The art of war, still a struggle

Two side-by-side exhibits chronicle the many offshoots of militarization, but only one achieves the gut-wrenching honesty its subject demands, writes SARAH MILROY.

The theme of war can be traced back to the ancient Greeks — with all the baggage of intelligence, companions, and glory — yet can you give the cover the full read if it has not yet delivered? After all, even if we know there will be wars, we do not want to read about them. And so, I found myself discussing this while looking at two shows currently at The Power Plant in Toronto — Fiona Banner: The Banner Book and Yael Bartana: Realtime Realtime.

To a degree, the difference between these two is their content: Banner is British, and lives and works in London; Davor is Croatian, a long way from the killing fields whereBanner’s subjects are now deployed, yet surprisingly perhaps, war and militarization are often connected — the former is a way to control the latter. The current show, curated by Power Plant director Gregory Block, Banner is showing works that expand on the idea of military ritual and its meaning. The show is being shown in two sections, one on a vast, empty, minimalist black wall, the other on a ceiling blacked-out, yet still glowing. The result is a space that is both empty and filled with potential, a place where the viewer is free to explore and engage with the work.

Yael Bartana, on the other hand, is showing an installation that is both intimate and overwhelming. The show is a multimedia experience, with video, sound, and text displayed on a large screen in a darkened room. The work is about war, but it is not about the physical aspects of war, but about the social and cultural aspects of war. The artist uses video and sound to create a sense of place and time, and to create a sense of atmosphere.

Banner is showing a series of drawings that depict various aspects of war, from the military personnel to the civilians who are affected by war. The drawings are both realistic and symbolic, and they are arranged in a linear fashion, creating a sense of movement and progression. The drawings are accompanied by text, which is also arranged in a linear fashion, creating a sense of narrative. The text is written in a mix of languages, and it is translated into English.

Bartana, on the other hand, is showing a series of video installations that depict various aspects of war, from the military personnel to the civilians who are affected by war. The videos are both realistic and symbolic, and they are arranged in a linear fashion, creating a sense of movement and progression. The videos are accompanied by text, which is also arranged in a linear fashion, creating a sense of narrative. The text is written in a mix of languages, and it is translated into English.

The shows are both about war, but they are about different aspects of war. Banner’s work is about the physical aspects of war, while Bartana’s work is about the social and cultural aspects of war. The shows are both about the same subject, but they are about it in different ways. The shows are both about the same subject, but they are about it in different ways. The shows are both about the same subject, but they are about it in different ways. The shows are both about the same subject, but they are about it in different ways. The shows are both about the same subject, but they are about it in different ways.