

Paper as Protest: Drew Cameron's Anti-War Activist Printmaking

“[Drew Cameron]’s Combat Paper project takes on the active responsibility of reflecting on war, of refusing the proliferation of war, and seeking healing.”

by Yunfei Hua



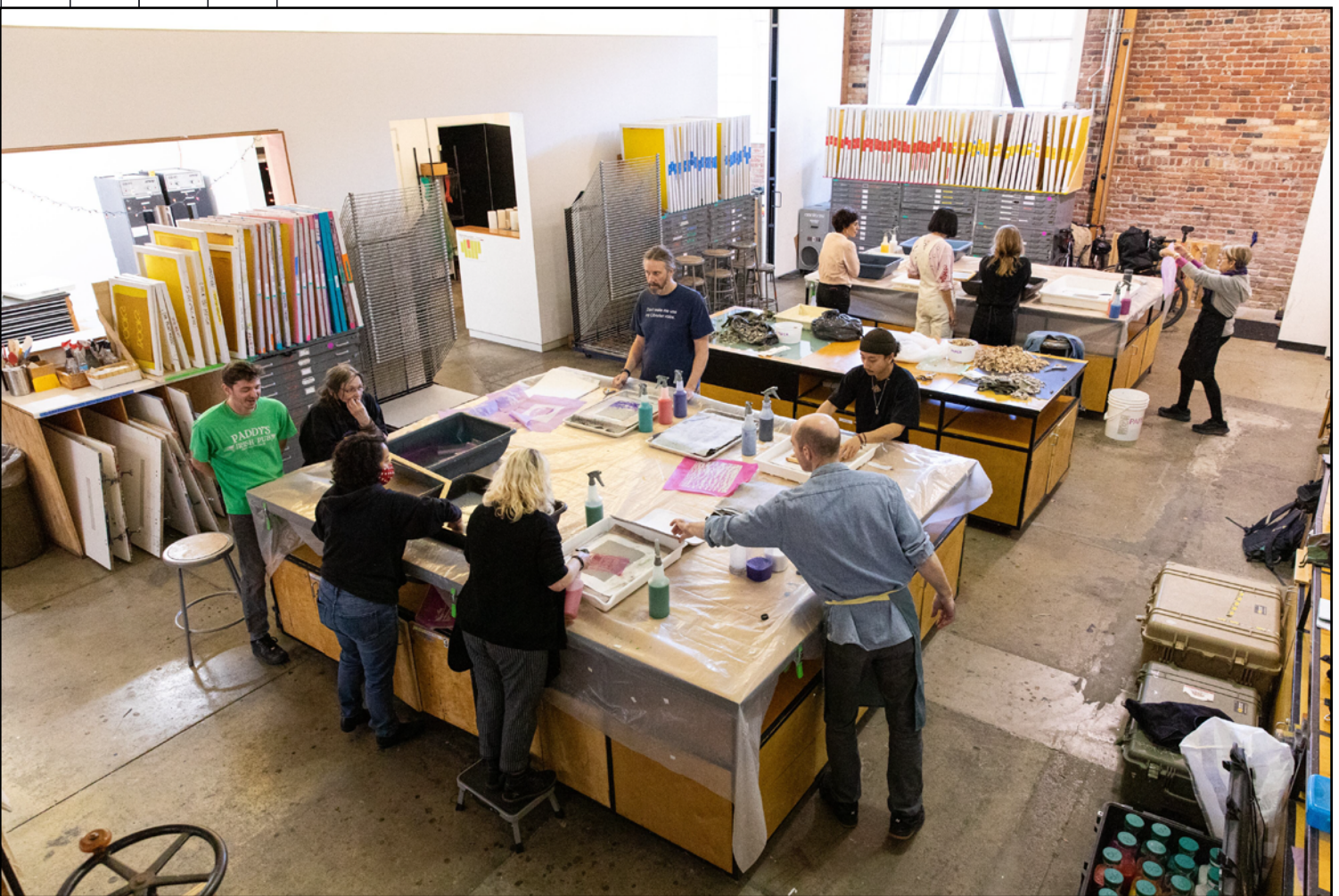
Drew Cameron teaching a Graduate Intensive at RayKo Studios (CCA Campus) in Spring 2024: Pulp Printing with Combat Paper

Photo courtesy of Nicholas Lea Bruno

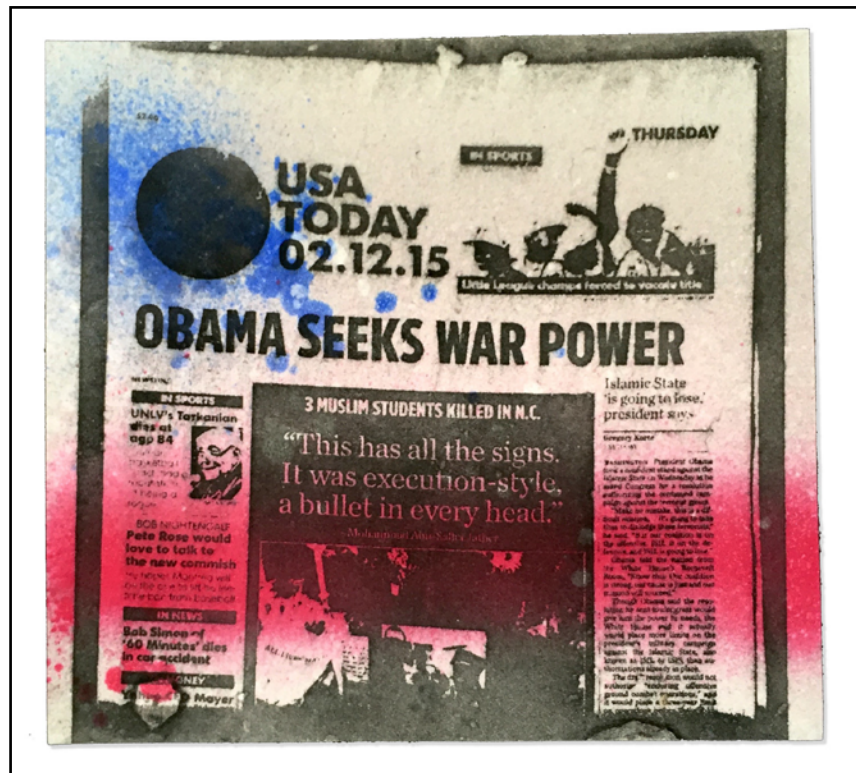
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For 29 years, the Yozo Hamaguchi Printmedia Scholarship Award has been awarded annually to outstanding BFA students working in printmedia at CCA. On the evening of March 27, 2024, the CCA Printmedia Program celebrated this year's recipients and hosted the annual Hamaguchi Lecture in Printmedia. At the beginning of this year's event, Anthea Black, the Chair of the Printmedia Program, expressed sincere gratitude to the scholarship's donors, Yozo Hamaguchi and his wife Minami Keiko, and recognized the students who applied for their efforts, regardless of whether or not they received the scholarship. This year, six recipients of this year's scholarships were announced. Black then introduced the speaker, papermaker and artist Drew Cameron, and cited the reason for inviting him to hold this lecture and other workshops at CCA: the job of printmakers, papermakers, and book artists is to engage political expression with materiality, and Cameron's work has become a wonderful model for that.



Cameron went on to introduce the following series of the Combat Paper project. Having once used a PO Box as his address, Cameron often paid extra attention to the newspapers he saw on his way to the post office. To record moments from changing topics in the news, Cameron made prints of newspaper headlines on the paper made from uniforms. According to Cameron, many of the headlines were in fact, lies, and when people look back at them now, after nearly a decade, we have the perspective to see how ridiculous they were. The prints show a recurring loop of themes and the cyclical repetition of history. In *Beyond Zero: 1914-1918* (2014), he presented visual pieces for a commissioned film under the same name, showing images from the photographic archive of World War I. Prints are made on paper handmade not only from uniforms, but also from bed sheets, flags, US currency, and T-shirts. Cameron wanted to make a "paper recipe that composites us, the war we serve, where we sleep, where we eat, and what we wear." With images full of people in this piece, he emphasized the idea that the real war is "us against ourselves."



Drew Cameron, part of the *Top of the Fold* series (2015)
Photo courtesy of the artist

Combat Paper takes on the active responsibility of reflecting on war, of refusing the proliferation of war, and seeking healing. Through in-person workshops, Cameron has been interacting with his participants directly, while developing the possibility of putting archival material in libraries and exhibitions in order to give access to a wider public. Under the shifting protections of free speech today, this generation of veterans appears more willing to talk about their mental health. The Combat Paper project in particular gives them a creative avenue by which to translate their feelings into objects and processes of action.



Drew Cameron, part of the *Top of the Fold* series (2015)
Photo courtesy of the artist



Graduate Intensive with Drew Cameron at RayKo Studios (CCA Campus) in Spring 2024: Pulp Printing with Combat Paper
Photo courtesy of Nicholas Lea Bruno

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