



TRANSMISSIONS

The Newsletter for Friends, Members, & Volunteers of NVAM

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Looking Back and Charging Forward

As we approach spring 2017, the promise of growth and opportunity inevitably comes to mind. With the promise of growth in the air, I'd like to reflect on the milestones we accomplished over the last year at the National Veterans Art Museum. Just a year ago, we wrapped up the extra wires and tools, took down the scaffolding over the escalators, and unveiled the touching installation of *Above and Beyond* at the Harold Washington Library Center. The project was an enormous undertaking from the unpacking, cleaning, and inventorying each of the 58,307 dog tags that comprise *Above and Beyond*, to the final installation. This required over 15,000 hours of labor and was made possible through the amazing support and dedication of NVAM staff, and the dozens of volunteers and sponsorship partners. Through this process, we always remembered that our efforts and dedication pale in comparison to the sacrifice of our Veterans and, more poignantly, of each service person represented in the exhibit. This was a very humbling experience for all involved and something we will never forget.

A year later, we have seen thousands of visitors at *Above and Beyond*. Visitors from around the country and throughout the world have traveled to Chicago to see this important memorial to Vietnam Veterans and to contemplate the weight of all that it represents. *Above and Beyond* was recognized as one of the best art installations of 2016 in Chicago. This serves as a true testament to the heartfelt vision and artistic execution of creators Joe Fornelli, Mike Helbing, Ned Broderick, and Rick Steinbock. NVAM is proud to be associated with these artists and "Above and Beyond."

On Veterans Day, we opened the doors to our current exhibit, *Vonnegut's Odyssey*. This exhibit highlights the Veteran voice through the visual works of legendary author Kurt Vonnegut Jr., and explores how the universal experience of the Veteran's return is something that we see from antiquity through today. NVAM was also fortunate enough to acquire over thirty of the screen prints on display through the generosity of Peter Nielsen and the Nielsen Family. This is the first major series of artwork created by a WWII Veteran to become a part of the NVAM permanent collection—which underlines our mission to collect, preserve, and exhibit art created by Veterans and inspired by combat and military service.

None of this would have been possible without our incredible supporters. It is with the help and participation of our Veteran artists, NVAM members, community partners, visitors, and donors that we are able to continue to cross major milestones and grow our collection. Your support will ensure NVAM remains a solid and resounding platform for the Veteran voice.

NVAM has great plans for continued growth over the next year and beyond. Through exceptional and thought-provoking exhibitions as well as NVAM's extraordinary programming and collaborations, we are working hard to continue to bridge the gap between perception and the reality of combat and military service. So join us in these endeavors, help us continue to grow and make this year, and the years to come, exceptional!

— Brendan Foster
Executive Director, NVAM



Artwork: *Black Heart*, 2016. Silk Screen on Paper
Kurt Vonnegut Jr., U.S. Army, 1943-1945, served in Germany during WWII.
From the solo exhibition *Vonnegut's Odyssey*, currently on view at NVAM,
Tues–Sat, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

CURRENTLY ON VIEW

Vonnegut's Odyssey

Last November we opened our current exhibit, *Vonnegut's Odyssey* on Veterans Day. Curated by Iraq veteran artist, Ash Kyrie, the exhibit explores various themes of the complex and universal experience of the veteran's return home after serving in war.

Many know and love Kurt Vonnegut Jr. for his humorous yet pointed storytelling, but visitors are often surprised to learn that he was also a prolific visual artist. *Vonnegut's Odyssey* features screen prints created by the author that clearly show his penchant for using satire and to point out weaknesses in the human condition or the absurdity of life. The prints on view serve as Vonnegut's visual commentary on the experience of returning and readjusting to a place and lifestyle that has changed as much as the veteran themselves. Touching on topics like prescribed and self-medication, self-reflection, and the mixed feelings about earning an award for participating in something as tragic as war, it is clear that Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s art is as poignant and timeless as his writing.



One-Liner #4, Self-Portrait 5/7/05
Screen Print by Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

The excitement about *Vonnegut's Odyssey* also helped NVAM gain a major new acquisition. Over thirty of the screen prints included in the show are now a part of the NVAM permanent collection due to the generosity of the Nielsen Family who sponsored the acquisition in memory of beloved wife, mother, and artist Faith Nielsen. NVAM is profoundly thankful to the Nielsen Family for their support.

The exhibit will be on display through May 6th and is not to be missed!

COMING SOON

Richard J. Olsen: A Retrospective

On Friday, May 19th NVAM will proudly open our next exhibit—a retrospective of Vietnam veteran and long-time NVAM artist, Richard J. Olsen. The artist began using symbolism early in his career, but his approach to conveying meaning came to the forefront during his mature period in paintings based on his wartime experiences as a transport helicopter pilot in the Vietnam War.

After earning his MFA at the University of Wisconsin, Olsen began producing almost pure abstractions by sanding the surface nearly to the under paint, then rebuilding it once again. However, rather than abstraction being the end in itself, these paintings were created as intense investigations of methods of painting. While working to master these techniques, he inevitably began deliberately adding abstracted images from his wartime experiences. These paintings began to include not only representative and symbolic images, but also historical and cultural images.



Wall No. 125, Richard J. Olsen

Instead of following the time-honored tradition since WWI of illustrators depicting combat realistically yet highly dramatically, he consciously omits the obvious pictorial subject matter and uses carefully selected fragments from previous works to create compositions that are based on memories of his experiences in Vietnam.

In collaboration with collectors and curators Andrew and HATHIA Hayes, and art historian Tony Janssen, NVAM is excited to bring together over 50 years of artwork created by Richard Olsen in this unique and insightful exhibition.

For the past four years, NVAM Education and Creative Community programming has been focused on promoting a deeper understanding of combat inspired art. Patrons of all ages are learning about the impact of our collection directly through hands on art-making events and volunteer opportunities, film screenings, poetry and dance performances, and conversations with veterans who lived the stories on display through the art and artifacts in the NVAM collection.

Creative Community programs are integral to our growing mission to increase veteran participation and expand learning opportunities through the lens of Veteran art. By increasing art-making curriculum in schools and developing networking opportunities for veterans, 2017 will showcase NVAM’s impact as a leader in arts education and outreach.

In the months to come, NVAM’s Creative Community will introduce an ongoing series of veteran networking events. These events will welcome veterans and civilians from around the city to meet, mingle, and collaborate, offering opportunities to make connections and build a network of creative veterans. This endeavor is anchored by NVAM’s ongoing mission to bridge the gap between the perception and the reality of combat, while providing a physical and emotional space for veterans and civilians of all ages to gain a new appreciation for how the split-second decisions made in combat can impact a lifetime.



Artist and Air Force Veteran, Eric J. Garcia leading a student tour at NVAM.

SPRING EVENT CALANDAR

<p>Saturday, March 18th Big Shoulders Press Writing Workshop for <i>I Remember: Chicago Veterans of War</i> 3-5PM</p>	<p>Saturday, March 25th Print-Making Workshop with The Veteran Print Project <i>Perception is Not Always Reality: Adjustment to the Return Home Through Printed Mark-Making</i> 12-5PM</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 5th NVAM’s 3rd Annual Spring Icebreaker 2017 at Old Irving Brewing Co. 6-9PM</p> 
<p>Saturday, April 20 Homer to Vonnegut: A Print Odyssey Pt. 1 at the SMART Museum of Art 5:30-7:30PM</p>	<p>Tuesday, April 25 Homer to Vonnegut: A Print Odyssey Pt. 2 at NVAM 5:30-7:30PM</p>	<p>Saturday, April 29 Human Library at NVAM 1-5PM</p>

RECOGNIZING OUR DONORS THIS QUARTER

EXTENDING OUR GRATITUDE

A special thanks to our donors and sponsors.

\$5000 & ABOVE

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IN MEMORY OF:

Carey McGiffin (USMC)
James Garrett (Army Special Forces)

IN HONOR OF:

LTJG Brendan C. Rogers
Ron Gibbs
Brian Moskal

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: STEPHANY MERLAN

NVAM GREATLY APPRECIATES THE TIME AND WORK CONTRIBUTED BY OUR GENEROUS VOLUNTEERS

Stephany is one of NVAM’s committed weekly volunteers. She helps at the front desk as a greeter, offering visitors a warm smile and answers about ongoing exhibitions. Stephany began with an internship working on the 2015 exhibition *Tactical Formations*, and has since continued to assist with the preparation and installation of new exhibitions and opening events.



During her time at NVAM, Stephany has learned how to research, develop, and plan an art exhibition, as well as handle artwork. As a volunteer, she has gotten a behind-the-scenes look at the daily operations of an art museum. Stephany has also had the one-of-a-kind opportunity to assist in the restoration and reinstallation of one of NVAM’s best-known pieces, *Above and Beyond*. She spent about 50 hours carefully cleaning some of the 58,307 dog tags, and cross-checking each individual’s information with NVAM and the Department of Defense records for the memorial.

Her front desk work has brought her into contact with veterans and veteran artists who have all contributed something different to the on-going dialogue of the veteran experience. Stephany notes, “I like volunteering at NVAM because I get to witness the joy and interest our visitors bring. NVAM’s visitors come from all over, and I’m always learning something new. The stories they share are educational, honest, and heartfelt.”

With a background in psychology and sociology, Stephany is furthering her career in the library and museum field. She also volunteers some of her time to the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO).

Stephany’s time has been invaluable to staff members, and we are very grateful for the 18 months she has been a part of the NVAM team. Thank you Stephany!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

Membership is important to the mission and sustainability of the National Veterans Art Museum. When you join, not only do you become a member of the Veteran art community and gain access to special members-only events and VIP previews, but you also directly support the daily operations, exhibitions, and programming at the museum. If you’re not already a member, sign up today and get exclusive invitations to special events, discounts at our gift shop, and help support Veteran art!

MEMBERSHIP INFO

Benefits	Levels: [*]	Member \$60	Sustaining \$100	Associate \$250	Partner \$500	Leadership Circle \$1,000	Executive Circle \$2,500	Director’s Circle \$5,000+
Electronic Mailings & Newsletter		★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Invite to NVAM Artists’ Reception		1 guest	1 guest	1 guest	2 guests	2 guests	4 guests	10 guests
10% off all Purchases		★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Invitations to Special Receptions			1 guest	2 guests	2 guests	4 guests	6 guests	12 guests
VP tour, 10 Friends & Family Members				1 tour	1 tour	2 tours	2 tours	4 tours
NVAM Gifts					Mug, T-Shirt	Mug, T-Shirt	Statue, Mug, T-Shirt	Statue, Mug, T-Shirt
Exhibition Tour with Director and Board Chair					★	★	★	★
Invitation to Above & Beyond Award Gala							★	★
Recognition as a Sponsor for an Exhibition of Your Choice							★	★
Use of NVAM Space During the Year ^{**}								★



nvam.org/membership

^{**} All levels include membership for 2 family members; veterans/active military memberships are free limited to one use per calendar year.

excludes catering

NVAM SPRING ICEBREAKER 2017

JOIN US FOR OUR 3RD ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

WEDNESDAY APRIL 5, 2017

6:00-9:00PM

Old Irving Brewing Co.

4419 W Montrose Ave.

\$20 Tickets via Eventbrite

Who: You, friends, family, fellow Veterans, fellow Artists—everyone is welcome! (Must be 21 or older) Break the ice and get to know NVAM! Admission is \$20 and includes Old Irving beer, soda, and appetizers all evening. Grab a pint and support Veteran art!

What: Join the National Veterans Art Museum for our third-annual Spring Icebreaker 2017!

Where: Old Irving Brewing Co.

CTA: Two blocks east of Montrose Blue-Line Stop, or at Montrose and Kostner stop on #78 Bus.

Driving: Two blocks east of Montrose exit on Kennedy Expressway, parking on Montrose Ave.

Why: NVAM exhibits world-class Veteran art to the national community and beyond, and we want to get to know you! Get involved in the growing dialogue we provide surrounding our veterans through combat-inspired art! Proceeds will directly support NVAM and its mission to collect, preserve, and exhibit art created by Veterans and inspired by combat. Join us at our Icebreaker this spring 2017—an evening of celebration and engagement!

