

ALEXANDRE

protectively near its androgynous face, looks anxious and introspective. The other figure peers into the distance, alert with anticipation, as a full moon rising on the horizon glows with mythic import. *Moon Rise* not only suggests the possibility of sexual union, but also the union of two aspects of the self. As the moon's cool light reveals the nocturnal landscape of the unconscious and the unknown, it brings the promise of inner knowledge and spiritual enlightenment.

In *The Dream*, the only overtly religious work in the show, the angel Gabriel raises a hand in benediction behind the sleeping form of Joseph. As the gospel story goes, Gabriel allayed Joseph's anxieties by assuring him that his child was the son of God. Tooker's works have always had a strong religious aura and a spiritual force. At 77, his voice is gentler, speaking with the quiet reconciliation that comes with age and perhaps, as *The Dream* suggests, with belief. —Nancy Grimes

John Walker at Knoedler

"A Theater of Recollection," John Walker's exhibition of recent work, consisted of paintings and prints about his father, John Henry Walker, who was a soldier during World War I. In these moving pieces, which have to do with both private and public memory, Walker takes tragic personal experiences and examines them from a more historically considered point of view.

It is interesting to see how Walker handles large themes with his repertoire of personal visual idioms, such as his abstract, Minimalist, slablike

form referring to the cinched waist of Goya's *Duchess of Alba*. In the big, powerful oil *Solitude* (1996), he paints his father in uniform, sitting at the painting's lower right and gazing at the Alba form, which here evokes an odd keyhole-shaped window. His father's head is a sheep's skull, while the Alba form is filled with yellow patches and rows of white strokes against a red ground. The dark colors framing the central image add to the work's quietly distanced sadness, embodied by the slightly upturned sheep's head.

Walker adds a new element to his work by including large, written-out quotations from two British poets who fought in the war, Wilfred Owen and David Jones. He also paints lines translated from the work of Aneirin, a 6th-century Welsh poet and soldier. In *Father and Son I* (1996), a passage from Owen's "Anthem for Doomed Youth" is painted in blue cursive script across the lower half of the work. Only partially legible against the mottled ground, the first line reads, "What passing-bells for these who die as cattle?" It strikes the note of elegy and not-so-muted horror conveyed so powerfully by Walker's imagery. The father (again represented with the sheep's head) is above the son, who is indicated by an abstract canvas on an easel, set in front of the poetry on the painting's bottom right.

Additionally the exhibition offered a gathering of small but brutally affecting etchings and aquatints. The powerful graphic work, rendered in the manner of Goya and Dix, reiterated Walker's grand theme: war's endless capacity for insult and grief. —Jonathan Goodman

John Walker: *The Somme (July 1, 1916) I*, 1997, oil on canvas, 8 by 14 feet; at Knoedler.



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