

*"....If you leave here with the word DUTY implanted in your mind; if you leave here with the word HONOR carved in your soul; if you leave here with love of COUNTRY stamped on your heart, then you will be a twenty-first century leader worthy...of the great privilege and honor...of leading... the sons and daughters of America..."*

- General H. Norman Schwarzkopf

### **Infiltration of Opulent Militarism**

Like Schwarzkopf wanted to ingrain a sense of duty in his troops, the infiltration of militaristic imagery has been an established norm in American culture.

Jonathan Terranova spells that out for us by creating very normal scenes that incorporate abnormal patterns that are almost appealing to the eye. The cover image makes blatantly clear what we are about to experience within.

By taking a phenomenological approach to how our perception can be so crudely distorted, we are drawn into a world of the patterns and colors that are meant to instill respect and fear, but when put on the wall or incorporated into a rug design, they become acceptable. The MARPTA pattern, (short for Marine Pattern) for instance, is meant to duplicate scenes in nature, hence helping its wearer to blend in to his surroundings. Doesn't anything in nature give us a sense of peace and security—hence be more acceptable?

Jonathan's interest in the military began when a close friend joined the US Army and served for five years and did three tours. He combines that with America's need to turn all things "respectable" (and not respectable) into a dollar. He has focused on this as a topic since his Currency - Blood Works project, which looked at the American financial system and its relationship to the military industrial complex. By using visual references to the collusion between these two entities, he ties together their commonality and common goals.

Historically, there's no way to separate the two. The relationship between money and military has just become more sophisticated. Wars are won and lost; power and money are lost or gained in the process. The technology developed in war time is now the technology we use in our daily lives for communication and even in how we store the foods we eat. (The tin can was created when Napoleon Bonaparte was preparing to invade Russia and couldn't keep his troops fed). Food technologies continue to be developed today only now the goal is to keep energy levels superior to the enemy.

While that doesn't appear to manifest opulence on its face, it will create additional wealth in America and in new sectors of the economy. It pays to keep the military acceptable; it creates a smoother transition for the look of the military, military philosophy and military technology to make its way into the mainstream.

Part of the point of the work is to show how easily we not only allow the martial mentality into our worlds, but we revere it, exploit it, and respect it in a different way than its initial intention. The artist has taken the discipline required in the military and coupled it with an objective, critical view of its truth and has given back to us a necessary inside look at ourselves.

His conclusion is clear; we have been bamboozled into being OK with something that just isn't. He has made this point by using the pleasantly unpleasant designs in our homes, on our clothing, on our cars and our art.

**Dorian McDuffie**

*Public Art Administrator*

City of Atlanta Office of Cultural Affairs

[oaatlanta.com](http://oaatlanta.com)

---

President Eisenhower's fears about a Military-Industrial Complex have been realized. Today, unfortunately, much of our economy depends on war. Our media is loaded with its symbolism. The US military budget is roughly equivalent to all the rest of the world's combined. Jonathan Terranova's *Infiltration of Opulent Militarism* opens our eyes to the ways the military has crept into our lives. It inspires us to turn this around and dedicate ourselves to creating a peaceful, sustainable, and just world.

**John Perkins**

*New York Times Best Selling Author*

[johnperkins.org](http://johnperkins.org)