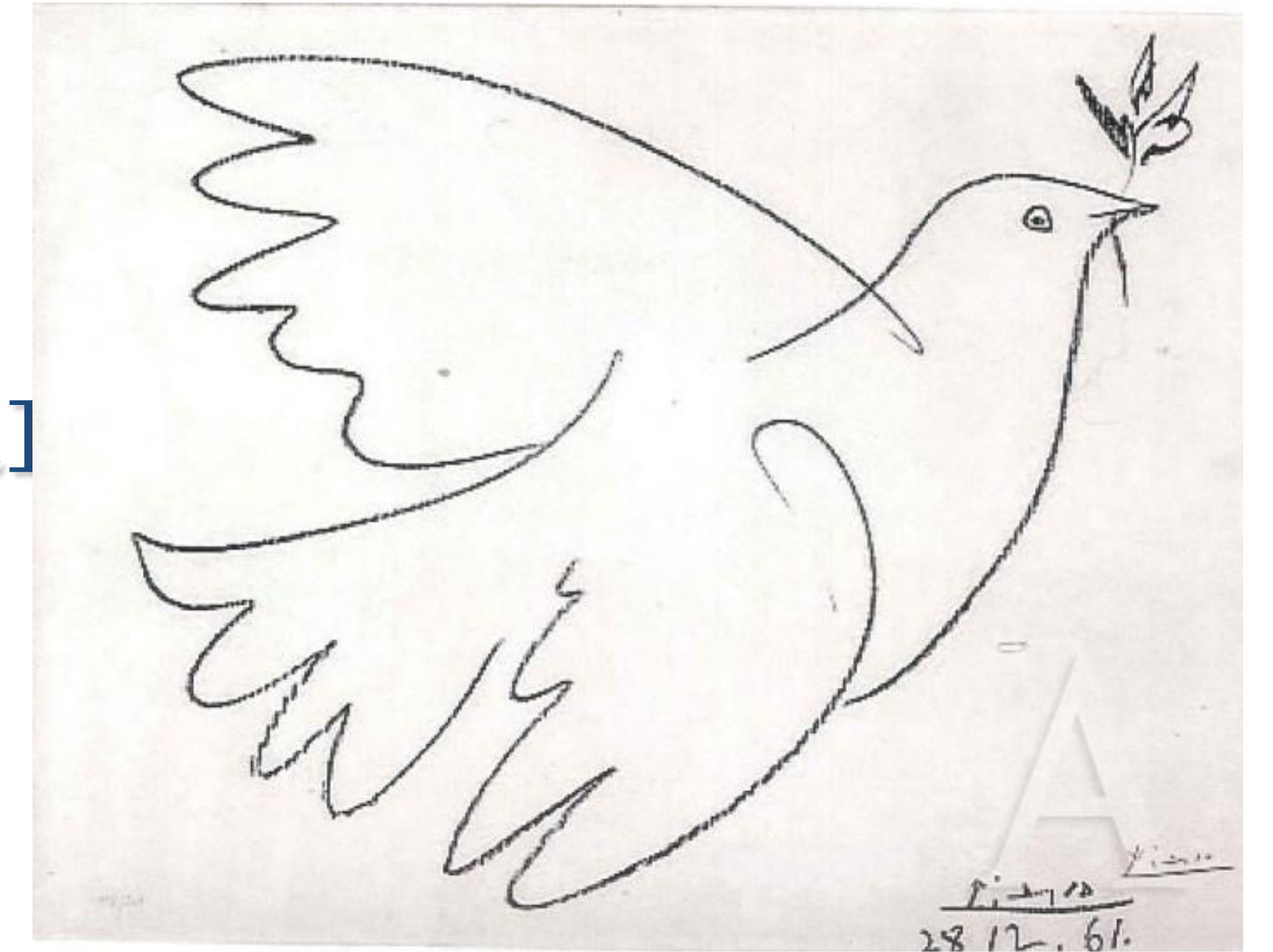


The World That Cried Woolf: Igniting Pacifism in the Face of Total War *A Digital Humanities Exhibition*



Pablo Picasso, *Dove with Olive Branch*. Image courtesy of International Art News.

An ethical call resounded throughout the world when fascist forces repeatedly bombed civilians during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Political tensions had increased throughout Spain in the years leading up to the outbreak of war, and were intensified by the election of a progressive Republican government in February 1936 that upset many wealthy capitalists, military officers, and conservative Catholics. Five months later, a lengthy civil war erupted between the political right, which included the fascist military rebels, assisted by their German and Italian allies, and the various factions of the left, which included anarchists, communists, and socialists. The fighting saw the emergence of total war, where the military actively targeted and killed civilians to break morale. This drew the attention and responses of prolific artists around the world. The writers and artists featured in this exhibit created literature and art that responded to the global call with powerful Peace Testimonies--a Quaker term that denotes the lived, public actions that embody inner spiritually-held pacifist beliefs.

The student projects from the course "Peace Testimonies in Literature and Art" study the intersections and convergences of writers' and artists' multifaceted pacifisms. Virginia Woolf combined socialism and feminism into a radical global pacifism that we have read in conversation with Langston Hughes's internationalist images of peace based on social justice and racial equality, Muriel Rukeyser's passionate, kinetic poetics that conveys a longing for peace, and Pablo Picasso's work publicly promoting peace and freedom. Each has a shared value in forging an activist pacifism that cannot be divorced from either social justice or human rights concerns. As pacifists, these artists actively denounced the continuation of warfare. The writers that we have studied deliberately used their art to display the suffering of civilians, many times transcending partisan ideologies, to promote the cause of pacifism. However, there is also a shared anti-fascist sentiment that our artists expressed after seeing the brutality of total war. Despite their differences, all of these artists believed that peace, as described by Woolf in *Three Guineas*, could be borne out of a free spread of ideas through art.

The digital humanities projects displayed here convey an ethical call to help the oppressed and victims of the Spanish Civil War. The issue raised by this ethical call was that no one really knew how to respond to it most effectively. From these thinkers, we have learned the extreme repercussions of war, the need to teach our families and children not to love war, the need to support politics that work towards equality, and finally the need to find a way to always stay true to our values. Through their work, these authors and artists provide a vocabulary for peace, offering an alternative to the relentless war rhetoric of their era and our own. Their poetry, prose, and art help the people of the world stand up and advocate for peace--even in a society dedicated to war. By remembering their contributions to pacifism, we can apply their philosophies to the ongoing quest for peace that continues to this day.