

In "Naming the Disappeared, Raising the Dead," Doris Salcedo, a Colombian visual artist and sculptor, addresses the concept of memory and the forgotten in her installations. In the beginning, Ms. Salcedo tells us about Colombia, where she has lived for more than thirty years, and has experienced more than fifty years of war. Salcedo believes that the naming of the victims serves to expose what those in power believe should remain invisible, nameless and faceless. In her work "Quebrantos," she and other Colombian leaders who survived political attacks wrote the names of the victims on a glass wall in Bogota's main square. Then, they shattered the glass to pieces. The intention was to tell people that forced destruction is unacceptable and that life is as fragile as glass. Once broken, a life can never be repaired. Salcedo's work shows how art can expose what those in power believe should remain unseen.

Similarly, Pablo Picasso's cubist techniques, such as fragmentation and overlapping of images, critique war. In *Guernica* (1937), *Massacre in Korea* (1951), and *The Charnel House* (c. 1944), the fragments metaphorically represent the fragility of human life in the face of war and the destruction of life by war.

## Guernica

1937



During the 1930s, the minotaur replaced the harlequin as a common motif in work. His use of the minotaur came partly from his contact with the surrealists, who often used it as their symbol, and it appears in Picasso's *Guernica*.

—from [Wikipedia](#)

Guernica is an anti-war painting which shows Picasso's anger at the massacre by the German and Italian army. We can see in the painting: a dying horse neighing, a man screaming for help, a soldier falling to the ground with a broken arm, a crying mother holding a dead baby, and witnesses who are dazed with fear, and other elements. It embodies the feeling of the brutality, pain, despair, and terror that comes with war. The shapes in the painting are all irregular and twisted, just like the distorted nature of humanity. Most likely, Picasso didn't want to distract from his message by adding color, so he ended up making all the figures pure white, black, and gray. At first, he drew a red tear on the woman's face, but eventually decided to remove it. It makes sense why he did that. color could have detracted from the focus on chaos via jagged shapes and lines in the artwork. without color, you couldn't detach yourself from what you were seeing and there would be no focus. This is Picasso's application of variety. Finally, the composition of the painting appears chaotic, which seems consistent with the chaotic atmosphere of the bombing when residents were fleeing and terrified.

“ The whole painting can be divided into four sections from left to right: the first section highlights the image of a bull; the second section emphasizes the injured and struggling horse, which is a metaphor for the most innocent people in the battle. The dazzling electric light above it looks like Like a frightened, lonely eye; in the third paragraph, the most conspicuous thing is the "Statue of Liberty" holding a light and sticking her head out of the window. Under it is a woman, walking towards the Statue of Liberty, It symbolizes people's desire for peace and freedom; and in the fourth

paragraph, the man lying on the ground symbolizes the unyielding warrior in the battle. He holds a sword in his hand. The best thing is the little flower on his sword, which praises this A spirit that would rather die than surrender.”

— <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E6%A0%BC%E5%B0%94%E5%B0%BC%E5%8D%A1/3145850>



*Massacre in Korea 1951*

—from [Wikipedia](#)

The “Massacre in Korea” is a distinctive anti-war work by Picasso which expressed similar meaning as Guernica, but the method is opposite. It is rare for Picasso to paint a work with a simple, clear structure. This painting uses elements of asymmetrical design, where things on both sides are different but have almost equal visual weight. Due to the contrast of colors (the background color is mainly green and yellow and the characters are mainly gray, white, and black), the characters in the painting are highlighted. Picasso also has a special style in his use of shapes. The distortion of the faces of the women on the left highlights their despair and

helplessness. Additionally, the soldiers with guns on the right side don't have genitals. They are in sharp contrast to the pregnant woman standing on the left side. The left side represents the birth of life, while the right side represents the destruction of life and hope by war.



***The Charnel House*** 1944~1945

Picasso used Expressionist forms to convey the tortured images of the figures

—from [Wikipedia](#)

The style of “The Charnel House” is a bit like Guernica, they have a common theme - anti-war. The painting shows the tangled bodies of a man, a woman and a child. Their bodies are made up of various strange shapes, and this twisted feeling leads people to feel endless despair. Once again, the artist only used gray, black and white in this painting, which tends to make people think of funerals and other depressingly lifeless things. The black, white and gray parts of the painting are clearly outlined,

allowing the viewer to focus on each part easily. Picasso aimed to depict the Nazi genocide of Jews during the Holocaust. This undoubtedly expresses contempt for the dark political methods of the Nazis, and reflects that art will ultimately override politics.

Even in modern society, many countries are still shrouded in political terror. Although governments claim to be democratic, they may strictly prohibit any speech that opposes them. Art is a powerful tool that can bring light and justice to victims of political crimes. At this time, art will reflect its higher than political aspect, that is, "Naming the Disappeared, Raising the Dead", which is a higher spiritual level.