrage,” 1916

Graphite and crayon on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)

AC 1972.90.5



Waldo Peirce
Bangor, Maine 1884–1970 Newburyport, Massachusetts

Too late to get to the abri, 1916

Graphite and crayon on postcard

Gift of Mrs. Earl Booth and Mrs. Maynard Kearny (George Bellows' daughters)

AC 1972.90.6



War

By 1914 Olga Rozanova had fully embraced Futurism. While Futurists did not renounce figurative art per se, their works are filled with dynamism, rhythmical displacement of form and content, and dissonance. Futurism seemed to promise a new artistic and cultural reality, unencumbered by tradition. The *War* portfolio features this new ideal.

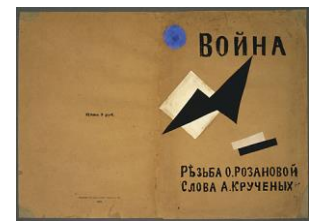
In *War* Rozanova collaborated with Futurist poet Aleksei Kruchenykh, whose fantastic poems feature the absurdity of war. She used the newly acquired technique of color linocuts, which she hand-inked with a brush, giving each print a unique texture and color. According to Nina Gurianova, “Kruchenykh entrusted ‘the word as such’ not to the typographer but to the individuality of the artist or painter, who restores to it the uniqueness of the pictorial quality of writing.” In this way the word became part of the artwork.

The artist started thinking about the *War* series as early as 1914. She began work in 1915, after Andrei A. Shemshurin—literary critic and patron of the arts—offered to fund the portfolio, and she completed the series by January 1916. To Shemshurin she wrote: “This is the best I have produced thus far in the area of printed art. Technically it is stronger than anything before it, and it is also more substantive and more original.”

Ol’ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Cover for the “War” portfolio, 1916
Linoleum cut and collage on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.1



The design of this cover reveals Rozanova’s familiarity with Suprematism, an artistic style featuring geometric abstraction and primary colors. Rozanova started her *War* portfolio the same year Kazimir Malevich introduced Suprematism to the art world in the *Last Futurist Exhibition of Pictures: 0.10* in 1915. She demonstrates her progressive aesthetic spirit by immediately using the Suprematist forms in new ways in book design and collage technique.

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Frontispiece, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.3

The portfolio's frontispiece shows a single figure symbolizing and signaling the war. The figure is reminiscent of French and Russian revolutionary imagery—female figures storming forward with a sword in their extended right hand—and the apocalyptic image of the trumpeting angel. The Russian word placed above the figure, "Voina," means "War." Rozanova indicates only contours, and in this way leaves space for imaginary completion of the dynamic figure by the viewer.



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

The Destruction of a City, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.4

The eye of the spectator might not immediately distinguish the cannons in this composition, for they seem to be part of the city organism—the unstoppable, fateful pagan force of a rebellious machine. The image conveys a battle of machines, which led to the First World War's cruelty. Yet instead of actual contemporary weapons, which she possibly had not seen, Rozanova depicts traditional cannons, which in most people's minds still dominated the concept of war. Her war-torn city becomes an iron mousetrap for its human inhabitants.



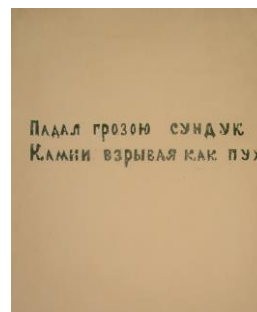
Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Untitled Poem, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.5

Text:
The trunk fell like a thunderstorm,
Exploding stones like fluff.



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Aeroplanes Over the City, 1916
Collage

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.6

The image of the airplane attracted many twentieth-century artists and poets, especially the Futurists. A traditionally Futurist mentality dominates this work, which combines collage with linocut and figurative with abstract elements. A schematic city appears in the largest rectangular element of the picture, while the figures of an airplane and a man floating (or flying) are printed on smaller rectangles and affixed to the supporting sheet. Abstract colored shapes complete the composition. Rozanova created this sheet as a collage for each of the portfolios. While they are similar in composition, they are not identical.



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

To the Death, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.7

This image is reminiscent of Goncharova's war print *Christian Host*. Along with parallels between Rozanova's *Destruction of a City* and Goncharova's *The Foredoomed City*, *Airplanes Over the City*, and *Angels and the City*, this related imagery comes from common sources available at the time. With the abstracted depiction of soldiers, Rozanova draws the viewer's attention to the new Futurist aesthetic rather than evoking compassion or narrating a story. The soldier blowing a trumpet in front of the row of fighters mirrors the signature figure on the third sheet of the series.



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Single Combat, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.8

Single combat becomes a leitmotif of Rozanova's series. The gesture of the warrior on the dark horse evokes the familiar stance of Saint Michael killing the dragon. This and the print *Battle* bear similarities with Kandinsky's works from around 1913, in which horses and battle scenes figure prominently.



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Excerpt from a Newspaper Article, 1916
Linoleum cut printed in black on paper



Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.10

The text translates as “The peaceful citizens being executed were forced to dig their own graves. (Excerpt from a newspaper article.)”

Rozanova must have been familiar with Cubist and Futurist collages in which snippets of newspapers render reality, stand for a specific situation, and play with materiality. In addition, in *War* the newspaper text conveys the character of a lubok. The Futurist artist Rozanova, unlike Goncharova, likely did not deliberately cite this traditional broadsheet format. Yet a contemporary viewer would have made the connection with this popular Russian medium.

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Excerpt from a Newspaper Article, 1916
Linoleum cut printed in green on paper



Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.11

The text translates as “With horror he recollects those he saw crucified by the Germans, head downward. (Excerpt from a newspaper article.)”

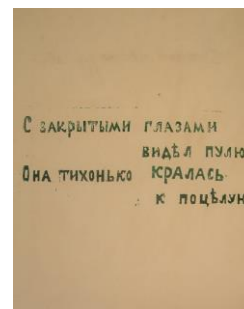
This print—and the newspaper article it cites—seems to refer to a report, written by the British politician James Bryce, on alleged German atrocities during the German invasion of Belgium in 1914. The subject also appears in Bellows’s war print, on view nearby.

A soldier is plunging a bayonet into his crucified victim, a scene that recalls Christ’s crucifixion. In this way, the image opens up a wider meaning.

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Untitled Poem, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper



Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.12

Text:
He saw the bullet with closed eyes
It quietly stole in for a kiss

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Battle in the City, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.13



This print presents the conflict at its most tangible, as the inhabited city becomes the locus of war and plays on the public's fear of invasion. While urban life and the idea of progress was closely linked to the Futurists' work, Rozanova again refers to the nineteenth-century idea of battles fought with infantry, cavalry, and cannons.

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Battle, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.14



The frequency with which Rozanova depicts battle scenes in her *War* cycle shows that the war had reached an intensive stage by the end of 1915. Battle implies not only disaster and destruction, but also the agonizing birth of a new age of terrible power.

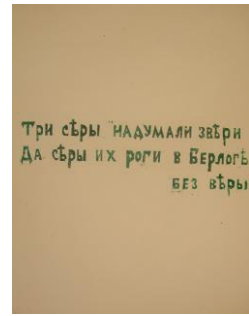
Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

Untitled Poem, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.15

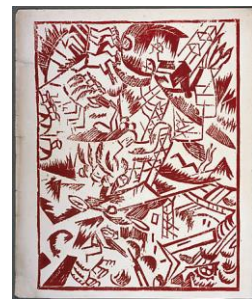
Text:
The beasts imagined three dark spirits
And their horns are gray in the devil's lair



Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Battle on Land, Sea, and in the Air, 1916
Linoleum cut on paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.16



This work captures the madness of war. All three spheres—land, sea, and air—seem to meld into an abstract red explosion. Rozanova created the whole series in the second year of the war and expresses war-weariness throughout. While the hope for a timely and merciful end of the war was fading, the polyphony of *Battle on Land, Sea, and in the Air* appears like an apotheosis in which red is at once the color of destruction and of new life.

Ol'ga Vladimirovna Rozanova
Malenki, Vladimir Province, Russia 1886–1918 Moscow

Aleksandr (Aleksei) Kruchenykh
Kherson, Ukraine 1886–1969 Moscow

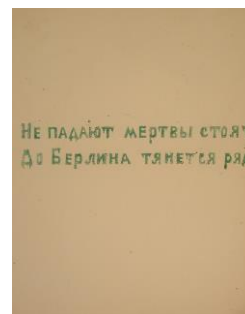
Untitled Poem, 1916

Linoleum cut in green on thin wove paper

Gift of Thomas P. Whitney (Class of 1937)
AC 2001.56.17

Text:

They do not fall they stand lifeless
The row stretches to Berlin



This Is War!

At the outbreak of the First World War Félix Vallotton volunteered for the French army but was rejected because of his age—at the time he was almost fifty years old. He suffered each defeat on the front, and excoriated the war's horrors as absurd. In the winter of 1915/16 he produced a critical-satirical series of woodcuts titled *C'est la guerre!* (This Is War!). Because his negative depictions challenged the official view of the war, they received a great deal of criticism.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, artists had revived wood engraving—in use since the Renaissance only for cheap popular prints—to create original artworks. In the 1890s Vallotton had become a leading figure of this revival, and earned his living as an illustrator throughout the decade. Yet he abandoned the woodcut at the turn of the century when he no longer needed this source of income. For *C'est la guerre*, which he published and distributed himself, he returned to the woodcut one last time.

His early affiliation with the Nabis, a group of French Symbolist artists, influenced his entire work. The Nabis rejected the distinction between high and low art and demonstrated interest in all creative media and materials. According to Maurice Denis, another member of the Nabis, "The aesthetics of Symbolism . . . is the art of conjuring up and prompting memories, instead of narrating and reporting; it is pure lyricism." Using only black and white planes, Vallotton renders emotion, action, and complex problems as purely visual impressions.

Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

This Is War (*C'est la guerre*): Cover
Woodcut and red ink

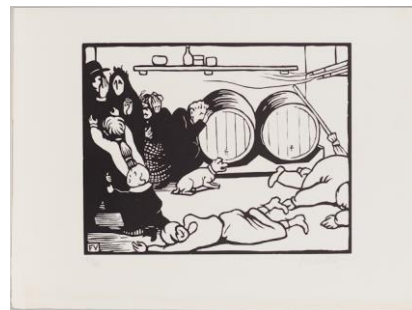
Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.b



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

The Civilians (Les civiles), from C'est la guerre, 1916
Woodcut

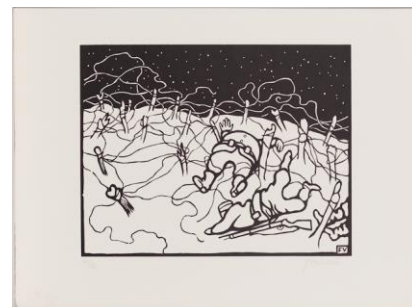
Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.b



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

Barbed Wire (Les fils de fer), from "C'est la guerre," 1916
Woodcut

Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.c



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

In the Dark (Dans les ténèbres), from "C'est la guerre," 1916
Woodcut

Museum purchase
AC 1996.43.d



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

The Orgy (L'orgie), from "C'est la guerre," 1915
Woodcut

Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.e



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

The Trench (La tranchée), from *C'est la guerre*, 1915
Woodcut

Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.f



Félix Edouard Vallotton
Lausanne, Switzerland 1865–1925 Paris

The Scout (Le guetteur),
from "*C'est la guerre*," 1916
Woodcut

Museum Purchase
AC 1996.43.a

