Leon Golub

We’re in a nasty, smart-ass power world, the surface of our world. So how do you interrogate these circumstances? How do you get them in your line of fire?

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This overview of the work of Leon Golub from the 1950s to 2004 is a companion piece to the retrospective exhibition to be staged at the Museo Reina Sofia from May 5 to September 12, 2011.

Over the five decades of his career, Leon Golub (b. 1922, Chicago, d. 2004, New York) remained an unfailingly eloquent and critical voice. He was one of the most politically engaged artists of his time, and his ouvre carried a powerful charge of drama, moral outrage and challenge.

His visual and critical sensibility sought to build a pictorial world in which to re-imagine theaters of conflict, parse the emotional underpinnings of violence, and probe the human body’s response.

Golub’s image narratives increasingly focused on representations of bodily pain. He addressed events as they happened, from Vietnam to South Africa, to depict chilling acts of aggression and evoke terror in the raw.