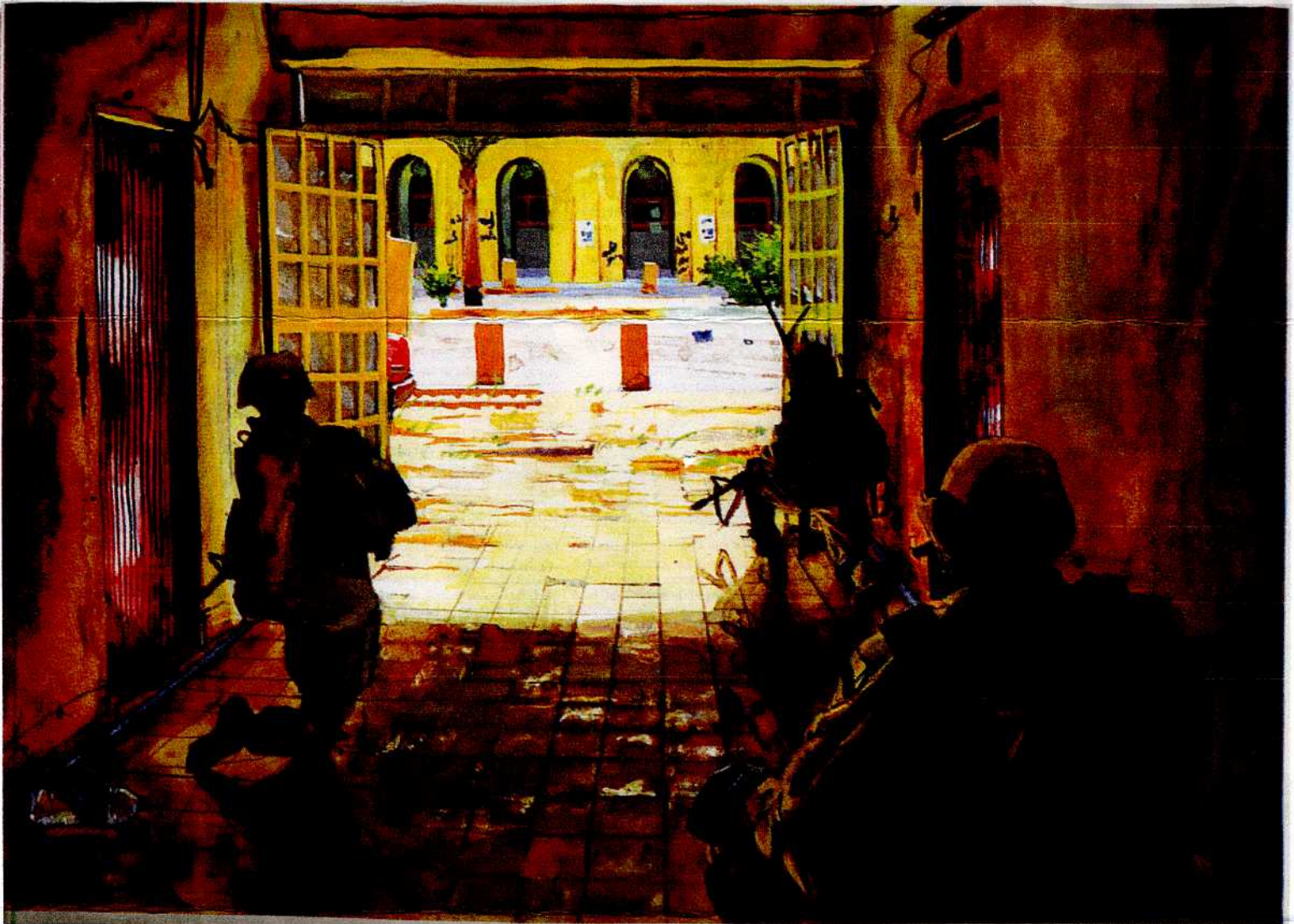


# Arts & Performance



Steve Mumford's ink and watercolor works, such as this view of American troops approaching a sniper's location, were done in 2003-'04, when he was embedded with American forces in Iraq.

## The tug of war

A combat illustrator captures the view from the ground in Iraq

By Ken Johnson  
GLOBE STAFF

Before Sept. 11, 2001, Steve Mumford was just another painter working his way up the food chain of the New York art world. A graduate of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and a Boston native, he'd gotten into a good gallery and his neo-surrealistic paintings were receiving respectful reviews.

Then came the attacks on the World Trade Center and the US invasion of Iraq, and Mumford came to an unusual, life- and career-altering decision. He decided to go to Iraq; not as a soldier but as an old-fashioned combat illustrator.

With press credentials provided by the online artnet Magazine, Mumford made four trips to Iraq in 2003 and 2004, and he created hundreds of ink and watercolor drawings documenting many different experiences of the war. He drew gun battles, crowded street scenes, landscapes, portraits of local citizens, prisoners behind bars, and images of US troops playing games and sleeping. Now 41 of those drawings, plus eight from a recent

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Mumford witnessed and recorded many aspects of the war, from suspects awaiting interrogation (left) to injured troops in a rehabilitation center (right).

