



# Flags and Faces: The Visual Culture of America's First World War (Franklin D. Murphy Lectures)

*David M. Lubin*

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*Flags and Faces*, based on David Lubin's 2008 Franklin D. Murphy Lectures at the University of Kansas, shows how American artists, photographers, and graphic designers helped shape public perceptions about World War I. In the book's first section, "Art for War's Sake," Lubin considers how flag-based patriotic imagery prompted Americans to intervene in Europe in 1917. Trading on current anxieties about class, gender, and nationhood, American visual culture made war with Germany seem inevitable. The second section, "Fixing Faces," contemplates the corrosive effects of the war on soldiers who literally lost their faces on the battlefield, and on their families back home. Unable to endure distasteful reminders of war's brutality, postwar Americans grew obsessed with physical beauty, as seen in the simultaneous rise of cosmetic surgery, the makeup industry, beauty pageants, and the cult of screen goddesses such as Greta Garbo, who was worshipped for the masklike perfection of her face. Engaging, provocative, and filled with arresting and at times disturbing illustrations, *Flags and Faces* offers striking new insights into American art and visual culture from 1915 to 1930.

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