



Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War

By David M. Lubin

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A vivid, engaging account of the artists and artworks that sought to make sense of America's first total war, *Grand Illusions* takes readers on a compelling journey through the major historical events leading up to and beyond US involvement in WWI to discover the vast and pervasive influence of the conflict on American visual culture. David M. Lubin presents a highly original examination of the era's fine arts and entertainment to show how they ranged from patriotic idealism to profound disillusionment.

In stylishly written chapters, Lubin assesses the war's impact on two dozen painters, designers, photographers, and filmmakers from 1914 to 1933. He considers well-known figures such as Marcel Duchamp, John Singer Sargent, D. W. Griffith, and the African American outsider artist Horace Pippin while resurrecting forgotten artists such as the mask-maker Anna Coleman Ladd, the sculptor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and the combat artist Claggett Wilson. The book is liberally furnished with illustrations from epoch-defining posters, paintings, photographs, and films. Armed with rich cultural-historical details and an interdisciplinary narrative approach, David Lubin creatively upends traditional understandings of the Great War's effects on the visual arts in America.

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Editorial Review

Review

"What Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* did for literature, David Lubin's *Grand Illusions* does for the painting, photography, sculpture, and film inspired by the First World War. Astutely guiding his readers through the treacherous landscape where stubborn romantic myths befog the ghastly realities of modern warfare, Lubin powerfully demonstrates the Great War's lasting legacy in all the visual arts." -- David M. Kennedy, author of *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*

"A fascinating, richly illustrated examination of how this supposedly 'forgotten' war figured in the American imagination." -- David Reynolds, author of *The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century*

"*Grand Illusions* is a remarkable work of scholarship and cultural criticism. The huge amount of material Lubin has gathered makes absolutely clear the widespread and profound effect World War I had on those who created masses of art about it. Considered as a whole, *Grand Illusions* may come close to being the definitive study of America's myriad 'Illusions' about the Great War. Many others have addressed the topic, but no one does it better than Lubin in this fine volume." -- Townsend Ludington, author of *Marsden Hartley: The Biography of an American Artist*

"The deep shadow the First World War cast on American painting, film, and letters is the subject of David M. Lubin's impressive book. Demolishing the outmoded idea that the war of 1914-18 vanished from the American scene after 1918, the author offers us a wide-ranging study of both the visible and the underground traces war leaves in its wake." -- Jay Winter, author of *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*

"The most thoughtful and imaginative book ever written about the art of the First World War." -- Alexander Nemerov, author of *Wartime Kiss: Visions of the Moment in the 1940s*

"The literature of American art history and popular culture is much enriched by Lubin's thoughtful work." -- *Booklist*

"*Grand Illusions* would be a valuable addition to any library with an interest in American art or popular culture, offering a stimulating narrative of World War I's lasting influence on visual culture. Lubin's

inclusion of visual culture examples falling outside of the traditional fine arts makes this book particularly appealing and rich." -- *ARLIS/NA Reviews*

"...a sustained and meticulous examination of the various impulses that shaped the US's diverse visual promotion and interpretation of WW I. Focusing on the period from 1914-33, Lubin provides a comprehensive examination of almost every mode of visual representation--paintings, posters, sculpture, films, even animated films--and the men and women who created them...Noting racial, sexual, and gender themes, Lubin demonstrates a profoundly distinctive talent for establishing the historical context and the intellectual, political, and social antecedents of the works. Beautifully illustrated and including extensive chapter notes, the volume is encyclopedic in the scope of subjects and themes it examines in the pursuit of understanding the visual rhetoric that portrayed and supported the war. No student of the cultural, intellectual, and artistic history of WW I and its aftermath can ignore this perceptive, engaging analysis." -- *CHOICE*

About the Author

David M. Lubin is the Charlotte C. Weber Professor of Art at Wake Forest University. A former critic for Rolling Stone, he is the author of several books including *Picturing a Nation: Art and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century America* (Yale UP, 1996), and *Shooting Kennedy: JFK and the Culture of Images* (University of California Press, 2003).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lester Magno:

Why? Because this *Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War* is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap that but latter it will shock you with the secret that inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who also write the book in such wonderful way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning totally. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This phenomenal book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book have such as help improving your proficiency and your critical thinking means. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

Robert Lofton:

The book *untitled Grand Illusions: American Art and the First World War* contain a lot of information on the idea. The writer explains your ex idea with easy means. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was written by famous author. The author will take you in the new age of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can open up their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice go through.

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Jim Molnar:

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