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OUR NEW ONLINE arts VENTURE

For some time we have wanted arts to provide you with on-line issues as well as print issues. With this new issue we have begun our venture! This will mean a marked increase in the number of articles, reviews, poetry, and general religion and arts news, along with notes on the programs of our partner schools, and the work of the Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies—sarts. And we are providing the new online editions without any increase in subscription rates!

But we are asking for your help. While this issue will “look” much like a print issue, it opens up possibilities for ongoing conversation and interaction. We hope you will give us feedback on this issue and suggest changes that you would like to see us make in the future. We’ll follow up this request with an email after you have had a chance to assess our first copy.

In this issue we have a welcome from Robin Jensen, President of the Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies. arts is the journal of sarts, and arts online issues will become a special source for keeping you informed of the work of the Society, its annual meeting, and the resources it makes available to you. sarts new website is just up and the link to that site is: www.societyarts.org.

In the following pages you will also find articles by Kim Vrudny, Cindi Beth Johnson, Wilson Yates and Rebecca Davis, as well as notes and website links for our arts partner schools: Andover-Newton Theological School, CARE: the Center for Arts, Religion and Education (GTU), Drew University, Fuller Seminary, St. John’s University, United Theological Seminary, Union Theological Seminary (NYC), United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Vanderbilt University, and Wesley Theological Seminary.

Our fall print issue will be sent to you by the end of the year. It is a special issue of 128 pages with a focus on one sculptor, Stephen De Staebler, and his work Winged Figure. Winged Figure is located in the atrium of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. The issue’s collection of essays was an original project of Doug Adams and, after his untimely death has been shaped and edited by Diane Apostolos Cappadona, a major figure in the field of religion and the arts.

I owe a special word of thanks to Kayla Larson, arts and sarts assistant, who has given shape to this issue. The arts staff hopes you will enjoy this new venture and let us know what you think.

-WY

A Special Invitation for Your Help as a Subscriber

I would like to invite you to respond in a special way to our new subscription campaign. We are seeking to increase our subscription base so that we might reach a wider and more diverse readership. My request is simple: Please suggest five persons who would benefit by subscribing to arts. We will send them a back issue and an invitation to subscribe.

For your help in this endeavor we will send you a copy of Arts, Theology and the Church, edited by Kimberly Vrudny and Wilson Yates.

Please send your subscription suggestions, their postal and e-mail addresses, and your preference about mentioning your name to: Kayla Larson at artsmagoffice@unitedseminary.edu.
I know that many of you belong to sarts-- the Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies, but, also, that some of you do not. For those who don't know much about us, let me begin by telling you who we are.

The Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies was founded in 2002 to encourage the integration of the arts in the teaching of religion at all levels, but especially in colleges, universities, and theological schools. This integration depends on the collaborative and generative work of artists, scholars, and religious leaders who may work in different kinds of institutions or contexts, but who wish to foster the spiritual and religious dimensions or intersections of the arts as well as integrate the artistic or aesthetic dimensions of religious life in their teaching, learning, or spiritual practice.

In the past six or more years, sarts has been generously supported by grants from the Henry Luce Foundation. These grants have underwritten programs at the annual meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society for Biblical Literature as well as some initiatives with the College Art Association. They have also supported arts, the publication of sarts, the development and maintenance of a website for the Society and efforts of the program committee to find and nurture new members. Perhaps most significantly, the Luce Foundation funds have allowed sarts to provide small, competitively awarded grants to young artists and academics to pursue targeted projects in the field of Religion or Theology and the Arts.

Among the goals of the Society are the sharing of syllabi, notices of programs and events, resources, promotion of the Luce fellowships, promotion of arts, and the highlighting of important new publications. We also provide an image gallery where artists are able to display images of their work. These are some of the features included in our new and much-improved website: www.societyarts.org.

This year’s programs were held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta, Georgia. We started, on Friday October 29, with a joint venture between sarts and The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning. This afternoon-long program was titled “The Role of the Arts for Transformational Pedagogy.” In a series of workshop-styled sessions, we explored the ways faculty can incorporate the work of artists into their teaching. Three practicing artists (a painter, a poet, and a musician) as well as faculty respondents assisted us in this.

Following the workshop, we held a reception for members and guests. The following morning we co-sponsored a tour of the High Museum in Atlanta with the Art, Literature, and Religion Section of the AAR. That afternoon we heard presentations by four of this year’s Luce Fellows, Laurie Cassidy, Sophia Rose Shafi, Kimberly Vrudny, and Erica Kierulf. Hearing about the work of our Luce Fellows is always a highlight of our meeting and an excellent opportunity for conversation and exchange of ideas.

If you are not now a member I want to encourage you to join our dialogue, benefit from our activities, and to contribute your energy, talents, and creativity to our work. Membership is $50 annual and includes a subscription to arts. If you are already a member, I thank you for your participation and hope you will continue to join us on our programs.

With all best wishes for this academic year.

—RJ
Established artists with successful careers, Chuck + Peg Hoffman-Carlson changed the focus of their art dramatically after a mission trip to Northern Ireland. A visit to Forthspring Inter-Community Group transformed their lives and changed the trajectory of their art and teaching. Forthspring, located on a peace line in Belfast, is a community effort to bring healing and reconciliation and break the chain of centuries of violence. The building has two entrances, on one side of the building there is a Protestant entrance, on the other side there is a Roman Catholic entrance. Forthspring is located in the middle, an organization dedicated to peace, a place where people gather with intention to be both contributors and participants in a peaceful life even as they have been surrounded by conflict and strife.

Chuck + Peg first went to Northern Ireland as part of a mission outreach project sponsored by St. Luke’s United Methodist Church in Orlando, Florida. Subsequent trips to Forthspring followed. Together they listened to stories, facilitated art and reconciliation workshops, and were given a commission. The commission was intended to convey the stories of the community members. Peg + Chuck quickly found common elements in the reflections and insights from individuals that lived on both sides of the wall. They retold those stories visually, inviting the women to see their lives as symbols of peacemaking and to understand their role as contributors and participants in a peaceful community.

The logistics of the trip meant that while they were in Northern Ireland, working on the commission, they chose to paint on the same canvas. On the way home they began to wonder if painting as a collaborative process might in fact be, for them, an expression of reconciliation. They set out to continue painting in this new style, working together on the same canvas and choosing to only paint together. They say of their process, “Our work is the result of collaboration, going beyond the conceptual sense, to include working together on the same canvas.

Creating art in this way, as in the reconciliation process, involves listening, respecting, trusting and being authentic with one another. There is also a shared balance of power. While one person may make a decision about what stroke and where, the power remains balanced.
Through this process, we have created paintings that neither one of us would have created alone. Looking at a work we see evidence of our individuality, as well as the presence of a third dimension—more than the sum of two parts. It is so satisfying that we can hardly describe it. We seldom talk during the process, but work out most issues through non-verbal communication.

One thing that we have noticed is that we don’t paint over or paint out something the other puts down without letting the idea (or stroke or color) live for a while, and then see how it fits into the whole. When we have learned all that we can from a painting we begin a new dialogue on a new canvas.

The intriguing nature of their artistic process is surpassed only by the power of the final work. Using strong colors and shapes to create commanding and insightful works their art invites us to see and understand reconciliation in new and significant ways. Each painting, done in intentional collaboration, begins with a prayer written in pencil on the canvas. They keep track of the prayers even as the works of art move out of their studio into new homes or galleries. Each work of art comes with two written reflections, one from Chuck and one from Peg.

The arc of their new work is not something that has influenced them alone. Accomplished artists, they are also exceptional teachers. Leading workshops and doing presentations, they share their insights and new models of collaboration with churches, seminaries, and religious institutions, as well as secular communities and corporations, inviting them into a deeper understanding of reconciliation, peacemaking and life lived in community. Chuck Hoffman + Peg Carlson-Hoffman are founders of the Genesis + Art Studio. For more information go to www.genesisartstudio.com.

Peg Carlson-Hoffman

Peg’s passion for art and faith includes designing worship spaces and experiential environments for others to engage the Holy. Creating cloths and banners for worship, she presents ancient symbols of the Christian church so that they come alive for a new generation of worshippers. Currently the Director of Retail Product Development for Hallmark Cards, she also teaches workshops on calligraphy, design and creativity. In her words:

Inspired by the Creation story in Genesis and the New Jerusalem images in The Book of Revelation, I became aware of what falls ‘in-between.’ Not only the books in the Bible, but what goes on in the ‘in-between’ spaces of my life. My work of late reflects those Holy Spaces, where distance between God and me thins or narrows, and where my
relationships become precious and transparent. Exploring the Alpha and Omega in paint becomes a form of prayer and meditation, that in-between place where I go to meet God.

Chuck Hoffman

Chuck’s passion for the spiritual in art finds inspiration in the transcending connection of art, prayer, and faith regardless of a person’s cultural background or religious tradition. A painter, designer and workshop facilitator, Chuck worked as an Associate Creative Director for the Walt Disney Company. In 2009 he received the Art and Innovation Fellowship Award from Luther Seminary where he is working on his Master’s degree while serving as their first full time artist in residence. In his words:

I believe community creates a space where it is possible to engage truth. Community also presents for those who dare the possibility to become transparent and to interact with each other. This spiritual dimension in turn brings us to Holy ground where we encounter each other, beginning a dialog between the Divine, the artist and the viewer. In this creative, prayerful dialogue I not only connect with creation, but find out about who I am in it, and who I am in relationship to others. For me, making art becomes the highest form of hope.

sarts Launches New Website

sarts launched its new website, custom-designed by Keypoppy Christian Resources, in early July 2010. The new site offers a variety of resources to online visitors navigating the intersection of the arts and theological/religious studies: feature stories in arts magazine, information on fellowships, updates on sarts programming and workshops, links to other resources on the web, and a calendar of events. The new site also provides several innovative features available only to sarts members. Members can make on-line payment of dues and register for Sarts programs at AAR/SBL meetings. They can exhibit their art in personal online galleries or share syllabi. The site also gives members access to the membership directory and the ability to post events on the calendar.

www.societyarts.org
In his memoir, *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael Beah writes about having a new life in New York after having been a child soldier in Sierra Leone. “These days,” he writes, “I live in three worlds: my dreams, and the experiences of my new life, which trigger memories from the past.” After capturing in vivid detail a nightmare he had experienced, in which he saw his own face on the body of a victim he pushed in a wheelbarrow through a blood-soaked field, Beah writes of awakening from his dream state and his subsequent struggle to disentangle one world he occupies from the others:

I lay sweating for a few minutes on the cool wooden floor where I had fallen, before turning on the light so that I could completely free myself from the dreamworld. . . . A shudder racked my body, and I tried to think about my new life in New York City, where I had been for over a month. But my mind wandered across the Atlantic Ocean back to Sierra Leone. I saw myself holding an AK-47 and walking through a coffee farm with a squad that consisted of many boys and a few adults. . . . As soon as we left the coffee farm, we unexpectedly ran into another armed group at a soccer field adjoining the ruins of what had once been a village. We opened fire until the last living being in the other group fell to the ground. . . . [Now awake,] I got up from the floor, soaked a white towel with a glass of water, and tied it around my head. I was afraid to fall asleep, [so] I stayed awake all night, anxiously waiting for daylight. . . .

This dilemma for former child soldiers after having undergone rehabilitation—of distinguishing reality from unreality, fact from fiction, truth from untruth—provides a jumping off point at this conference on ethics and aesthetics to enter into the poster campaign developed in 2007 at TBWA, Paris by creative director Erik Vervroegen, art directors Ingrid Varetz and Javier Rodriguez, and photographer Michael Lewis for Amnesty International (France). The team produced three photographic ads, documentary in style, as posters for Amnesty International’s campaign to raise awareness about child soldiers. In one, boys play in noose-shaped swings alongside two hanging corpses; in another, children play soccer with a human skull; in still a third, three children armed with fully loaded machine guns use skeletal chips as game pieces gathered, it is implied, from the dead bodies mounded in a pile behind them. At the bottom right of the photographs, the posters include Amnesty International’s logo and address to its webpage in French, as well as the tag line: “300,000 child soldiers dream of simply being children.” These images, with their interplay between reality and unreality, fact and fiction, truth and untruth, raise intriguing questions related to Miroslav Volf’s concern for “remembering rightly,” particularly when considered within the framework of theological aesthetics.

Medieval theologians, beginning with Augustine and culminating in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, thought the transcendentals: the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, to be fitting names for the Trinitarian God, insofar as human language is able to express such a magnificent Mystery. Among the earliest to suggest that the transcendentals might constitute, in an analogical sense, what can be known about the very Being of God (acknowledging that they, by their nature, transcend our experience of them: thus, they are “transcendent”), Augustine contributed enormously to the Christian tradition and its sense that earthly experiences of truth, goodness, and beauty have a relationship with these perfections of Being, albeit to varying and lesser degrees. From there, it was not far for Augustine to make his acclaimed argument about the nature of evil. Recognizing the problem of talking about evil as having its own substance (because then from what does
it derive—a God of Absolute Evil?—Augustine understood human experience of evil to be a privation of the good. Thus, he thought there to be something of a continuum between Absolute Goodness (the very Being of God), and nothingness, with evil located somewhere in between as a degree of corruption of absolute goodness.

Although Augustine did not extend the concept to the true and the beautiful, the same could be said of these: the human experience of deception and of deformity is located somewhere along that continuum between Absolute Truth and Absolute Beauty and nothingness. Deception and deformity are not experiences of something, per se, but they are experiences of privation, or corruption of being—a corruption of Truth, a corruption of Beauty. Truth entirely corrupted (that which is absolute deception) has no Truth in it: it has no being. Thus, absolute deception doesn’t exist: it is nothingness. Beauty entirely corrupted (that which is deformed absolutely) has no Beauty in it: it has no being. Thus, absolute deformity is nothingness. Humans experience what they call deceptive and deformed but, properly understood, these are not experiences of something, but rather are experiences of corruption, of a lacking of Truth, of a lacking of Beauty, to varying and often horrifying degrees but, so the argument goes, never to such an extent that the True, Good, and Beautiful are entirely overcome. Indeed, in such a theological view, in situations of abject horror, such as where children are expected to participate as “soldiers” in massacres, the True, Good, and Beautiful are present, even if only to confirm that what is happening is objectively wrong.

My own understanding of Beauty as a name for the divine Being is indebted to these concepts, Platonic in origin, though introduced into Christianity by Augustine and advanced by Thomas it is also informed by the contemporary movement of theological aesthetics inspired by von Balthasar among others, and also by contemporary science, both biological and physical. I have written elsewhere about how I understand Beauty to be “existence stripped of everything superficial.” Indeed, like the medieval theologians who understood God to transcend creation as its ultimate cause, I understand Beauty to be existence’s ultimate source, insofar as we are able to name it, cohering with Ultimate Reality, or the Ground of Being, to use Tillich’s terminology. However, rather than imagining with ancient cosmologists that Beauty is somewhere “out there,” the highest Existence in a ladder that climbs ever higher until one arrives at Beauty Absolute—rather than thinking about a God who sort of “bends down” to share the divine nature with earthly life, I understand experiences of truth, goodness, and beauty to be participatory reflections of the ultimate cause of all that exists. They are “immanental”: the True, Good, and Beautiful are deeply within all that exists, as Uncreated Existence opens up a place within Being for a universe or multiverse to emerge, a creation that bears witness to the divine in the elegance of its very structure. The True, Good, and Beautiful become evident in nature, both biological and physical, as its history unfolds in evolutionary processes. So deeply within the structure of material existence, they once again transcend materiality, meeting their origin in existence’s very source. Beauty, a name for God, is Being—the source of all being, who continually brings being into being out of Being through something of a “microcosmic” expression, breaking into time and space, birthing all that is in a complex web of life that lacks God’s perfection but which continues to testify to Existence’s Being: to the Being of the Ultimate “I am.” If the Ultimate Being is Trinitarian, it is appropriate still to think of the True, Good, and Beautiful as names for the Being of God—with the true revealed by the Holy Spirit, expressed through wisdom, and studied by logic; with the good revealed by the Creator, expressed through justice, studied by ethics; and with the beautiful revealed by Christ, expressed through compassion, literally “suffering with,” and studied by aesthetics. If the True, Good, and Beautiful are to be identified with the persons of the Trinity: coequal, distinct but not separate, intrinsically relational, and interpenetrating one another in an eternal perichoresis, we could tweak Jacques Maritain’s phrase just a mite to say that “the splendour of all the transcendentals together” is Love, rather than beauty—Love the superabundant expression and creative energy behind Being’s revelation in creation.

Given such a philosophical construct, when we consider the “truth” and “untruth” of Amnesty International’s campaign, there is automatically a theological
dimension to the conversation, where the ethical and aesthetical are inevitably implicated. These images are staged, their children actors posing on an unreal set to raise awareness about a nonetheless very real and tragic human rights disaster unfolding in our own time. To what degree, then, can these images be said to be “true”? In what way are they true, even if fictional? Does the degree to which they are “untrue” corrupt also their “beauty”? To what extent can they be said to participate in Existence, bearing within them the power to transform viewers into reflections themselves of that which is more perfectly True, Good, and Beautiful still? As a Christian theologian invested in the development of a political theological aesthetics, in thinking about these sorts of questions in relation to this campaign, in particular, Miroslav Volf’s concept of “remembering rightly” emerges in my mind, to which we will turn shortly, to suggest that Amnesty International’s project succeeds by giving us a “higher art,” trying to connect us all in a universal aspiration that transcends “otherness,” but which ultimately fails by reifying racist perceptions of Africa precisely as “other”—an impression that is statistically false and intentionally made.

In his memoir, Ishmael Beah records his memories of how war first touched his life when he was twelve. He had travelled with friends on foot to a neighboring town to participate in a talent show when word came through that rebels had attacked his village. The next eighty pages recount how Ishmael struggles for weeks to find his family, sneaking into villages avoiding rebel fire to steal food, freezing in forested areas through the nights, only to rummage again the next day. Finally Ishmael met someone who recognized him, and insisted that she knew that his family was in the next village, about a two days’ walk from where they were. They headed for their destination and, on their way, Beah recalls meeting Gasemu, a former neighbor, who shared, “Your parents and brothers will be happy to see you. They have been talking about you every day and praying for your safety. Your mother cries every day, begging the gods and ancestors to return you to her.” He guided them to the village where they all were staying. As they approached, Ishmael recalls:

I heard gunshots. And dogs barking. And people screaming and crying. We dropped the bananas and began running in order to avoid the open hillside. A thick smoke started rising from the village. At the top of it, sparks of flames leapt into the air. We hid in the nearby bushes and listened to gunshots and the screams of men, women, and children. . . . The gunshots finally ceased, and the world was very quiet, as if listening. I told Gasemu that I wanted to go to the village. He held me back, but I shoved him into the bushes and ran down the path as fast as I could. I didn’t feel my legs. When I got to the village, it was completely on fire and bullet shells covered the ground like mango leaves in the morning. I did not know where to begin looking for my family. . . . “They stayed in that house,” Gasemu said to me as he pointed toward one of the charred houses. The fire had consumed all the door and window frames, and the mud that had been pushed in between the sticks was falling off, revealing the ropes through which the remaining fire was making its way. My entire body went into shock. Only my eyes moved, slowly opening and closing. I tried to shake my legs to get my blood flowing, but I fell to the ground, holding my face. On the ground I felt as if my eyes were growing too big for their sockets. I could feel them expanding, and the pain released my body from the shock. I ran toward the house. Without any fear I went inside and looked around the smoke-filled rooms. The floors were filled with heaps of ashes; no solid form of a body was inside. I screamed at the top of my lungs and began to cry as loudly as I could, punching and kicking with all my might into the weak walls that continued to burn.

In her report for the UN copyrighted by Unicef under the title The Impact of War on Children, Graça Machel begins her chapter on child soldiers with the words, “The increasingly widespread exploitation of children as soldiers is one of the most vicious characteristics of recent armed conflicts.” With the UN, she defines “[a] child soldier [as]
any child—boy or girl—under the age of 18, who is compulsorily, forcibly or voluntarily recruited or used in hostilities by armed forces, paramilitaries, civil defense units or other armed groups,” and reports that “most are adolescents, though many are 10 years of age and younger. The majority are boys, but a significant proportion overall are girls.”

Given such a reality, Vervroegen’s team at TBWA in Paris had a difficult assignment when Amnesty International approached its company to design a poster campaign to raise awareness about child soldiering. How does one, in three posters, lift up the issue in such a way as to compel people to learn more—particularly through Amnesty International’s website as a means to encourage support of its work on this issue? In the end, the team decided to shoot three documentary-style images set in sepia tone for dramatic effect juxtaposing a sense of a “normal” childhood kicking a soccer ball, swinging, or playing Jenga, with elements from lives of child soldiers: weapons, ammunition, skeletons, hanging corpses. The creative team’s tag line, “300,000 child soldiers dream of simply being children,” in combination with imagery, completes a campaign both visually striking and emotionally engaging. Therefore, it is not surprising that the creative team has been widely recognized for its work on this project, receiving numerous advertising awards for technique, social responsibility, and public awareness.

The campaign is successful in terms of “representing reality” because, while there are certainly grounds upon which to argue that it is misleading to use a photojournalism style photograph in a project that is not, finally, documentary, the campaign captures a deeper truth than documentary photographs might. In terms of the notion of a “deeper truth,” I defer to Hemingway, and translate his argument about books to images: “All good books,” he wrote, “are alike in that they are truer than if they had really happened and after you are finished reading one you will feel that all that happened to you and afterwards it all belongs to you; the good and the bad, the ecstasy, the remorse and sorrow, the people and the places and how the weather was.” There is a truth that is captured in the photographs by Michael Lewis for the Amnesty International campaign that is gripping and poignant. By constructing a set and inhabiting it with actors, the team perhaps arrives at a deeper truth about aspirations universal, about childhoods stolen, about nature’s dignity and the tragedy of its violation. Therefore, the creative license to use the documentary vocabulary to express humanity’s lament for a childhood lost was effective, at least to a degree. But are the images also in some way untrue—and, as such, unsuccessful in evoking the response they intend?

Ishmael Beah becomes a child soldier in chapter twelve of his memoir. Losing hope of finding his family, exhausted from weeks of hiding in the cold without food or shelter, he and his companions are captured. His report is succinct: “Suddenly two men put us at gunpoint and motioned with their guns for us to come closer.” They took Ishmael and his companions to a village occupied by the military, and gave them sanctuary for several weeks. However, as the rebels came closer to the village, the lieutenant informed the orphans, Ishmael among them, that

‘W]e need strong men and boys to help us fight these guys, so that we can keep this village safe. If you do not want to fight or help, that is fine. . . . You are free to leave, because we only want people here who can help . . . . [W]e need the help of able boys and men to fight these rebels. This is your time to revenge the deaths of your families and to make sure more children do not lose their families.’

Some of the boys, though not Ishmael’s companions, tried to leave the village. The lieutenant used them in his speech to help the boys make their “decision.”

‘The rebels shot them in the clearing. My men brought them back, and I decided to show you, so that you can fully understand the situation we are in.’ The lieutenant went on for almost an hour, describing how rebels had cut off the heads of some people’s family members and made them watch, burned entire villages along with their inhabitants, forced sons to have intercourse with their mothers, hacked newly born babies in half because they cried too much, cut open
pregnant women’s stomachs, took the babies out, and killed them. . . . [The Lieutenant said of the enemy:] They have lost everything that makes them human. They do not deserve to live. That is why we must kill every single one of them. Think of it as destroying a great evil. It is the highest service you can perform for your country.”

The lieutenant’s speech, and its manipulation of the children’s desire to avenge the pain inflicted upon them, is among the kinds of problems upon which Miroslav Volf reflects in his autobiographical narrative, The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World. Having himself been traumatized at the hands of interrogators during the conflict in Yugoslavia, Volf appreciates the injunction that we remember—but he worries about a grave potential to “remember wrongly.” For him, the central question “was not whether to remember.”

He knew that he “most assuredly would remember and most incontestably should remember. Instead,” for him, “the central question was how to remember rightly. And given [his] Christian sensibilities, [his] question from the start was, How should [he] remember abuse as a person committed to loving the wrongdoer and overcoming evil with good?” In other words, how could he remember in such a way as to foster a genuine reconciliation rather than vengeance?

Despite its truthful yet fictional juxtaposition of child soldiers depicted playing, sporting, and gaming, the Amnesty International Campaign fails to remember rightly. In his 2002 article: “UN Report on Child Soldiers Ignores Worst Offenders,” journalist Thalif Deen investigates how even the UN “fail[ed] to name the world’s top three offenders” in their report on child soldiers, choosing instead to focus “on the use of child soldiers in Africa.” Casey Kelso, then coordinator of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, referred rather to Myanmar, Colombia, and Sri Lanka as among the worst offenders. “This is not simply an African problem but takes place in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere,” Kelso said. Deen reported that “Other countries where child soldiers are deployed either by governments or armed groups include: Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Israel, the Palestinian Occupied Territories, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda and the former Yugoslavia.”

Clearly, then, the choice by the creative team at TBWA to include only African children in its three posters is a particularly blatant violation of “remembering rightly.” Indeed, the choice reifies racist perceptions of Africa as site of misery, forever dependent on whites (to whom the advertisements are directed) for assistance.

Binyavanga Wainaina, a Kenyan intellectual, has written prolifically about how stereotypes about Africa are harming the very Africans Western organizations purport to assist. Wainaina wrote a mock “tip sheet” for Western journalists called, “How to Write About Africa” for a British literary magazine. His satire is particularly uncomfortable when reflecting on the Amnesty International campaign:

Never have a picture of a well-adjusted African on the cover of your book, or in it, unless that African has won the Nobel Prize. An AK-47, prominent ribs, naked breasts: use these. . . . In your text, treat Africa as if it were one country. It is hot and dusty with rolling grasslands and huge herds of animals and tall, thin people who are starving. . . . Taboo subjects: ordinary domestic scenes, love between Africans (unless a death is involved), references to African writers or intellectuals, mention of school-going children who are not suffering from . . . Ebola fever or female genital mutilation. . . . Establish early on that your liberalism is impeccable, and mention near the beginning how much you love Africa, how you fell in love with the place and can’t live without her. . . . Africa is to be pitied, worshipped or dominated. Whichever angle you take, be sure to leave the strong impression that without your intervention and your important book, Africa is doomed. . . . Broad brushstrokes throughout are good. Avoid having the African characters laugh or struggle to educate their kids or just make do in mundane circumstances. . . . Describe in detail dead bodies. Or better, naked dead bodies. And especially, rotting naked dead bodies. Remember, any work you submit in

16. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
which people look filthy and miserable will be referred to as “the real Africa,” and you want that on your dust jacket. Do not feel queasy about this. You are trying to help them to get aid from the West.”

When applied to Amnesty International’s campaign to end the use of child soldiers in war, a consideration of the photographic images against the backdrop of Volf’s concern and Wainaina’s satire suggests that they fail to “remember rightly” by reifying racist attitudes against Africa, and by failing to establish a context whereby the viewer might begin to understand how the situations developed that children as young as seven have fought as soldiers in war. The campaign implies those who prevent these children from having their childhoods are monsters, thereby escalating rather than diffusing the dehumanization that perpetuates conflict, without implicating the structures and we who perpetuate them as partly to bear for the atrocities unfolding in so many places throughout the world. While the campaign may lift us to a higher reality, juxtaposing concepts of an idyllic childhood with childhood lost, the greater danger is that the ads leave us baffled by Africa’s perceived proclivity to violence. They may leave us to pity “them,” wishing desperately that something could be done to help. They may leave us overwhelmed, given the tagline’s reminder of the enormity of the (perceived predominantly African) problem. They may confirm, in the end, that we are a compassionate people because we are disturbed by what we see, requiring of us nothing more, thereby paradoxically justifying our complacency.

So, in the end, is Amnesty International’s campaign an effective one that successfully raises to public awareness the scope of the problem of the use of child soldiers? Or does it fail against the directive to “do no harm” by showcasing Africa, further underscoring racist perceptions that those with dark pigmentation in their skin are forever requiring assistance from Europe and America for survival?

In our complex world, the answer is in my view, tragically and unsatisfyingly: probably both.

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sarts will begin accepting applications for 2011-2012 fellowships in January 2011.

 Forgiveness (Eric Okdeh, 2008) is one of 2,900 community murals in the Philadelphia that Maureen O’Connell, an Assistant Professor of Theology at Fordham University, examined through the support of a sarts Faculty Fellowship in 2007-08.
The **Icon of the Holy Trinity** (c. 1411) by the icon painter and monk, Andrei Rublev (1370-1430) is one of the most important of Russian Orthodox icons. It was to take on profound religious and political significance in the life of the Russian people. Now in the Tretyakov Museum in Moscow, it has been copied by icon painters of Rublev's time continuing down through the 17th century.

The icon draws on the story of Abraham and Sarah in Chapter 18 of Genesis. The Genesis passage is the story of Abraham's hospitality to the three men who appear at his tent at the Oak of Mamre. When the figures come to him, he bows and invites them to rest and be fed, calling on Sarah to make bread and a servant to prepare a calf. "Then taking curds, milk and the calf which had been prepared, he laid all before them, and they ate while he remained standing near them under the tree." Soon thereafter, they announce that Sarah will have a son, news which is received by Sarah with laughter, for she thought herself too old to bear children. Yahweh then asks Abraham "Why did Sarah laugh and say 'Am I really going to have a child now that I am old?' Nothing is impossible for Yahweh...."

The story had become a part of the church's treatment of the Trinity as early as the 4th century and, in Constantinople, it would later take on the image it would retain as it became a defining form for the Orthodox Church's treatment of the Trinity, both in its theology and its liturgy. Leonid Ouspensky, in his classic study, *The Meaning of Icons*, observes that "for many centuries, the representation of the three biblical men as angels was the only iconography of the Holy Trinity; it is still preserved in the Orthodox Church as that which accords best with its teaching."

The Orthodox relating of the Abrahamic story to the Trinity comes through the church's interpretation of the story as a prefiguration of the revelation of the Trinity at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Liturgical commentary perceives Abraham as the one who saw God in the manifestation of the three figures: "Blessed Abraham, thou hast seen and received the One and Triune Godhead," and "the holy Abraham welcomes of old the Godhead, who is one in three Persons." From the story, the theologians take the hospitality theme in which Abraham and Sarah's encounter with God becomes a theme of the continuance of the seed of Abraham. The men are later identified in Chapter 19:1 as angels and the interpreters see the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit represented by...
the three as the unifying persons of the Godhead.⁴

In early icon paintings before Rublev, and in later centuries, works include the three angels: Abraham, Sarah and often a servant preparing the calf. There are also well-developed images of the house which becomes the symbol of the temple or church, the Mamre oak tree which signifies the tree of life, and the mountain from which God spoke to the people, along with either one or three chalices and, on occasion, food.⁵

Rublev’s work greatly simplified the narrative, removing Abraham and Sarah and the servants from the scene and making the house, tree and mountain much less prominent. There is no calf present, or other food, and there is only one chalice. Rublev, therefore, removes the work in large part from the realm of biblical narrative to a theological statement about the Trinity and he offers a religious understanding that was borne of his own spirituality.

It is important to remember that the icon painter was assumed to be a deeply religious person who was able to create a spiritually profound work because the artist’s own spirituality could transform the material into spiritual content. Rublev was an icon artist who could express his own deep Orthodox spirituality—a spirituality that was shaped by the Philokalia’s way of prayer. The Philokalia is a book of readings from different spiritual figures who teach a continual life of prayer in which a stillness, gratitude and peacefulness is realized in a heart focused on loving kindness. As Baggley notes, it is sometimes called “‘Hesychasm’ from the Greek word hesychia which conveys the meaning of stillness, tranquility and being concentrated in attentiveness.”⁶

Recognizing that Rublev seeks to convey the stillness, tranquility, and love so central to his spirituality, he undertakes a simplification of the image focusing foremost on a divine presence. The eye and the heart are to seek and know God in God’s triune form and presence. The work itself, as with hesychastic prayer, takes on the power of quieting the soul, directing the heart, and offering a sense of unity with God.

Light bathes the work with a luminosity that pulls one out of the ordinary into a sense of the numinous. And this is extended by the use of the circle within which the figures are located. They surround a circle within a circle which conveys even to the unconscious the sense of unity that lies at the heart of the Trinity. This is reinforced by the continual play of curves—the curving bodies and heads and halos, the mountain, the sweeping tilt of the tree, even the movement of the house—with the viewer’s eye moving back and forth from the circularity of the heads to the chalice and returning to the heads. In the midst of this play of circularity is the triangular shapes repeated in the robes, body movements from the heads downward, the pedestals their feet rest on, the negative space the chair legs form—all creating an amazing harmony and balance, a gentleness of rhythm, a quiet dance of truth that plays off of our own souls till they leave their imprint within us.

Color plays a central role. The gold is the color of eternality and holiness. It covers the wings, the light gold halos, the chairs and pedestals for the angel’s feet—it enthrones the figures and sets them apart from the earthly realm. Each figure has blue in his robe—a symbol of divinity. The figure of the Father is in gold, the Son in a deep purplish red suggestive of the crucified figure who gave his blood to the world, and the Holy Spirit in a green that symbolizes new life and growth. They are the persons of the Trinity, all of one substance yet manifest to us in the particular persona they have in the life of faith.

But the theological imaging of the figures finally yields an inner sense of spiritual presence. For in the balance of lines and shapes, in the harmony of movement, in the colors whose hues envelope us, in the subjects the figures symbolize, and the quietness they convey we are pulled into them and their world, if but for a moment, that removes us from the world about us. And in that moment our spirits are stilled. With the Psalmist we arrive and know now what is meant when the poet writes, "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10).
Locating quality images for teaching or research purposes can be a challenge. While a Google Image search might be a quick way to begin the process, most images that will surface are embedded in other texts and, as such, will not be well documented. The image inventory below includes both free use resources and subscription-based databases. University libraries or academic departments often subscribe to digital imagery collections; however, numerous on-line resources are also available, offering a wide range of high-resolution images with pertinent citations. Turning directly to a museum site is another way to peruse through collections and access imagery. Image inventories such as this one are always in the process of assessment as new sites continually emerge.

**Artcyclopedia**
www.artcyclopedia.com
Collection: Comprehensive collection focusing on ancient to contemporary art.
Description: In addition to images, provides links to museums worldwide.

**Art Images for College Teaching (AICT)**
www.arthist.umn.edu/aict/html/index
Collection: Ancient, medieval, Renaissance/Baroque, eighteenth- through twentieth-century, and non-Western.
Description: A free use resource that includes a textbook concordance to widely used undergraduate art history survey texts.

**Art Resource**
www.artres.com
Collection: Digital library contains over 250,000 keyword-searchable images from a variety of world sources.
Description: Art Resource is a fine art stock photo archive, licensing authorized images to all media. Subscription based.

**Art Resources on the Web**
whitcombe.sbc.edu/ARTHLinks.html
Description: Created by C. Whitcombe, Art History Professor, Sweet Briar College, Va. Multiple links to other art resources.

**ARTstor**
www.artstor.org/index.shtml
Collection: Digital library of 600,000 images of art and architecture.
Description: Images and documentation for research and teaching. Subscription based.

**Biblical Art on the WWW**
www.biblical-art.com
Collection: Easy to navigate. Search by Biblical subject, text, artist, and word.
Description: Maintained by a Norwegian Lutheran theologian/educator.

**Bridgeman Art Library**
www.bridgeman.co.uk
Collection: Includes works from major museums and private collections. Useful tool to do basic searches.
Description: Includes images of art, design, maps, architecture, furniture, glass, ceramics, and anthropological artifacts. Subscription based.

**British Library**
www.bl.uk

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Rebecca Beru Davis is a doctoral student in the area of art and religion at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She is currently in her third year of studies. Her interests are in the intersection of art, faith, and justice with attention to art created on the margins of society. Her focus has been on Latin American and Latino/a art; particularly art created by women. Her current work with women artists living in the shantytowns on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, was featured in the essay, “Picturing Paradise: Cuadros from the Peruvian Women of the Pamplona Alta as Visions of Hope,” in the 2008 issue of *arts: The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies.*
Collection: Gallery of art images drawn from the collection. Includes historical images and sounds, journal articles, and more.
Description: “Turning the Pages” feature allows viewing of books from their collection (i.e., Luttrell Psalter, Bible from Ethiopia, Blake’s Notebook, etc.)

Catholic Resources for Bible, Liturgy, Art and Theology by Felix Just, SJ
www.catholic-resources.org
Collection: Assorted links to Old and New Testament resources with specific links to image collections compiled by Felix Just, SJ, as well as other existing sites.
Description: In addition to Biblical images, the site includes a comprehensive visual art collection related to the Fourth Gospel.

EIKON Image Database for Biblical Studies
research.yale.edu:8084/divdl/eikon
Collection: The collection consists of images related to Biblical studies.
Description: Image in the EIKON database are a subset of the Yale Divinity Digital Image and Text Library. Some images in the database are restricted to Yale use, due to copyright agreements.

Great Buildings Collection
www.greatbuildings.com
Collection: A collection of world architecture throughout history.
Description: Search can be conducted by name of building, architect, or place.

Grove Dictionary of Art
www.oxfordartonline.com/public
Collection: Grove Dictionary of Art Online Image collections.
Description: Online version of the Dictionary of Art (45,000 articles) with linked images (720,000 index entries), plus more. Subscription based.

Iconoclass
www.iconoclass.nl
Collection: Collection is linked to museums worldwide.
Description: This database allows you to start broadly (thematically, stylistically, etc.) and move to specific, individual works of art.

Insight: Visual Images of Art, History and Culture
www.davidrumsey.com/collections/finearts.html
Collection: Multiple collections ranging from antiquity to the present. Includes ancient Chinese scrolls, architectural slides, modern art installations, or historical maps of the Americas.
Description: Collection has been organized into five topics: cartography, fine arts, architecture, photography, and other. Subscription based.

Library of Congress
www.loc.gov
Collection: Database includes American photographs, architecture, art, etc.
Description: Collections include American Memory, Global Gateway, and America’s Library.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
www.metmuseum.org/toah/splash.htm
Collection: Art historical examples drawn from their collection organized across the Met. Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.
Description: In addition to images, a timeline, a rich and varied assortment of additional information.

Mother of All Art and Art History Links Page
www.art-design.umich.edu/mother
Collection: Sponsored by the School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan.
Description: Includes image collections, links to research, textual and linguistic and new media art resources, art museums, and on-line exhibitions, etc.

Museum with No Frontiers
www.discoverislamicart.org
Collection: This site features “Islamic art in the Mediterranean” organized by regions, dynasties, topics, and history.
Description: Funded by the European Union, this site offers teacher resources, virtual exhibitions, and links to over fifty collaborative museum sites.

National Gallery of Art
www.nga.gov
Collection: American and European painting, sculpture, photograph, and decorative arts collection.
Description: Includes images of the collection, foreign language resources, podcasts, slideshows, and online tours.

New York Public Library Picture Collection
digital.nypl.org/mmpco
Collection: Collection of American material culture.
Description: Digital images from books, newspapers, photographs, postcards, etc.

Olga’s Gallery
www.abcgallery.com
Collection: Over 10,000 works of art organized alphabetically according to name, county, or movement.
Description: Of particular note, the site provides image indices of Christian saints, Old and New Testament stories, Greek and Roman myths, and world literature references.

Princeton University Index of Christian Art
ica.princeton.edu
Collection: Primarily text base resources, but some images.
Description: Significant resource for Medieval art.

Scholars Resource
www.scholarsresource.com
Collection: Over 100,000 images with increasing coverage in traditionally hard to find areas.
Description: Multiplies ways to search: artist, country, museums, period, style. Subscription based.

University of California, Berkeley, Art and Architecture Visual Resources Library
www.mip.berkeley.edu/spiro
Collection: Architecture, art, and much more.
Description: SPIRO (Slide and Photograph Image Retrieval Online) 65,000 full size viewable images.

Virtual Library Museums Pages
www.icom.org/vlmp
Collection: Links to museums, galleries, and libraries and their collections throughout the world.
Description: As a directory, LVMP is supported by ICOM (the International Council of Museums).

Vista
www.smith.edu/vistas
Collection: Visual culture in Spanish America.
Description: The website provides a gallery of more than one hundred color images,
essays, and a searchable bibliography on Spanish visual culture.

Voice of the Shuttle: Art and Art History Page
vos.ucsb.edu/index-netscape.asp
Collection: Under “Contents,” the Art and Art History thread provides numerous connections to images, museums, and other art-related resources.
Description: An extensive website for research in the humanities maintained by the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Web Gallery of Art
www.wga.hu
Collection: The Web Gallery of Art is a virtual museum and searchable database of European painting and sculpture of the Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Neoclassicism, and Romanticism periods (1100-1850), currently containing over 20,300 reproductions.
Description: A free resource primarily for students and teachers of Art History. It is a private initiative not related to any museums or art institutions. Picture commentaries, artist biographies, period music available and more.

WorldImages, California State University
worldimages.sjsu.edu
Collection: The internationally recognized database provides access to the California State University IMAGE Project. It contains over 65,000 images, is global in coverage, and includes all areas of visual imagery.
Description: WorldImages may be freely used for nonprofit educational purposes. The images are organized into over 650 portfolios, which are then organized into subject groupings.

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http://www.wesleyseminary.edu/LCAR.aspx

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