By Ken Johnson

Before Sept. 11, 2001, Steve Mumford was just another painter working his way up the food chain of the New York art world. A graduate of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and a Boston native, he'd gotten into a good gallery and his neo-surrealistic paintings were receiving respectful reviews.

Then came the attacks on the World Trade Center and the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and Mumford came to an unusual, life- and career-altering decision. He decided to go to Iraq not as a soldier but as an old-fashioned combat illustrator.

With press credentials provided by the online artist magazine Mummer, Mumford made four trips to Iraq in 2003 and 2004, and he created hundreds of ink and watercolor sketches documenting the different experiences of the war. His drawings of battle scenes, portraits of locals, prisoners of war, and images of troops playing games and sleeping. Now 40 of these drawings, plus eight from a recent MUMFORD, Page 128

Mumford witnessed and recorded many aspects of the war, from troops awaiting interrogation (left) to injured troops in a rehabilitation center (right).
Exhibits trigger meditations on humanity, technology

STEVE MUNFORD

Steve Munford's drawings are made with a brush, dry brush, and ink, with a technique that he describes as "drawing while walking." His work is highly detailed and often portrays images of war or conflict. Munford's use of dark colors and stark contrasts create a sense of tension and unease, prompting viewers to question the nature of violence and its aftermath.

Munford's drawings often feature landscapes and urban environments, contrasting the beauty of nature with the destruction caused by war. His use of line and shading creates a sense of depth and movement, drawing the viewer into the scene. The artist's signature is a small, intricate mark that is visible throughout the work, adding a personal touch to each piece.

Munford's approach to drawing is unique, as he uses a combination of techniques to create his images. He often incorporates elements of collage and assemblage into his work, adding layers of meaning and complexity to each piece. The artist's use of color is also notable, as he experimentally uses a range of hues to convey different moods and emotions.

Munford's work is often described as a reflection of the artist's experiences with war and conflict. He has served in the military and has lived in a number of countries, including Afghanistan and Iraq, where he witnessed the effects of war firsthand. His drawings are a testament to the human cost of conflict and the need for peace.

Munford's drawings are not just images of war, but also a meditation on the nature of humanity and its relationship with technology. The artist's use of complex and detailed imagery invites viewers to consider the impact of modern technology on human development and identity.