

PRESS RELEASE

**WILLIAM LAVEN: "WAR MODELS"
EDWARD STURR: "THE INFANTRY SERIES, 1961-1963"**

**October 13th – November 11th, 2006
Opening reception with artist William Laven, October 13th, 6 – 8 pm**

Joseph Bellows Gallery is pleased to announce the October/November exhibitions featuring images of the military. The gallery will feature William Laven's series War Models and Edward Sturr's Infantry Series from October 13th – November 11th, 2006.

William Laven's "War Models" presents a highly unusual survey of the military aircraft currently in use in the Iraqi theater of war. He points his camera not at the actual machines in flight or on the ground, but at the raw plastic parts from model airplane kits purchased at a hobby shop near his home in the San Francisco Bay area.

In the images, aircraft elements such as wings, fuselage, tail assemblies, and other details appear randomly arrayed throughout a grid of piping comprised entirely of light-toned gray plastic. Photographed by the artist against a stark black background, the images at first seem almost entirely abstract. Yet, within the viewer's eye, these disparate parts readily assemble themselves into the potent, enormously lethal, and often enormously large objects that these "toys" authentically represent.

Laven quickens this experience by scaling the images to each other in precisely the same proportions as their real world counterparts. As a result, the printed image of model parts for a GR4 Tornado strike aircraft measures a modest but still substantial 18 by 27 inches, while the print of B-1 Bomber elements measures a surprising large four by six feet.

The artist's use of carbon pigment inks on archival paper gives these digitally produced images a visual richness and textural character that perfectly serves his goal of creating a body of images that are in no way imaginary, but which spur the mind and the imagination.

Laven received his MFA degree in 1991 from the San Francisco Art Institute. His interest in military aircraft reflects something of a family heritage. His uncle, Col. George Laven Jr., was the most decorated Jewish-American pilot of World War II.

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The presentation of Laven's images at the Joseph Bellows Gallery joins the continuing exhibition of works from "The Infantry Series, 1961-1963," by Chicago-based artist

Edward Sturr.

The images Sturr created do not arise from combat situations and all the physical and emotional complexities such scenes can invoke. Instead he shares with viewers his very un-dramatic experiences in the Illinois National Guard during the early and relatively quiet years of America's military involvement in Viet Nam. More than politics or war itself, his subject is the often challenging tedium of never ending training interrupted by brief periods of intense exertion followed by utter exhaustion.

These black and white photographs of mostly anonymous "weekend warriors" immortalize moments that in truth are fleeting and mundane, and far from political. They lend a kind of grandeur to the unremarkable experiences of young men brought together by chance and circumstance for several weeks at a time over the course of a few years, and who then melt away from each other to wherever it was they came from. Sturr's photographs are about these people; more about their individual humanity than about their soldiering.

The artist's subsequent career as a photographic artist and arts educator would follow this example - focusing on people's experience; their inner realities more than on their external circumstances and whatever connotations those circumstances might suggest.

Much of this later work focused on the people of Chicago, where he was a highly regarded member of the informally organized "Chicago School" of street photography. The Joseph Bellows Gallery featured this body of Sturr's work in a 2002 solo exhibition and catalog.

Born in 1937, Sturr studied and later taught at Chicago's highly regarded Institute of Design. Among his professors were Harry Callahan, Arthur Seigel, and Aaron Siskind.

The Joseph Bellows Gallery is an internationally recognized dealer and exhibitor of vintage and contemporary photographic art. Founded in La Jolla in 1998, and with more than 5,000 prints currently in its inventory, the gallery's clientele includes major public and private collections worldwide.

For more information or to request images please contact:

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10 am - 6 pm, Tuesday through Friday

11 am - 5 pm, Saturday

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