



## Art of The Troubles

Shipsides, D. (Author). (2014). Art of The Troubles. Exhibition <http://www.nmni.com/um/What-s-on/Current-Exhibitions/The-Art-of-the-Troubles>

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

### **Publication Status:**

Published (in print/issue): 10/04/2014

### **Document Version**

Author Accepted version

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DAN SHIPSIDES - MORTAR | DEVICE



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**MORTAR | DEVICE**

HD video: 2min  
Dan Shipsides 2011

Web preview:

MORTAR | DEVICE from Dan Shipsides on Vimeo.

Over 70 six pointed stars photographed on Loyalist murals and other vernacular Unionist forms in Belfast - edited to remove the red hand and then animated.

**Mortar:** Weapon used in trench warfare. Cement used in brickwork  
**Device:** Constructed functional thing. A designed (visual, text or audio) form.

Whilst not so noticed the six pointed star appears often amongst the visual icons of Northern Ireland, especially associated somewhat mysteriously with many loyalist paramilitary (the UFF - Ulster Freedom Fighters , UDA - Ulster Defense Association and the RHC - Red Hand Commando a small group linked to the UVF - Ulster Volunteer Force) and heritage groups. It also appears on the Ulster Banner – the state flag for Northern Ireland from 1952 to 1973 (Presently there is no official national flag for Northern Ireland). The military style iconography cements the notion of current violence being persecuted under a war footing or mentality - which is rooted in the significance of World War One to Loyalism's right to Britishness and also the currency of their warrior/defence status. The Star of David is an obvious link to the grand narratives of religion originating from the Holy Lands, to which much fundamental religious belief in Northern Ireland is wedded. Nonetheless, the star's usage and significance in Northern Ireland is opaque. As an icon of certain apparatus of power it carries positive and negative associations, but it sits without transparent commentary.