

The Growing Market for 'War Porn' -- What's Going On?

May 17 2010

(PhysOrg.com) -- "War porn" -- videos viewed for entertainment that feature gruesome footage of dead American soldiers or the killing of soldiers and civilians in the Middle East wars -- are growing in numbers online, in part, because of the absence of a strong mainstream media presence in Iraq and Afghanistan, says University at Buffalo popular culture expert David Schmid, PhD.

Schmid is a professor of English at UB, where he teaches fiction and cultural studies, and is the author of highly regarded studies of American's popular fascination with [violent death](#).

"War photography and images can and do celebrate war, of course," he says, "but 'war porn' is born of a systematic dehumanization of the enemy 'other.'

"Soldiers have always collected trophies from the conflicts in which they are involved," he says, "but today they have the technology to turn such trophies into media events. In one sense, then, it's just the technology that has changed. The rest is continuous."

Schmid notes that such images can provoke social protest, such as when television footage of dead and maimed soldiers and civilians helped stoke the public outcry against the Vietnam War, and ghastly photos of the Antietam battlefield sent shockwaves throughout the Civil War North.

"It is, in fact, the lack of a critical [mainstream media](#) presence in Iraq and Afghanistan that helps create and expand the market for war porn," Schmid says. He addresses this, the origins of today's war porn and consequences of public fascination with it, at newstips.buffalo.edu/tip/66 .

Schmid is the author of "Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers in [American Culture](#)" and (in progress) "Murder Culture: Why Americans Are Fascinated By [Homicide](#)."

Provided by University at Buffalo

Citation: The Growing Market for 'War Porn' -- What's Going On? (2010, May 17) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-05-war-porn-.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--