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THE THIN LINE BETWEEN PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

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THE THIN LINE BETWEEN PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

by

Ryan Jenkins

B.A., Southern Illinois University, 2005

A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Masters in Fine Arts Degree.

College of Mass Communications and Media Arts
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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THESIS APPROVAL

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TITLE: THE THIN LINE BETWEEN PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Antonio Martinez

In this paper, I discuss the line that divides propaganda and persuasion in relation to my thesis work, *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* My intention is to show how easily images can transfer between propaganda and persuasion. I analyze this division between propaganda and persuasion by discussing propaganda as one-way communication process and persuasion as a two-way communication process. Then I discuss my relationship to photography, graffiti, and how my own work furthers the conversation of propaganda and persuasion in relation to other artists. In the next section, I contextualize my use of the database in parallel to news media photographs. Following this section I write about the construction of *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* I conclude with the importance of analyzing image databases in context to propaganda and persuasion and it's relevance to my thesis work.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Grandfather Ralph Jenkins and my Father Ronald

Jenkins. Without there support and inspiration this project would not of been possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The line between propaganda and persuasion is not only thin, but also transparent. Exploring this subtle difference between propaganda and persuasion is what drives my creative process. Propaganda and Persuasion are both forms of communication which impact one's thinking. Propaganda is seen more as a deliberate organized attempt to influence and mold one's ideologies to further the goals of the propagandist. Persuasion, on the other hand, is understood as an open communication practice with people wanting to have their wants and needs satisfied by the persuader. Working in collage with propaganda and persuasion as a central topic has allowed me to explore particular types of images from daily national newspapers, such as civil protest, the aftermath of war, and images of physical conflict. A particular interest I have with this type of collage is the tremendous database one can build from appropriating these types of images. It allows for the reworking of these images time and time again to see to what end I can dissolve the thin, transparent line that divides propaganda and persuasion. By dissolving this line it will help to better understand when outlets of media or in their like switch from persuader to propagandist. *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* not only critiques the distinction between propaganda and persuasion but how photojournalism's original purpose as a means of persuasion can transform into propaganda through the use of repetition.

In this paper, I discuss the line that divides propaganda and persuasion in relation to my thesis work, *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* My intention is to show how easily images can transfer between propaganda and

persuasion. I analyze this division between propaganda and persuasion by discussing propaganda as one-way communication process and persuasion as a two-way communication process. Then I discuss my relationship to photography, graffiti, and how my own work furthers the conversation of propaganda and persuasion in relation to other artists. In the next section, I contextualize my use of the database in parallel to news media photographs. Following this section I write about the construction and materiality of *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* I conclude with the importance of analyzing journalistic photographs in context to the database and the significance of deciphering them from propaganda or persuasion.

For my database, I collected images from the months of May through November of 2012 from daily national newspapers of war, protesting, and the devastation of war. These three categories incapsulate the types of photographs used to cover conflict zones. I then took each monthly collection of images and constructed them into a seven foot by eight foot mural of the political disarray that ensued that month. I have always been interested in these three categories of photographs in context to propaganda and persuasion, simply because the question of whether these photographs are being used propaganda or persuasion purposes is important for any concerned citizen. In relation to visual culture I take these photographs very seriously, photographs have the power to influence policy makers but also determine the filter of how a group or culture is represented. To show the conflictive nature of these images I set them against posters of socialist realism art.

In contrast to these conflict images is a single image of propaganda created during the time of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. I was drawn to these posters not only because of their simplistic use of imagery but also under the

circumstances they were created. All of these posters are of an anti-war nature and when they were created they had minimal use of text due to the former USSR's literacy problem among the general populace. In response, the government created propaganda that was very image based not only for educational purposes but mold individual and group ideologies to the States. Although US literacy rates are higher than the former USSR, I feel the general US public and consumers of media news imagery suffer from a visual illiteracy, in particular, of how other cultures are represented in media. This is not only due to repetitious nature of news media but also a more sensationalized news media agenda.

CHAPTER 2

MY RELATIONSHIPS TO GRAFFITI AND PHOTOGRAPHY

In my youth I participated in several extracurricular activities, with BMX riding during my teen and early twenties as the most memorable. I started off racing on the weekends and moved to riding skateparks daily. In BMX culture it is hard not to get involved with other creative subculture activities. When I was seventeen I helped create my first zine and purchased my first 35mm camera. I purchased this camera to record and document I all the sights I witnessed. A common thing to do at a skatepark when a person first visits, is place a sticker or tag (write your name) on one of the ramps. This led me to start making my own stickers and learning graffiti from the BMX community. Wanting to do a deeper investigation of photography I decided to peruse a bachelors degree in photography at Southern Illinois University.

In 2005, I received a bachelors in art with emphases in photography. Throughout my undergrad years I never combined the use of photographs with the use of graffiti, for I wanted my graffiti to be anonymous. I loved the power of anonymity and felt they should be separate because with photography my area of concentration was dealing with political social issues and my graffiti was dealing with the landscape that surrounded me. It wasn't until after graduation I began pursuing a deeper exploration of graffiti and street art.

After graduation, I took a job with a photography warehouse company in Peoria, Illinois building photography studios for individual and company studios. Over the next two and half years, I traveled on weekly basis all over the United States getting to see different cities, in addition to a wide variety of art exhibitions. I became enthralled with

the graffiti and street art versus traditional white wall gallery art. Street artists and graffiti writers were having an anonymous conversation with each other and involved everyone with or without their approval.

This new interest of graffiti and or street art I was seeing led to my own experimentation of using stencils, found imagery, and different kinds of different artists and non-artists materials. Years later, upon entering graduate school I realized I was partaking in the conversation of propaganda and persuasion. It was only after closely inspecting two artist work that I came to this realization, one was Ron English and the other was Shepard Fairey.

I had been aware of both Fairey and English's work for awhile, Fairey working on the side of propaganda and subversion and English working somewhere in between. It was the power of Fairey's work that first brought my attention to using repeated images to effect one's space. Using massive amounts of Xerox and a single image, Fairey was able to reignite an icon through the eyes of a Professional wrestler, Andre the Giant. Fairey produced a single poster called *Obey Giant* created in 1993, it used the eyes of the iconic wrestler with the word OBEY beneath it. This poster has been through the most iterations of any other of Fairey's works. The classical representation of this poster is the stencil of Andre the Giants eyes done in black with the work obey in white with a red outline. Fairey took the word obey from John Carpenters 1988 movie *They Live.* Through the use of this poster Fairey was able to create a piece of propaganda that left people in wonderment as they passed by it. The poster had know indication of who created and left people haunted of ideas of surveillance. For awhile, Fairey was able to maintain his anonymity and through the use of an icon he was able explore ideas of subversion. Now he is a well know artist and he has become the icon of Obey. In

comparison to Fairey's work, my thesis works to critiques how imagery transfers between propaganda and persuasion, whereas Fairey's work critiques the foundations of propaganda by using found of imagery of the past and present. Our use imagery is similar at an aesthetic level of stenciling techniques but they depart in their critique of propaganda and persuasion.

Ron English's work, like my own, operates somewhere in between propaganda and persuasion. By putting our work in the public sphere we try to start a conversation with our subject matter. English's use of billboards and his appropriation of fast food and breakfast cereal characters has had the most impact on my own work. He is known for appropriating billboards illegally and reinterpreting characters of fast food culture. Two of his most influential characters is *MC Supersized* created in 2009 and *Fat Tony* created in 2012*. MC Supersized* is a overweight creation of Ronald McDonald and *Fat Tony* is Tony the Tiger from Frosted Flakes cereal. *MC Supersized* a bloated overweight version of Ronald McDonald sometimes shown wearing a diamond dollar sign necklace. *Fat Tony* came in box that was similar to the Frosted Flakes box. Instead of having Kellogs written at the top of the box it read killkidds. Where it normally informed the child of what free toy they were going to get, it was changed to read a free dose of ritalin. The *Fat Tony* toy is posed with hands doing his famous they're gr-r-reat pose. English created these characters as both drawings and three dimensional toys that one can purchase. *MC Supersized* is the character that English is more known for and has been transformed into smaller kids toys and of as late created full size mascot suit. Both of these characters speak to an obese U.S. populace and companies use of symbols and characters to appeal and to market children for profit. English satirizes these characters to critique mass consumption and marketing to children consumers. English's work is a

great of example of re-appropriating company mascots and then using the transparent line between propaganda and persuasion to critique conspicuous consumption systems. In creating *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* it was English's alternative viewing of marketing systems that influenced my juxtaposition of my database. In that, I created an alternative viewing of the photographs from four different daily national newspapers by increasing their size and through the use of collage. I also created a underlying critique by using photographs that are used to appeal to potential buyers.

Another profound artist that influenced *Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* is Andy Warhol. Two pieces of work that influenced my understanding about media imagery include *The Car Crash Series* created 1963 and *Orange Disaster Number 5* created in 1963. *Orange Disaster Number 5* is a orange and black screen print of an electric chair repeated fifteen times in three vertical columns in rows of five. *The Car Crash Series* is another screen print but this one has few different iterations of color the one I am referring to is the black and green screen print. It's a photograph of a burning car flipped upside down and on fire, to left of the image you can see a man impaled on telephone poll as a result of the car crash. The photograph repeats many times but is not as neatly put together as *Orange Disaster Number 5*. The photograph is juxtaposed from right to left, the top two images show the entirety of the scene and the middle four images give more emphasis to the man impaled on the telephone poll. At the bottom of the print the photograph is repeated to create a panoramic view of the scene. Warhol's stylistic use of repetition and juxtaposition is a highly valued technique I incorporated to reflect the propaganda machine. Both of these pieces of art use repetition of journalistic style photographs and our fascination with death in news media.

Warhol's use of the screen print medium lends to the alternative viewing of these photographs in ideas of authorship and the critique of news media photographs. In Warhol's Factory he was known for letting other workers make the different screen prints, he would do the final sign off of the work, by doing this he brought to light ideas authorship. By making screen prints of news media photographs he critiqued death and repetition in media through the reproducibility of the screen print. It's the use of found imagery and how these images affect our sensibility as consumers of popular visual culture I find intriguing in correlation to my thesis work. Using photographs of mainstream news media I am critiquing one of the same systems as Warhol, repetition in news media photographs but through the gaze of propaganda and persuasion.

CHAPTER 3

PROPAGANDA VS. PERSUASION AND SOCIALIST REALISM

Propaganda comes in many different forms, illustrated images, photographs, text, and public speaking are just a few. There are also different forms of propaganda when it comes to authorship. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell (2012) define such categorizes of propaganda in context with authorship in their book *Propaganda and Persuasion.* They contest there are three different forms of propaganda in relation to authorship, white, grey, and black (p.17). These three forms relate to the truthfulness of the message that is being delivered. White propaganda is where the author of the information or propaganda can be identified and the information is more or less accurate (p. 17). Grey propaganda is just what it sounds like, it is between white and black propaganda, it's author may or might not be identified and the truthfulness of the information cannot be substantiated (p. 20). Black propaganda is an outright lie and the author cannot be identified. Sometimes the identification of the author is credited to a another author for disinformation, black propaganda created for disinformation purposes (p. 18). For *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* we know I am the author but I have removed the authorship of the photographers' photographs and reconstructed the images into my own authorship. In looking at *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* my work could not only fall in the form of White propaganda but also Grey.

Looking at the difference between propaganda and persuasion will help to better understand if *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* falls into the category of propaganda. Propaganda and persuasion are both forms of communication

but according to Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) in their book *Propaganda and Persuasion,* propaganda is subset of persuasion. Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) define propaganda *"the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perception, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist"* (p. 7). Looking at Jowett and O'Donnell's (2012) definition of persuasion one could see how slippery the slope is between propaganda and persuasion. The authors define persuasion as *"a subset of communication is usually defined as communicative process to influence others. A persuasive message has a point of view or desired behavior for the recipient to adopt in a voluntary fashion"* (p. 32). A big difference between these two definitions is the idea of a voluntary fashion, what might be voluntary for one person might not be voluntary for another. Another difference between propaganda and persuasion, is the former involves a person looking to have that want or need filled. Propagandist do try to fill wants and needs but only if it furthers their ideology. This is why I look at propaganda as a one-way communication process and persuasion as two-way communication process. With persuasion the persuader is looking to fill a want or need by trying to persuade an individual or group they can fulfill that want or need but ultimately that individual or group has to be willing, open, and receptive to such wants and needs. An alternative view point of propaganda and how it effects the communication process through the context of voluntary can be found in Anthony Pratkanis and Elliot Aronson's (2001) book *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion*.

Pratkanis and Aronson's (2001) sees propaganda as voluntary on the side of the recipient. The authors write:

Propaganda involves the dextrous use of images, slogans, and symbols that play on our prejudices and emotions; it is the communication of a point of view with the ultimate goal of having the recipient of the appeal come to "voluntarily" accept this position as if it were his or her own (p. 11).

Looking at this definition of propaganda compared to Jowett and O'Donnell's (2012) individuals or groups accept forms of propaganda as their own ideas voluntarily. This leaves out the idea of involuntary propaganda such as government control of information or subject matter. Embedded journalism would be case where the government controls what subject matter can and cannot be photographed and we only get to see one side of a story. Now certain information or propaganda will have certain subject appeal to certain groups or cultures to forward their own ideas, such as photographs that show the military winning the War on Terror. These photographs forward the goals of the government and keep a populace at bay by showing them the War on Terror is being won. With my thesis work, this is a system I critique by using journalistic photographs form daily national newspapers. Using these images I am trying to better understand how photographs of war, protesting, and the aftermath of war effect our ideologies of other groups and cultures. At the same time I am critiquing the persuasiveness of these photographs through repetition and if they fall in line with the propaganda posters I used to contrast them. It is the repetitious nature of these photographs and how they are used to play on our emotions and our own ideologies that can determine if they are of propaganda and persuasion type. Using Photoshop, spray paint, and abrasion I am disrupting the original viewing of the photographs and

socialist realism art. This effectively aids in the blurring of the two different types of images to show how transparent the line between propaganda and persuasion is.

The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion falls into both categories depending on one's thinking. I am trying to systematically change one's perception on how a person perceives images of a news media type. Building each mural seven foot tall by eight foot wide, I am not only presenting an alternative viewing of photographs in newspapers but molding them into the role I want them. Putting my work in a gallery setting I am not forcing anyone to come see my work but I suggest through the use of post cards. A person can choose whether or not they want to come into the gallery or look at the work that was in glass display case situated in a public hallway. With the complexity of the imagery and collaging, one has to stop and to decipher the presented content, unlike billboard media which is quickly viewed and immediately understood.

The socialist realism posters that I choose to use as background image were created for propaganda purposes. Looking at how Russian socialist realism posters were created, we will better understand how an image can forward the goals of a propagandist. These posters were created for the purpose of disseminating Western thought, anti-war sentiments, and creating alternate reality. Peter Kenez's (2006) book *A History of the Soviet from the Beginning to the End* explains socialist realism as an art practice:

> Socialist realism could best be understood in terms of what it excluded. It excluded above all ambiguity: a text that could be interpreted on several levels, one that had multiple meanings, could not serve the interests of the political order, it implied that truth could be multilayered. This was a notion more subversive than an open expression of hostility to socialism. Furthermore,

socialist realism could not include irony, for irony was always subversive.

Socialist realism art created an alternate reality that seemed to have the features

of the real world but in fact was totally imaginary universe. The creation of this

Fictional world was the greatest service artists provided (p. 124).

socialist realism propaganda was perfect to contrast the database of images from daily

national newspapers. Using images of a journalistic form contrasted with propaganda's

false realities, thereby obscuring or complicating the line between propaganda and

persuasion. One tells the story of a select moment in time the other presents what the

moment should become. The synthesis of these two images allowed for the

experimentation of my own constructed realization of communication through imagery.

Another reason for choosing socialist realism posters is in how these posters

operate as propaganda in general. In Peter Kenez's (1985) book *The Birth of the*

Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization 1917-1929 he writes about

how these posters operate:

The poster, like propaganda itself, is a product of the modern age. It is in fact the

quintessential form of propaganda: Its message can be quickly grasped by the

most unsophisticated viewers; its appeal does not depend on rational argument;

and it is as capable of advertising a commercial product as of selling a political

idea (p. 111).

Posters today are still used throughout the world to display a message, we still see

posters created out Xerox prints and posted on construction plywood walls. These

messages can very from music concerts to messages of dissemination. Ironically,

Shepard Fairey's *Giant Obey* posters create both questions and demands dissent and

control.

Control is a key aspect to propaganda and the poster allows the propagandist to do this without considerable expense. The poster advances their ideologies and asserts control over the public mind in an open forum. Control through information is an idea the Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) note:

The propagandist tries to control information flow in two major ways: (a) controlling the media as a source of information distribution and (b) presenting distorted information from what appears to be a credible source. Using journalists to infiltrate the media and spread disinformation is one way to present distorted information. A public relations expert Victoria Clarke, developed the Pentagon's media operation including the program to embed American journalists with American troops in Iraq in 2003-2005. This may have been intended as a form of controlling information flow because the journalists get emotionally attached to their units, thus causing their reporting to be emotional (p. 46).

As we can see from Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) control is a large component to the formation of propaganda. News media and the concept of embedded journalism can become apart of the propaganda equation. *The Thin Line between Propaganda and Persuasion* blurs the line even further by combining propaganda posters of socialist realism and photographs from daily national newspapers. When we look at images of civil protest, the aftermath of war, and images of physical conflict we cannot see what is going outside of the frame. Especially when one looks at war photographs in newspapers, we do not know if there is someone else guiding the camera besides the photographer. If there are guidelines to photographing in certain areas of a conflict or war zone the person pushing the shutter really might not be the author. If government policy dictates what may or may not be photographed, the government then becomes

the author and the image would fall into the Grey of area propaganda. We do not know without a fully disclosed caption indicating the author who is guiding the frame of the camera's viewfinder.

Those who control the database can dictate how that information is interpreted but also its transparency. On the outset of building *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* these were two key aspects I was concerned with in collaging a Russian socialist realism poster and photographs from daily national newspapers. Readability between the two different sets of images and the scale of many smaller images set against one large image and not having one dominate the other. Instead using them to show how easily the line between sources of propaganda and persuasion can be transversed. This will not only show the power of my own database but also how minimal the gradient is between propaganda and persuasion.

CHAPTER 4

THE IMAGE AND THE DATABASE

Through the use newspaper photographs I was able to create my own database for the purpose of exploring one-way vs. two-way communication. With *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* I appropriated photographs from the front page section of four different daily national newspapers *The New York Times, USA Today, Wall Street Journal,* and the *Washington Post.* The idea of scanning newspaper images started with another project call the *Recognition of Print.* This work can be viewed at http://ryanjenkins.org/recognitionofprint.html. The reason I choose these four newspapers is they are four of the highest circulating newspapers in the U.S. according to *Alliance for Audited Media* (2013).

Recognition of Print came about in a MFA projects class that I took in the fall 2011. I would scan images from different daily national newspapers, then place the scanned image in photoshop and take them apart using the magic wand tool. After I stripped down the photograph to it's basic subject matter and eliminated what I considered to be the noise in the photograph, I would make an interactive Net Art piece with the images. What I mean by noise, is parts of the images such as surrounding buildings and objects that couldn't be identified, breaking down the image to only the foreground subject matter. I would use the background if the foreground subject matter was interacting with it. Such an example may include a protester throwing a rock at the police. I used the same Photoshop technique in *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* Each week I would slightly change the code of the piece to further my understanding of these images. I would juxtapose these images using basic random

placement scripts and random transparency scripts. In some pieces I would also use a random background script to alternate the background color.

Figure 1. Newspaper photograph after being scanned.

Figure 2. Photograph after being edited in Photoshop.

This work developed into ten different interactive Net Art pieces were I used newspapers as the database and the Net Art piece as the interface. Lev Manovich (2001) talks about this in a very similar way:

Some media objects explicitly follow a database logic in their structure whereas others do not; but under the surface, practically all of them are databases. In general, creating a work in new media can be understood as the construction of an interface to a database (p. 226).

This is the same approach that I used for creating *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* Using four different daily national newspapers as a source for a database collection and the interface being the mural. My logic for collecting photographs became the three different categorizes of war, protesting, and the devastation of war. Any photograph that fell into these categorizes I removed from the front page section of the newspaper and entered into my database.
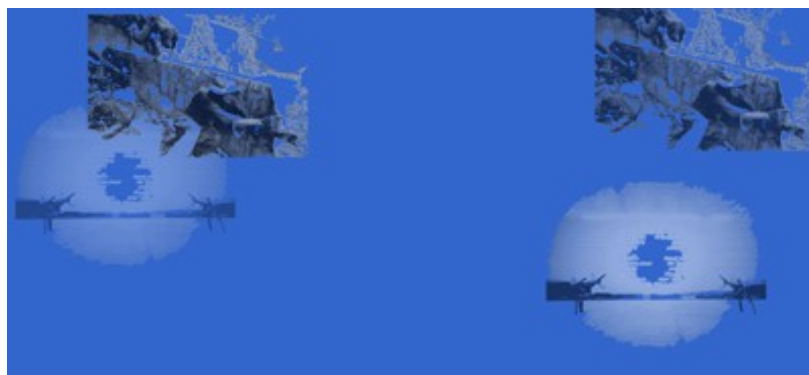
Figure 3. Screen shot from Aftermath.

The reason for using newspapers as database I was able to take easier notes on how images were given prevalence. On the internet a lot of images are shown through different slideshows and are categorized to the area where that conflict occured. In the front page of a newspaper, photographs are constantly changing in terms of prevalence and their size within the pages denotes their importance. Another was the limitation of print, newspapers can only show so many images on a given day where the internet in theory has unlimited space and can be updated many times in one evening.

Newspapers still have to pick the best photo from either their staff photographer or a company like Getty images or the AP. Most often, under my observation, an most often, the same photographs that were in the front page section of the newspapers were almost always on every news media outlets website. I looked at the photographs I was using from daily national newspapers as being the edits of the edits to the newspaper being the final edit. In theory, *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* represents the pivotal photographs used to tell the major stories from around the world.

Using this database of daily national newspaper photographs made the work load manageable when it came time to construct each individual mural. On average I would scan around 130 to 150 images a month, large and small, which allowed for an in depth study on what photographs were being used inside and outside of the front page sections.

Using the front page section of the four daily national newspapers allowed me to take a more critical look at what images are being sold to consumers. The images that come from the front page section of the newspaper, which presumably has the most pertinent content, this section also has the most graphics to appeal to the potential readers. Image precedence or a cycle of different images is something I noticed over the six months of collection. There would be images of riots in a region followed by images of war leading to images of the devastation. From this observation I was able to construct the database of images into the relationships I was seeing in the front page sections through collaging.

After editing all the images in Photoshop, I enlarged each image to 20 inches, this allowed to maintain each images scale to one another. By doing this each person or subject in the photograph stayed the same size and when I started to construct the

mural the images wouldn't dominate each other in size. I wanted to give each image the same visual weight before I began collaging them or painting them.

After making the Xerox prints, some of the photographs main subject matter varied in size, this was do to how I used the background to foreground relationship. With some photographs I would do a slight contrast increase because of the original of newsprint tonal quality. This helped to focus the subject and allowed me to use some of the smaller photographs in the newspapers.

In creating my database of photographs I became intrigued how one month related to the next. The narrative of each month would not change but where that narrative was taking place would change. I wanted to create an alternative narrative and present them in a fashion of how easily the line could be transversed between propaganda and persuasion. The persuasion in my work was the photographs I collected from daily national newspapers and the propaganda was the Russian socialist realism posters. It's merging theses to types images though to show the transparent line between propaganda and persuasion. Lev Manovich makes note how narrative relates to the database:

> If only one interface is constructed, the result will be similar to a traditional art object, but this is an exception rather than the norm. This formulation places the opposition between database and narrative in a new light, thus redefining our concept of narrative. The "user" of a narrative is traversing a database, following links between its records as established by the database's creator (p. 227).

In the creating my murals, I created six different interfaces but from one database. We could look at each month as different databases determined by the popularity of events taken place during a months period. In relation to constructing the murals, I looked at

each months photographs as a nonlinear narrative and my database as the connecting line to each mural.

An important aspect of my database involves how news media outlets choose to represent the individual, group, and other cultures. Additionally, how gender roles were represented, as victim vs. savior became an interest. I decided to implement rules and conditions relating to the selection and use of images. For example, if a photograph was repeated more than once on a given day I made four copies of that image when it came time for print. Making four prints of that repeated image represented the four newspapers and the importance of the image on that day. If the image was shown in more than two newspapers on a certain day I still only had four copies of it made. A high percentage of the photographs that were repeated throughout the four different newspapers dealt with the victims of either civil protest or theaters of war.

Throughout the scanning of each month's worth of images, the victim vs. savior narrative played repeatedly. The crying women with her hands either in the air or carrying their diseased or injured child or she viewed down covering her fallen husband. The women were never put in a position of power to show that they were contributing in a conflict zone. If they were photographed in a protest they were showing screaming at the top of there lungs and almost always shown to be the first victims of police violence. Children were almost always shown as the victim in a country engaged in war.

Children were routinely shown receiving medical care by some medical physician. They usually were sitting on a table with there hand covering there wound while the doctor was inspecting their injury. Or they might be sitting in a humble like position with their wound wrapped. The use of children in the photographs I collected were always showing them in a compromising situation. Whether it was receiving

medical treatment or grieving a lost loved one. Some of the photographs I collected showed children right after they had an amputation with their heads hanging low and their eyes looking up.

As my database grew it became apparent the men were put in the position of power and the role of the "protector". In a conflict men were the one's caring arms and in control of the military or paramilitary complex. During protest men were shown as the agitators, committing acts of aggression against law enforcement officers or handcuffed by law enforcement putting up a rigorous fight. Sometimes they would be shown in a group discussion, ultimately looking to plot against authority. In images of civil protest, the aftermath of war, and images of physical conflict, my database relentlessly showed male aggression towards not only his fellow man but people of authority. Each conflict or protest the male repeated the same role of antagonist and was placed in a position of power. It could be said, this also makes him the victim, always being the one to take up arms. Women's and children's reflection of victim repeated throughout different conflicts in the construction of my database. Only a few images of child soldiers told a different version of childhood.

The database was the key to the construction of *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion.* It allowed myself to draw relationships between genders, portrayals of different conflicts, embedded journalism vs. non-embedded, and the role of the protester. It also began the critique of journalistic style photographs and whether they cross the line into propaganda or persuasion. After collecting a months worth photographs it made it easier to choose which piece of propaganda I used from the former USSR.

CHAPTER 5

CONSTRUCTING THE IMAGE

The original construction plan for *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* was to be eight, seven foot by eight foot murals into one large square construction, much like a fence. In its completion, it would have been three murals by one mural, making a rectangle perimeter that no one could see inside. The murals, as a whole, would operate the same way a construction fence does, hiding every aspect of how an object is built and only being able to see the final product. Constructing this blockade would have brought the graffiti or street art conversation inside.

The concept for the construction wall came from my graffiti background of tagging and putting stickers on these types of walls. I have always been amazed how fast these walls get covered with graffiti and how quickly a conversation takes place from individuals or groups. However most people do not look forward to graffiti wall placements, but look forward to what is being built behind the wall. They look forward to the static building instead of the ever changing conversation. Via street art John Berger's (1972) *Ways of Seeing* notes the relationship between people and images to this similar environment.

> Usually it is *we* who pass the image – walking, traveling, turing a page; on the tv screen it is somewhat different but even then we are theoretically the active agent – we can look away, turn down the the sound, make some coffee. Yet despite this, one has the impression that publicity images are continually passing us, like express trains on their way to some distant terminus. We are static; they

are dynamic – until the newspaper is thrown away, the television programme

continues or the poster is posted over (p. 130).

The construction wall in context to graffiti is dynamic, people will put their poster over

another poster, different tags will overlap, and stickers will compound each other. The

conversations that take place on the construction fence are dynamic but no one ever

thinks to hold on to these pieces of plywood as a time capsule of public discourse.

Due to unfortunate circumstances of not being able to find a venue to house the

completed idea I settled on the Cinema and Photography Gallery in the Mass

Communication Building. This does not mean though I didn't use the aesthetics of the

construction fence, I was just not able to build the blockade I wanted. In building each

mural the layering of newspaper photographs became key to the overall lines of

viewing. I wanted groups of images or individual images to look as if they were placed

at different times periods. It also allowed myself to concentrate on each piece as a

separate month and let the database I created be one of the major connecting lines. In

naming the murals, I decided to name them from which month I collected the

photographs. I wanted to see if people would remember any the events of the

photographs I edited or if they did remember them how would they view my context of

them. During the week of my thesis exhibition people did recognize certain events but

some people couldn't tell the difference between the President of Iran versus the

President of Syria. People also recognized more U.S. events than world events, such as

the U.S. Presidential election photographs.

After the framing of the plywood I painted a few lines of different colors in case I

wanted to peel the posters down to the base of the wood. I thought of the plywood as

the first layer and the spray paint on the plywood as the second layer. This was not to

only replicate things I had seen on other construction plywood fences but also gave myself more layers to experiment with.

 After looking through all the photographs I collected for the month of May, I decided to use a poster I found of pontiff like character with his hands above his head preaching to a few men on their knees in front of a large cannon. This poster was created by Dmirty S. Moor. The closest date I could find to when this poster was printed was around the 1930's and is titled, *Black Ravens are Preparing a Predatory Raid on the U.S.S.R Proletariat be Vigilant!* I choose this poster because of the pontiff character's hands, in collecting photographs from newspapers for the month of May hands seemed to be a recurring theme. Whether it was showing hands in rage, disgust, or in sorrow the hands were a major focal point. There was also a image of soldier with bloody hands that were wrapped in gauze and the blood was seeping through the gaze. His hands were out stretched as if he was looking for someone to hold them.

Figure 4. Editing of Moor's poster.

Because of the lack large scale color Xerox machines in my local area, I had

print all of the socialist realism posters eleven by fourteen inches and put them together

like a puzzle. Every socialist realism poster was printed seven feet tall and the width

varied due to the aspect ratio. I always used the socialist realism posters as my third

layer and constructed them with great care because I wanted them to look as if they

were officially sanctioned like a government poster. The glue that I used for all the

images was a mixture of wall paper paste and my own concoction of wheat paste. Wall

paper paste has a lot of water in it and it allowed me greater time to work with all the

images and move them around while still wet. Mixing my own wheat paste with the wall

paper paste added rigidity to all the images and made them extremely tough. Using this

mixture made tearing of the photographs easy. Wheat paste was used to display early

20th century propaganda posters and is still used by graffiti and street artist today. Again,

keeping to propaganda and street art materials.

Figure 5. May mural with first layer of paint and placement of Moor's poster.

After getting socialist realism poster glued, the next step was placing all of the

photographs from the month of May. In glueing the photographs, I started with the ones

I made four copies of. This gave myself a good base to work from as starting point in organizing the months conflicts. For the *May* mural I worked around the idea of cause and effect. Using the cannon as the idea of the military industrial complex I choose to put people of power in and around the top of the cannon. On the left side I layered the photographs of rebel groups and government soldiers engaged in physical conflict. At the right of the mural I displayed all of the different protests and they were overlapped with images of police forces getting ready to or engage protesters with force. At the bottom of the *May* mural were all the photographs of the deceased from the different conflicts taking place globally in regions such as, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This became a repeating theme throughout all six murals. Doing this made sense because of the large cross and cannon in the center of the socialist realism poster. The cannon being the reaper of death and the cross representing the conflicts of religion. A pontiff praying to the cannon for the safety from ones enemy's but the celebration of the dead helped connect the themes of the photographs I collected. I manifested these ideas through the use of each layer of painting.

Each mural was almost entirely painted with spray paint. I worked with three different brands of spray paint Belton Molotow, Montana 94, and Montana Hardcore. The reasons for choosing these three different paints is that they come in a wide variety of colors, a person can work after letting the paint dry in less than five minutes and are great for working in high humidity. I also wanted to keep all of my materials in line with street art propaganda techniques. In that, I wanted to work with materials that exemplified the ideas of the propaganda machine, working with materials that are not only cheap but highly reproducible like xerox and materials that everyone can afford.

Figure 6. Completion of May mural.

In painting all six murals I tried to keep to the color scheme of the poster of socialist realism art. With the *May* mural, I did exactly this, using different colors of beige and creating different depths between the layers of the photographs from the daily national newspapers. To blur the line between propaganda and persuasion I wanted to bring elements of the socialist realism poster back into the foreground of each mural. In the *May* mural I accomplished this by painting the outline of the cannon back into the mural. I covered the original part of the cannon in the poster with photographs from the different daily national newspapers. Painting the cannon back in did two things, one, directed the eye line of the viewer, two, created two different viewing distances. The first viewing distance being the overall mural and the second being the close inspection of the photographs from the newspapers. This creative decision brought together images from daily national newspapers and Dmirty S. Moor's poster more fluidly to connect sources of propaganda and persuasion.

In constructing the *June* mural it was learning experience on many levels. It is the one mural that I came back to the most. Choosing the poster of socialist realism for this mural I wanted to connect the ideas of the victim vs. savor relationship. It led me to Dementy Shmarinov poster *Avenge Us!* This poster by Shmarinov is of a women carrying her a child that appears to be her daughter out of a fire of burning rubble in the background. The child's eyes are closed and she has a small cut on her forehead, the wound is bleeding down her forehead into her hair. This poster was created during the time of World War II and was a message to the Russian people to avenge the fallen. The artist used the traditional victim vs. savor model that are in the photographs I collected from the newspapers for the month of June.

Figure 7. Edited version of Sharinov's poster.

I started the construction of the *June* the same way I started *May,* first by painting the seven foot by eight foot plywood and then glueing Shmarinov's poster. With the second layer of this mural I mixed a deep blue with a matte black paint in keeping with the color scheme of the poster. From here I started to glue the photographs collected in

the month of June. Since this poster's background had an overwhelming amount of

purple in the background, I used four different variants of purple spray paint. I also

darkened some of the purples to create more of division with a transparent black spray

paint, which resulted in about six different variants of purple.

Figure 8. Layering and painting of photographs.

In layering the images for this mural I created a division around the central

characters of the socialist realism poster. I kept the images of the deceased at the

bottom as I did with the *May* mural but in this one I created divisions of the protests and

conflict fighting on the left and right. The end result was protesters protesting against

protesters and soldiers fighting against soldiers. At the top of the mural I also kept the

theme of political figures and creating their division of hierarchy. During this month there

was campaigning for the U.S. Presidency and hostility between U.S. and Russian

relations. After adhering and painting the photographs I made the decision to overlap

the socialist realism poster with the photographs as I did with the use of the cannon in

the *May* mural. With the *June* mural I choose to use the flames to overlap the photographs from the newspapers.

After painting the flames back on the *June* mural, the photographs became lost and I created only one viewing distance of the overall mural, the women and child being at the center. In dealing with this I decided to push the central characters further by using a Dremel. I purchased a small bit that is meant for routing wood corners and carved out very small lines to replace the facial features of the women and child. The resulting effect from this was skeletal like features and I left a little part of their faces to show their former features. After carving out the features of the women's and child's faces, I used a black acrylic paint to add more depth to the features I carved out with the Dermel.

The victim vs. savior relationship theme relied on the use of the socialist realism poster, but where it gets blurry involves the use of the photographs. I lost my two viewing distances by using different variants of purple that were too similar in tone. Trying to replicate the construction fence the mural became too organized and more reflexive of the one-way communication process. It doesn't look like multiple people came along and had a conversation through images. This is not a bad thing by any means, the *June mural* is just different from all six murals but indemnifies the line between propaganda and persuasion. Through the use of the different variants of purple I was able to meld the photographs I collected from the newspapers and change the original meaning of Shmariov's poster of revenge into victim vs. savior and create an alternate narritive. What I mean by meld, is the amount of images a persons sees on any given day of civil protest, the aftermath of war, and images of physical conflict. In this melding process and the growing number of images that are added to the database

everyday; we are losing the ability to properly identify subject relationships to not only

ourselves but the proper representation of a group or culture. Photojournalism has

become too repetitive and formalistic in their representation of groups and cultures. It

could be said the frame is being guided by a common, yet unknown hand of the cut and

paste function in culture representation. In the context of Lev Manovich (2001) we are

living in a cut and paste society, in which the viewfinder replicates groups and cultures

through no line of delineation.

Figure 9. Completion of June mural.

With the *July* mural I took a different approach with the propaganda poster.

Instead of making it one large seven foot poster I made several eleven by seventeen

posters to start my third layer. I made a grid with the posters, five across and seven

down, equalling forty-two posters. The poster I choose was Viktor Ivanov's 1962 *Down

With War*. After removing the text from the image I made two different versions of the

Ivanov's poster. The first one was with the text removed and the second was a blurring of the image. For the second version I simply made a copy of the girl and transposed another slightly transparent and misaligned on top of the other.

Figure 10. Edited version of Ivanov's poster.

Making this third mural I wanted to utilize the little girl covering her face as much as I could. In placing the photographs from the daily national newspapers I concentrated in placing and tearing them around the girls eyes. The power of the girls eyes from Ivanov's poster were so powerful and in such freight I wanted make sure they were utilized. When glueing the photographs I made sure to use more glue than necessary so I could do more precise tears with a putty knife. Using a putty knife I was able to make small holes in the photographs and make the tears look more natural, like the elements had done it.

Painting this mural proved to be one of the most challenging because of the complexity of the background poster. The repetition of Ivanov's poster as the background and the placement of the photographs became a spacial problem. Collecting images for the month of July was overwhelming. For the number and nature of reported news events seemed unrelated. The Syrian Civil War was being covered

twenty four hours at this point, Pussy Riot was in jail for their demonstration, and the U.S. Presidential Candidates were in full debate mode. When I started laying out the photographs, the process became hectic, but I chose to construct a mural reflexive of this turmoil. Instead of creating divisions between the protesters and people engaged in physical conflict, I layered them together. What remained constant in relation to previous murals included the placement of images in which people in power at the top and the deceased at the bottom. The colors of the *July* mural reflected the earth tones in Ivanov's poster. Layering different browns, beiges and blacks served as a unifying element among the chaotic and disparate news stories.

Figure 11. Point in which I lost the center focus point.

In the process of layering and painting the photographs I lost the central point of focus. The previous murals each had a main focal point, whether it was the women's face or the pontiff charter and the cannon. Applying the photographs from the newspapers I created the lines I wanted but the result left the eye wondering too much. Creating purposeful composition that directed the viewer's eye throughout the mural

proved difficult. After much debate I decided to foreground Ivanov's poster through the use of a larger scale instead of leaving it as the background. I glued the larger Ivanov poster at eye level, so the girls eyes would be at the same level for the average viewer. I added careful expressionistic placement of paint splatters helped to redirect the eye line to the bigger Ivanov poster but also add another layer of texture. In doing this it also added to the conversation of the overall mural, as if someone came into contact with the mural and didn't like what they saw, again trying utilize the idea of the construction fence.

The *July* mural was a learning experience in many ways. Before I even built the actual mural I made a digital layout to serve as a blueprint. Even with this layout I lost the sense of scale. Only in the construction of the actual mural did it became evident that the focal point was getting obstructed. I feel the size of the poster competed with the size of the photographs from the daily national newspapers. In blurring the line between propaganda and persuasion I feel that this mural was a success. Using the database of the photographs and a repeating propaganda poster, I was able to reference the propaganda machine with it's authority in question.

Figure 12. Completion of July mural.

I did not make a mural for the month of August. The library where I was receiving my newspapers had a miscommunication with some new employes and disposed of all the newspapers before my appointed pick up time. In lieu of producing an August mural, I touched up previous murals, performed file maintenance and management.

The *September* mural I returned to using a larger poster of socialist realism art. I choose a poster I found on a Russian blog site dedicated to propaganda posters. The poster has a silhouette of a large bomb over what appears to be an apartment structure and the bottom of the poster has text that reads, Militarism Agressioon Konfrontatsioon. After doing extensive research I was unable to locate the artist or the date of when it was made. Judging from the design and the use of the bomb I would date it's creation in the 1980's. I altered the poster in two different ways in Photoshop. First, I removed the text and second altered the color. Originally, the poster was black and white, though I

added selective color and changed all the black and white tones to red. To produce a more ominous feeling, which was magnified with its larger scale presence.

Figure 13. Edited version of the bomb poster.

Before glueing the photographs from the daily national newspapers I made a quick template of the bomb from oil board in order to assess the need to repaint the bomb if parts of it became covered from the photographs. Positioning the photographs for this month became difficult. My original idea was to cover the bomb and repaint the bomb over the photographs from the newspapers. In line with previous murals, I placed high ranking political official's at the top of the mural and the deceased victims at the bottom. On the right I placed all of police action that had been taken against protesters, and on the left, included various protesters. For the month of September there were a lot of protests. This had a lot to do with the attack in Benghazi, Libya on the U.S. Embassy of September 11, 2012. Also during this month, I had collected a fare amount of American Flag burning photographs from different protests. I started placing the photographs as if they were in conflict with each other but used the center of the bomb

as the dividing line. The bomb interrupts the surrounding conflicts, which are accented with the use of tearing the photographs. I also tore all the photographs of the newspaper images so one's eye would lead to the center of the bomb.

Figure 14. Layering of photographs and paint test patches.

The *September* mural plays upon patriotic themes in relation to the presidential debates. Painting the *July* mural I used different mix of blues and a cherry red for the bomb. I started with a deeper blue at the top and faded it off at the bottom and to add more depth I used a transparent black spray paint. For the bottom of the mural where I placed the deceased images I used tar black color. Using this tar black with Xerox has an interesting effect, the tar black gives the Xerox a lot more depth to the photograph. After painting the photographs I reintroduced the outline of the bomb in the mural but decided to leave the inside of the bomb transparent, coating the inside with very little red. The decision to stencil on a small four panel window at the top of the bomb created the bomb as a house. Giving reference to the nuclear family and the idea of the bomb protecting U.S. Interest through the use of the family.

The *September* mural was a great experimentation in trying to discern the line

between propaganda and persuasion. The way I chose to paint the bomb gave it too

much attention and distracted away from the photographs and their visual lines. This

came from not only the color choice of painting the bomb cherry red but also the size of

the bomb. The layering of the photographs became lost because due to the bomb's

dominate size which interfered with the space on all sides of the mural. To distinguish

elements of propaganda and persuasion the need to paint the poster and the

photographs with high degrees of contrast was unnecessary. It's for this reason I chose

not display this mural in my thesis exhibition.

Figure 15. Completion of September mural.

For the *October* mural I took a different approach after constructing the

September mural. Realizing the photographs from the daily national newspapers I was

collecting were becoming more of a timeline of a self destructive battlegrounds, I

wanted to capitalize on this concept. In choosing the poster I chose one that exemplified the political battleground of not only the content presented in the photographs but the subtle difference between the poster and the photographs. I choose to use Vladimir Fidman's poster that was created in 1919, it is a rendering of a king who is choking himself with a chain and in the background there is an army of soldiers attacking him. In the kings left hand is the chain while his right hand is raised making a clenching action with his fingers. His crown has been damaged by a cannon ball that was fired from the soldiers in the background. At the top of the poster sits a castle on a hill the soldiers are protecting. The poster is black and orange with the king in black and the soldiers and castle in orange. The original poster had a text I removed that read, "the enemy is after Moscow – the heart of Soviet Russia. The enemy must be destroyed Onward comrades!"

Figure 16. Edited version Fidman's poster.

The *October* mural began with glueing Fidman's poster first. Fidman's poster became my second layer in the construction, the first layer being the plywood.

Reasoning for this, I wanted to keep the Fidman's poster complete as possible and not carve into the wood as I did with the *June* mural. I placed the photographs to interact with the battle scene on the poster. The subject matter of the photographs engaged in conflict on the left and right side of the mural, making it look as if they were fighting each other. Collecting photographs for this month there were several of young rebel soldiers being photographed with their rifles aimed down range. This was one of the main reasons for picking Fidman's poster. Playing on the idea of an eye for an eye which transversed over into my painting and layering of the mural.

The color scheme of the *October* mural mirrored that of Fidman's poster but with greater intensity. Colors included burnt and deep oranges, along with coatings of matte black which added to a scorching effect. Again, photos of the deceased remained at the bottom with overlays of tar black paint and cream colors. This gave the appearance of a residual effect of ash. Starting off with deep oranges at the top and fading to lighter oranges at the bottom I was highlighting the cause and aftermath of the implied destruction. The *October* mural differed from the previous months through the use of color to suggest the culpability of those in positions of power. Placing the figures of political power I made a simple strip down the middle of the mural. There wasn't many political figures I collected for this month but I utilized the few I had making them the center of the conflict. The first top photographs is of President Barak Obama and Governor Mitt Romney, while below is a photograph of the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. I placed them in a center line with Fidman's royal crown. A double set of photographs to the left and right side of the center line of President Barak Obama and Governor Mitt Romney. This predicated to the upcoming U.S. Presidential elections that would take place in November but more to split of Government Parties. I left some of

the photographs unpainted to replicate the construction fence aesthetic but also with the stenciling of the poster.

I stenciled the left arm and chain into the mural after I covered it with photographs, I wanted it to look like maybe something that would happen on a construction fence. The construction fence is a timeline of a conversation that takes place in a public space. In creating my murals I utilized this concept of the timeline through the use of layering of photographs and posters of socialist realism art. After stenciling the left arm and chain back, I had a better visual site line from the poster to the photographs. This not only connected the visual sight line better but left the mural unfinished adding more to the construction fence aesthetic.
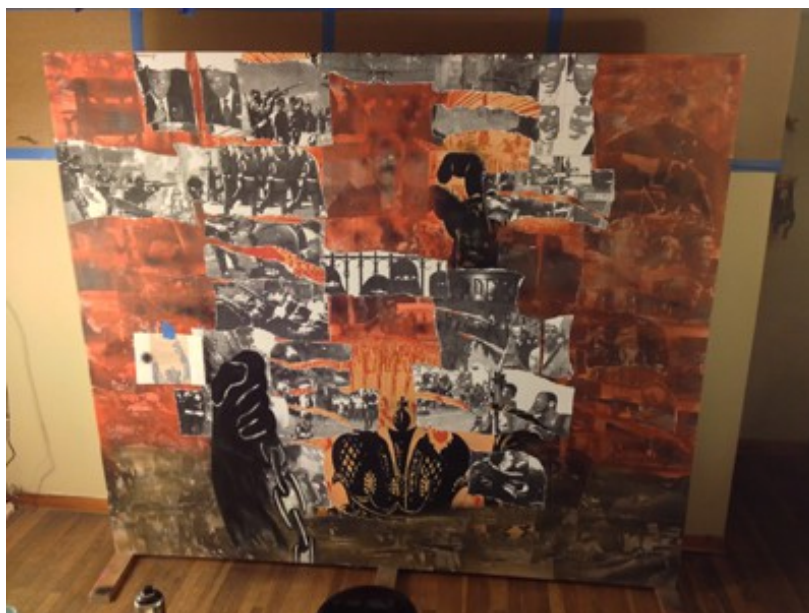

Figure 17. October mural with arm and chain stenciled.

With the *October* mural I created the two viewing distances I wanted, one being the overall viewing distance and the second one being the database of photographs. Using the construction fence aesthetic I was able to blur the line between propaganda and persuasion. This wouldn't of been possible if I didn't draw on the battlefield of

Fidman's poster. In doing this, I was able to more effectively blur journalistic

photographs to the idea of propaganda.

Figure 18. Completion version of October mural.

With the *November* I incorporated the same type of overlapping present in the

October mural. I used V. Arseenkov 1986 poster *Murders must answer for their crimes*.

Arseenkov's poster is of U.S. war planes flying through a set of clouds and below the

planes is a young male child crying. I removed the text on the front of the planes, they

had U.S. written on the front of them and removed the main slogan on the right side. I

found the planes intriguing and reminiscent of today's drones. The planes were the main

reason I chose the poster and would incorporate them in the stenciling of the mural to

show ideas of the military industrial complex. With the painting of the *November* mural I

not only intensified the colors like the *October* mural but complimented them as well.

Figure 19. Edited version of Arseenkov's poster.

As with the *October* mural I decided to start with Arseenkov's as the second layer for the *November* mural. I knew I was going to concentrate on using the planes as a considerable part of layering, especially with the photographs. The layering of photographs and the stenciling of the planes complimented each other. For every protester image, I would add an image of a law enforcement official or military figure. I used a putty knife to carve out the outline of protester underneath in order separate it from the military figure. With the political figures in the *November* mural I placed them throughout the top of mural. The President of Iran sits at the top left of the mural, while two photographs of President Obama is positioned top center and the Chinese Communist Party at the top right. These were the only Head of State figures I collected for the month of November. I represented them in the idea of far right and far left. Again, the images of the deceased were positioned at the bottom.

After layering the photographs most of the planes and child's face were still visible. Before painting all of the photographs I made a stencil of the planes making use

Photoshop and with the aid of digital projector. Then I used a digital projector to project

the plane on a piece of oil board and made three different size stencils of the plane by

adjusting the zoom lens on the projector.

 I painted the photographs with a slightly different approach than the previous

murals, I supplemented the poster's color scheme with colors that contributed to the

idea of the construction fence. In picking out colors to add to the idea construction fence

I decided on a carmel and a cream color. The first layering of plane stencil I started with

a matte black, from here I covered the left, right, and center part of the mural with the

cream color. Using the transparent black paint I gave the left and right side of the mural

a thin coat. After panting the mural I lost the visual center point. So I used the plane

stencil in combination with a gold paint to redirect the eye line but another layer of

context. In that, the gold planes represent the military industrial complex that is

overlapping the subjects in the photographs. With the child at the bottom of the mural I

used the carmel paint to accent his facial features and draw the eye line downward

towards the deceased photographs. This redirected the visual eye line through the

different photographs and poster.

Figure 20. First layering planes on the November mural.

The *November* mural of the this series exemplifies how imagery can transfer

between content of persuasion and a message of propaganda. The *September* mural

served as an effective form to be emulated in future murals. During and after my thesis

the *November* mural prompted the most conversations among viewers concerning

propaganda and persuasion. I attributed the use of stenciling the planes to the success

of the this mural because it unified the other visual elements. The *November* mural

displayed the effectiveness of the database and through Arseenkov's poster I was able

to better highlight the transparency of propaganda and persuasion.

Figure 21. Completion of November mural.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Working on *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* I have come to realize how influential U.S. mainstream media imagery dictates or reinforces previous notions of groups or cultures. For instance the victim vs. savior relationship is a theme I saw recurring throughout the database. Our current repositories for storing images and photographs are only growing and our ability to share this information is taking less clicks of the mouse or swipes of the finger. What is not taking place though, is a conversation of propaganda and persuasion in context to media imagery. If we don't understand these two forms of communication we will not know if some is trying to persuade us or forward an ideology. Images or photographs have become so easily published we no longer have to seek out the image but it now seeks us out and we need to be able to properly critique images and the information they broadcast.

The building of one's own database is truly the ultimate propaganda machine not only for governments but the media maker as well. Search engines rely on the indexing of information and relating that information to each specific users tastes and preferences. With my own database I was able to play in and around the line that separates propaganda and persuasion. Using photographs from the front page section of daily national newspapers I was able to add the layer of consumerism. The front page section most notabilty used to appeal to buyers through the use of color graphics and large text. Constructing *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* is the product of my database to show the blurring of the line that separates propaganda and

persuasion. Using this section as the final filter helped me better understand one-way vs. two-way communication in relation to propaganda and persuasion.

Using Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) context of one-way vs. two-way communication in relation to propaganda and persuasion is key to understanding existing and new databases. Propaganda being a one-way communication process and persuasion being a two-way communication process. Understanding these two communication processes help with are interpretation of images and photographs but how they are engaging us as a global community. *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* engaged both of these communication processes with the combination of Russian poster propaganda and an American newspaper database. Building a database of photographs from four different daily national newspapers I was able to combine the two-way communication process.

By using these two different forms of image communication I was able to show how easily a two-way communication process can become a one-way communication process. The murals demonstrate this through the blurring of photographs and Russian posters and the use of the construction fence atheistic to build a timeline. A timeline that shows the repetitive nature of journalistic photographs. The importance of this becomes in identifying photographs that cross the line into propaganda. As more and more news media companies become owned by entertainment companies, it will become even more imperative to identify propaganda from persuasion. Essentially the news media is having a one-way or two-way conversation through the use of images and how is the frame being effected from large databases's? *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* effectively hints at how easily the line can be crossed by unknown hands guiding the frame. Taking the example of the Abu Ghraib photographs, it wasn't until the

public saw these photographs that questions began to arise "at what cost". Before the photographs of Abu Ghraib the images we were seeing coming out of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars told a different story. They were telling a narrative of winning harts and minds and the War on Terror.

Using photographs from daily national newspapers and layering them with a socialist realism poster I was able to create a conversation through the use of the construction fence aesthetic. Even though I was not able to physically build the fence, I still applied the construction fence aesthetic to each mural. In the gallery setting where *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* was displayed the murals did not exactly have the aesthetic of the construction fence due to the separation on the gallery walls. The plywood was warped and weathered from sitting in the elements and gave the appearance as if they were taken from the street to the gallery. Taking all of the elements in to delineation I was able to create a body of work that explored the line between propaganda and persuasion through the use of the database. With databases growing everyday, it is imperative that we understand how this information is being structured and by using the one-way versus two-way communication process we can more effectively breakdown these structures.

With my future work I want to continue working with database's in relation with propaganda posters of the past and photographs of the present. I am currently still working with Russian socialist realism posters by themselves and making wooden reliefs of them. With photographs from mainstream news I'm still exploring my use of the Xbox 360 Kinect and and the possibilities of merging the two media. For long term explorations I will continue my research into forms of propaganda and photojournalism. I not only find this research compelling in terms of communication practices but also its

relation to our ever changing news media landscape. Combining this research with my art practices I will be able to see if U.S. news media changes it's framing of civil protest, the aftermath of war, and images of physical conflict. *The Thin Line Between Propaganda and Persuasion* does just this, by combining photographs and Russian propaganda I built a timeline that showed how these three different categorizes are framed through the lens. For if the frame does not change, we will only build upon one-way communication practices and our framing of other cultures and groups will only become more repetitive.

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