Replacement versus reconstruction

How methods of dealing with facial injuries between World War I and World War II changed dramatically via collaboration between traditional visual representation and plastic surgery, to its development to contemporary digital techniques.

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The key to success of facial surgery is the ability to accurately re-image the face, in order to reconstruct it with the use of detailed imaging techniques. This central tenet was championed during World War I, with the high influx of war casualties motivating practice of new techniques, particularly in the field of facial surgery.

Contemporary plastic surgery imaging displays influences of traditional visual media performed during World War I and II. The three elements of focus in this will be graphic illustration, sculpture, and photography. This work will examine the three disciplines, over a context of a timeline focusing on World War I and II, and how the techniques continued or translated into present day usage. The various uses of these media, for reconstructive as well as replacement purposes via prosthesis, will be explored.

The work of the artists involved was often on a voluntary basis, proving invaluable to the work of the surgeons, especially during the publication of the research. This work will examine the work from a collaborative perspective; how a symbiotic relationship was formed between these diverse practitioners with the aim of innovation.