

### The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

### STEPHEN LEE SCOTT Servicemen

June 30 - July 28, 2012

**HEADBONES GALLERY** 

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"Another Glorious Day in the Corps!"
Tats, Tattwas and Wayward Topologies in
the Extravagant Skin Jackets of Stephen Lee Scott
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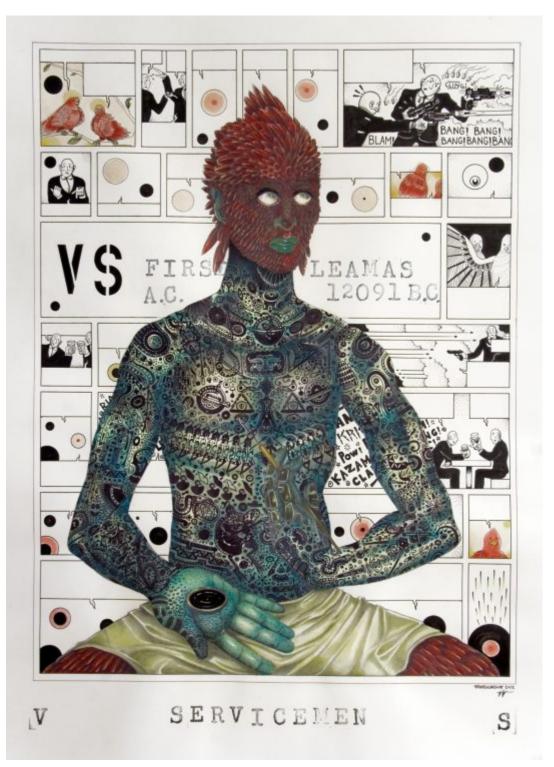
Cover Untitled Skull - 2011, Ink & pencil on paper, 17 x 11 inches

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# STEPHEN LEE SCOTT Servicemen

Commentary by Julie Oakes Essay by James D. Campbell



"Leamas 12091 B.C." - 2012 Ink, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30x22 inches



#### Stephen Lee Scott Servicemen

Visual languages can be personal to the artist until the viewer catches up to speed. It requires a conceptual leap as heady and difficult as learning an actual language and the closer the new language is to the mother tongue, the quicker the translation. Clues are needed to start the process. Scott is a draftsman. His hand is confident. Meticulous pen and ink work provide the graphic details that define Stephen Lee Scott's tattooed, decorated and tribally-young take on a complicated society. Not afraid to include references to difficult subjects such as war and retribution, Scott's visual world exhibits an

eerie beauty.

Stephen Lee Scott's exhibition Servicemen implies a narrative. He uses verbal as well as visual tropes. Handwritten notes or short letters addressed to Leamas relate happenings in another dimension, apparently a galactic country where some kind of battle is being engaged. Leamas (Painless Leamas, Nennius Leamas) is one of an ongoing series of Scott's characters whose names are displayed along with an ink portrait sporting tattoos.

Leamas, read backwards, is Samael, the name adopted by the heavy Metalpunk band, Samael. Samael is the Prince of the Demons in Talmudic and post-Talmudic literature and is an accuser, seducer and destroyer. Reading the note on Scott's work, such as Duane - "I don't wanna sound like a wimp or nothing but me and George did some pretty messed up things over here." - an echo of the testimonies of soldiers returning from wars is brought to mind. Which war might be discerned through researching the echelon of major players in defence politics. Samael as the Chief of Satans is also known to fly through the sky like a bird (intergalactic travel) and to command a group of like minded beings who could be, perhaps, The Servicemen.

Donald is obviously Donald Rumsfeld for on a flying banner studded with stars and stripes beneath his portrait is the famous quote "as we know there are knowns, there are things we know we know..." that contributed to his resignation in 2006 after he lost political support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of the portraits are not clear as to the reason for

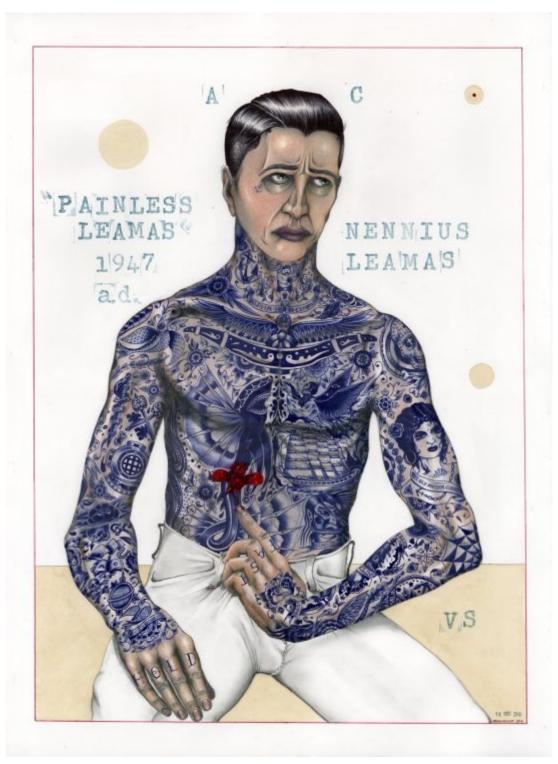
the reference but part of the engagement of Scott's work is the deciphering of the clues. *Albrecht* for instance seems based on the historical self portrait of Albrecht Durer but his role as a "serviceman", I have not yet deciphered.

The end and critical point of every work of art, is of course, the work itself but the process is crucial to defining the visual imagery. Stephen Lee Scott's process includes extensive story telling that begins to leak out when the puzzling protection is pierced. This deconstruction serves to draw out more interest and enhance rather than distract from the visuals. Scott knows how to eke meaning through visuals by underlining his intent with verbal clues.

This makes for a layered and rich reading.

Julie Oakes - 2012





"Nennius Leamas" - 2010 Ink, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30x22 inches



"Another Glorious Day in the Corps!"
Tats, Tattwas and Wayward
Topologies in the Extravagant Skin
Jackets of Stephen Lee Scott

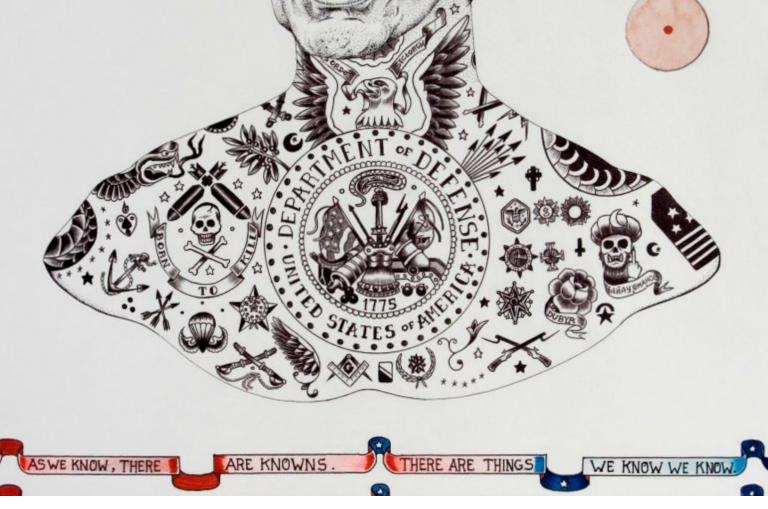
Take the Seven Bridges of Königsberg (an infamous mathematical problem solved by Euler) and transpose it to the human epidermis. [1] What do you get? Well, something resembling the skin jackets of Stephen Lee Scott. He is a prophet of the end times for a culture caught in the tertiary grip of violence. Across the full array of his animated (I mean, ambulatory) epidermal acreage and sometimes beyond, Scott grafts his deviant topologies with a wealth of exquisite surface detail. His tatts are really

topological entities fraught with tattwas.

Topology (from the Greek ôuðïò, "place", and ëüãïò, "study") is an important branch of mathematics concerned with properties that are preserved under continuous deformations of objects. It arose from conceptual evolutions in geometry and set theory, including issues of space, dimension, and transformation. Notions now classified as topological were treated as early as 1736 and, in the late 19th century, a distinct discipline developed, which was referred to in Latin as the geometria situs ("geometry of place") that became known as topology proper. Basically, topology is the study of continuity and connectivity.

The geometria situs of Scott's skin jackets are rife with myriad continuities and connectivities. I am speaking to both body form and the morphologies of facture now. It is not only how the artist presents his skin jackets, but his process and ethic of making. He transits from one topological space to another with a weird, wired alacrity. He moves the linear element from closed to open spaces with inordinate precision. His tatts morph as they move across torso, face, hand. Here, the continuous image of a connected space is connected by sundry inbred lineages: text, surface detail, annotation and illicit subject matter.

Scott is a highly talented draftsman: the casual authority of his hand is such that it seems he can do wrong. With a voluptuous eye for precise detail and rendering, these works speak not in a loud voice but a sinister whisper of off-world realities. Being both connected and



continuous, Scott's strange topologies collapse space and time in torus-like fashion. His servicemen with their posthuman demeanours seem avatars of or escapees from some dystopian reality just around the corner of tomorrow. Take Donald, in which the erstwhile Secretary of Defense's torso is enlivened by all manner of skull and crossbones motifs in truly Yakuza style. His whole skin jacket is a declaration of war. Think of Gunnery Sergeant Apone's rant to his marines in James Cameron's Aliens (1986) and you have the gist of his ethos: "All right, sweethearts, what are you waiting for? Breakfast in bed? Another glorious day in the Corps! A day in the Marine Corps is like a day on the farm. Every meal's a banquet!

Every paycheck a fortune! Every formation a parade! | LOVE the Corps!" [2]

In his earlier work, Scott was more interested in stitching the body out of tattoos, rather than drawing the outline of the body. He now renders them obscenely continuous across several boundary markers: the flesh itself and the space of making/marking, and that of thought and writing. He enmeshes them in whole-cloth narratives that show remarkable dovetailing. His is a mortise and tenon joinery of the heart turned bad. His skin jackets are overwhelmingly supple and seductive. When Scott has Saturn devouring the Ramones mask and Durer having his own drawings tattooed on him, depicting the apocalypse, we think hard on



both armaggedon and aftermath.

Indeed, it is as though an electrical current charges these works. Or should one say, better, etheric? It is one that animates his topologies and his tatts alike. It carries the strangest and most compelling of messages. This leads us to the pertinence of the Tattwas that embody a synthesis of western and eastern ideas about the mystic elements in the Western Mystery Schools. [3] They are geometric images from India. In Scott's work, consider the ubiquity of the circle, for instance. Other geometric symbols emerge into the foreground with fluidity, like mandalas that activate the composition, lending them an unusual, tuning-forkish resonance. Just as Tattwa

cards will prove effective in revealing the facets of Solar Prana as it is channelled through the etheric current, so these skin jackets will prepare you for both Antichrist and the Rapture. In Scott's curious and compelling work, we witness a reckless but diverting collision between the Tattwas and the cultural tradition of Tattoism.

It is hard not to think of Scott's images as collapsing topologies in which his eloquent and often harrowing tatts are really epidermal flash cards for tattwa visualisation. In other words, his work is intended to ignite a fuse in the mind that might explode all dualities, fold space and jettison us into an efflorescent elsewhere: a living Hell more Hellraiser than Dantean. [4]

James D. Campbell - 2012



#### **Endnotes**

[1] The Seven Bridges of Königsberg is a historically notable problem in mathematics. Euler found it was impossible to find a route through the town of Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) that would cross each of its seven bridges exactly once. This result was not contingent upon the lengths of the bridges, or their distances from one another, but only on connectivity properties: namely, which bridges are connected to which islands or riverbanks. If Euler had mastered the Tattwas, or had seen in a scrying orb one of Scott's works, he might have reached a different conclusion.

[2] Gunnery Sergeant Al Apone was senior NCO and second in command of the USCM Squad that was sent out to Acheron LV-426 to investigate the incident at Hadley's Hope. Al

Apone was born in Detroit, Michigan-USA, on September 2, 2137. Wiki tells us that there is scant info about his early life or how, why, and when he joined the Colonial Marines Corp. He later achieved the rank of Gunnery Sergeant.

[3] See GoldenDawn Pedia: Your Online Golden Dawn resource at http://www.goldendawnpedia.com/Literatu rePages/Misc/introTattwas.htm

"What are Tattwas? The word Tattwa, alternately spelled tattva, tatwa, tatva, is Sanskrit basically meaning "essence," "principle," or "element." The concept of the Tattwas date back at least as early as 2000 BC and they are said to predate even the Greeks' own knowledge of the elements of nature, and in fact that the Greeks may have learned of the elements from the Indian gurus. In a better context, the Tattwas are the essence of nature through which we not only experience the world around us, but give rise to the very concept of awareness. This comes into play later when we learn the relationship of the five primary Tattwas to the five senses, but they basically are the elements that lead us to believe that we exist."

[4] Hellraiser (also known as Clive Barker's Hellraiser) was a famously harrowing 1987 British horror film based upon the novella The Hellbound Heart by Clive Barker, who both wrote the screenplay and directed the film.

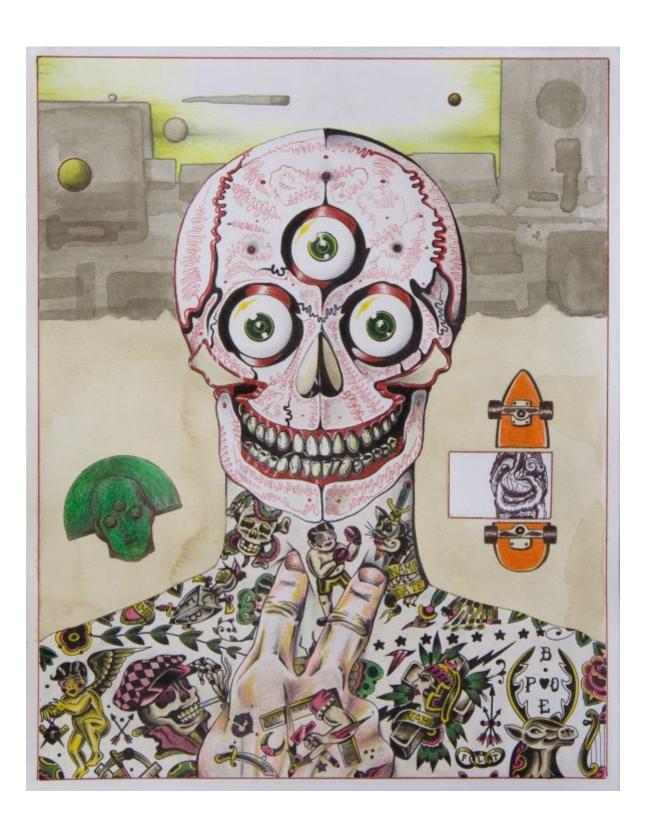


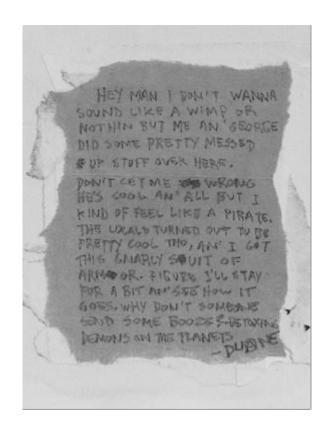
"Untitled" - 2010 Ink, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30x22 inches









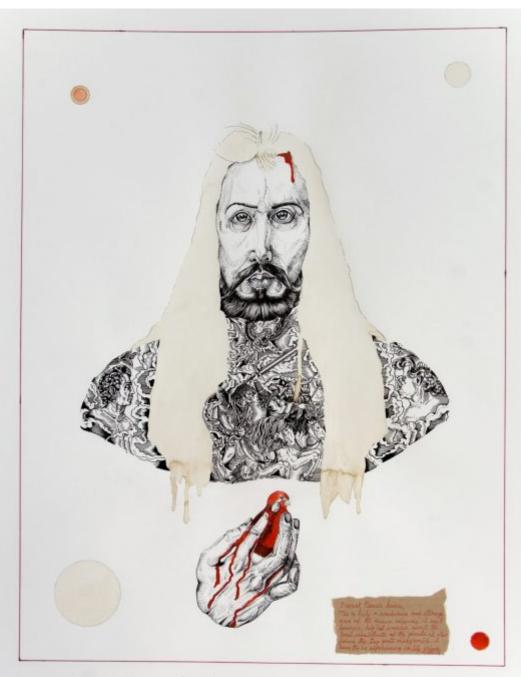




DUANE



"Albrecht Jesus" - 2011 Ink, collage, wash on paper, 30x22 inches



 $\mathbb{A} | \mathbb{L} \otimes \mathbb{R} | \mathbb{E} \otimes \mathbb{C} | \mathbb{H} | \mathbb{T}$ 



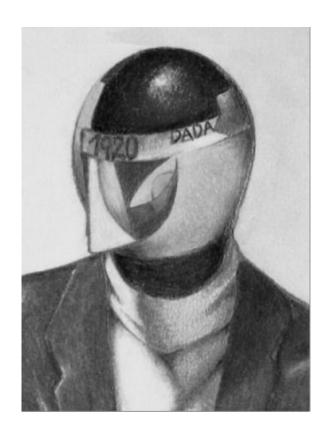


DONALD



"Get Some" - 2011 Ink, pencil crayon, collage, wash on paper, 30x22 inches





"Marcel" - 2011 Ink, collage, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30x22 inches

# MARCELIS ALIVE AND WELL AND SWINGIN'IN COPENHAGEN

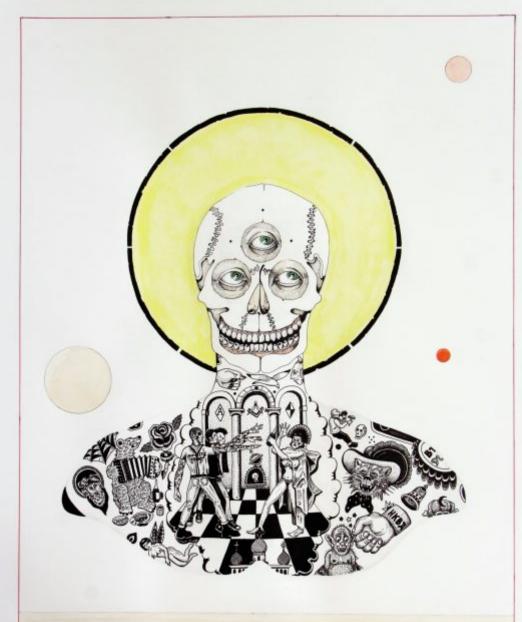




Bon Voyage! Best Wishes!
- DAVA HEAD

1920

LEAMAS!
THANK YOU FOR THE MASH! IT WORKED
LIKE A CHARM
DURING THE CLEANSING
OF ALPHA CENTAURI.
I MUST SAY, WE ARE
ALL LOOKING SHARP
SINCE ARRIVING ON
THE PLANETS.



LEASIAS!
THEN YE PIR THE
PLASE! IT WHISE!
LINE & CHAM!
OF MINE CHING!
I HAVE THE CONTROL!
I HAVE THE CONTROL!
THEN CHING!
THEN CHING!
THE CONTROL!

DEDRAG, INVANC,
AND RESELT AND
OUTTOON ON THROUGH
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VS

2291



"Untitled Couple" - 2010 Ink, pencil crayon, wash on paper, 30x22 inches



Hello Sir, I'm pleased to tell you that the campaign was quite Successful. I got banged up a bit, got a pain in me gulliva', and lost a bit of the of parts as it were, but I'm right as rain besides, one chap "ad the nerve to take me hat but don't worry gov, I'll gether back. I've got to Mand it to that Duane fella' he were quite the bone Cousha' sir. We've taken to callin 'im the "Master of disaster " I reckon we'll ave everythink destroyed soon for the others to come and do their 'Artsy' Stuff etc. Stay in good 'ealth Sir, have ten and bon Voyageas it were gov! - George-Haz 241 A.O. Glory to the VOLUNTEERS! VULGUS SUPERO!



HEY LEAMAS, I GOTTA SAY THE PLANETS ARE PRETTY COOL MAN. THAT BEING SAID, I WISH YOU HADN'T SENT ME ON THE SAME FLIGHT AS SATURN! HE TRIED TO DEVOUR ME, WOULD'T YA KNOW, AND HE DAMN NEAR TOOK MY ARM RIGHT OFF! WE'RE GETTING ALONG BETTER NOW BUT HE ASKS ME WAY TOO MANY QUESTIONS NOW I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO TELL HIM THAT I'VE GOT NO CEREBELLUM! BEST OF LUCK ON YOUR VOYAGE. - PINHEAD CRETIN-ESquire



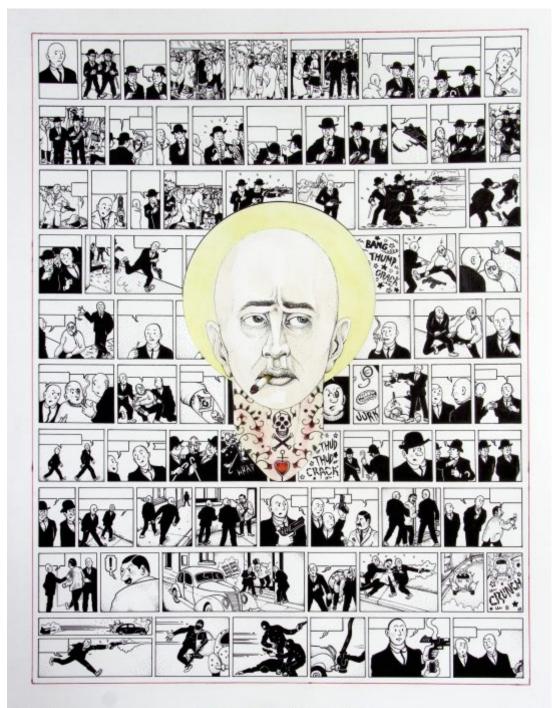
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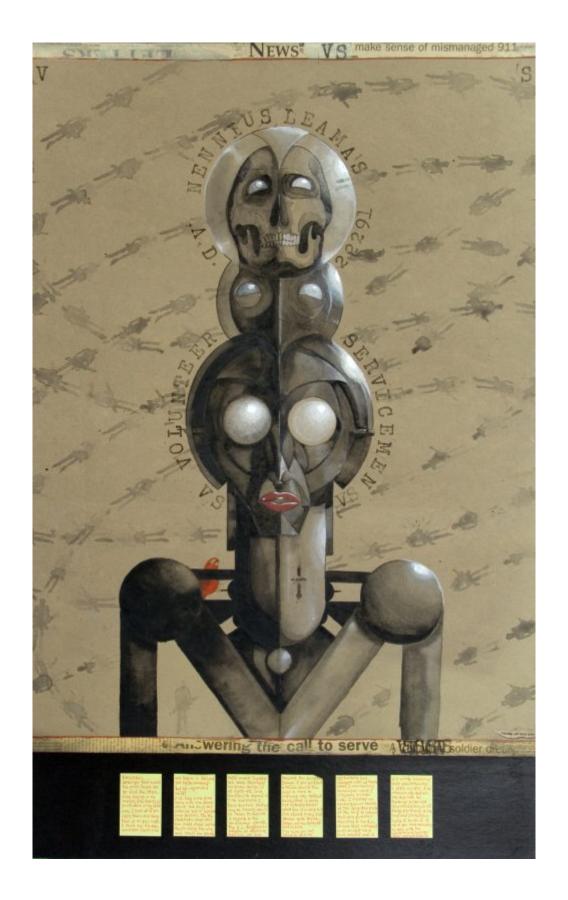


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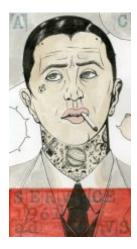




## SOME IDEAS CONCERNING SERVICEMEN

- -Nennius Leamas represents in a sense a dystopian world that has yet to evolve past the same cyclical nature of human history.
- -This could relate to many contexts such as the art world, philosophy, fashion, music, or humanity in general.
- -Ideas carrying over from Leamas are a need for something original to inspire humanity
- -Nennius come from the Greek historian who wrote "Historia Britannum"
- -Leamas comes from "The spy who Came in from the cold" It is Samael spelled backward, an agent of ambiguous moral leanings in myths.
- -In short, Nennius Leamas represents the nature of a once great empire, and the potential to rewrite it's history.
- -Everything comes from the Greeks, and even they copied the Sumerians
- -Science Fiction has the only capacity to create pseudo-originality
- -Man cannot have an original idea unless he has other life to compare himself to
- -Empty captions may represent a refusal to create something original.
- -The Servicemen represents the wish or hope that knowledge can still be sought after.
- -Leamas represents that sort of potential that has not been realized
- -The Servicemen requires mankind to find life on other planets to evolve an original idea.

Stephen Lee Scott Kelowna, BC 2012



## STEPHEN LEE SCOTT

## **Education**

2011 Visual Arts BFA, University of British Columbia, Okanagan

## **Exhibitions**

2012 "Servicemen" Headbones Gallery, Vernon B.C. Solo exhibition, "Beauty and Other form of violence" VPAG, Vernon B.C. Ecotone Art Festival, Rotary Arts Performing Center, Kelowna B.C. 2011 Proof Positive, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon B.C. 2010 UBCO BFA Exhibition, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon B.C. Legacies 2010, Collaborative, Penticton Art Gallery, Penticton B.C. Duotone Art Festival, Rotary Performing Arts Center, Kelowna B.C. Architectural Digress, Gallery Vertigo, Vernon B.C. Art on the Line, Juried Exhibition, University British Columbia, Kelowna B.C. 2009 State Proof, Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon B.C. Art on the Line, Juried Exhibition, University British Columbia, Kelowna B.C. 2008 Content Orange, Alternator Gallery, Kelowna B.C. Art on the Line, Juried Exhibition, University British Columbia, Kelowna B.C. Wearable Art Gala, Alternator Gallery, Rotary Performing Arts Center, Kelowna B.C. 2007 Art on the Line, Juried Exhibition, University British Columbia, Kelowna B.C.

# **Awards**

2010 Deputy Vice Chancellor Purchase Award, University British Columbia Okanagan

