“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.” – Thomas Jefferson

In reflecting on these words from Thomas Jefferson, we think of the ways our actions define us. As an institution, we know who we are, we understand our mission, and we resolve to take actions that show the incredible social and cultural value the National Veterans Art Museum holds. Taking action is the most important step in making a true impact in what you support and believe. While our Board and Staff hold important roles in the management of the museum, we see ourselves driven by the support and involvement of our community of supporters. The more ways we can engage and act alongside our community, the more we are able to achieve our mission and share the incredible stories of our veterans, to reflect on the nature of military service, war and conflict, and to hold high the cultural and artistic achievements of our veterans.

To this end, we’ve worked to offer more opportunities than ever for you to act with us. By attending our programs and events, by becoming a member and financially supporting the museum, by contacting us with new insights and ideas, by serving on our Associate Board, or even by simply sharing our mission with friends and family, you are taking a stance and saying “I value the stories of our Nation’s Veterans.” It is through these actions that we become a community, ready to tell the world of the merit and worth of the Veteran Voice. It is our job at NVAM to steward and promote the value of these works and it is through your actions and involvement that you achieve the highest level of meaning and impact for our United States Veterans.

By taking action, you become an integral part of the NVAM mission and join us in our effort to show the reality of combat and war, and of honest patriotism. You help to broaden our ability to reach those ready to tell their stories and those ready to listen. You support educating our youth about the complicated nature of national diplomacy and war. You support the veteran artist and the profound works they create for our benefit. Your action impacts far more than a gallery and collection. You help to define what is a Veteran, and what we stand for as a society.

It is through your involvement that NVAM is able to put promise into action, and your trust and support of NVAM ensures we are able to bring these discussions and issues to the forefront. Whether through our world class art exhibitions, critically acclaimed programming, or our community events and gatherings, you help us to achieve our mission. In the coming months, there will be many opportunities for you to act upon and support NVAM, the arts, and our Veterans. Join us and act today!

— Brendan Foster
Executive Director, NVAM
Development for the National Veterans Art Museum is about as unique as it gets. From hearing beautiful and terrifying stories from veteran artists, to planning with educators, entrepreneurs, and non-profit professionals, and to walk the gallery with students and community members, there’s always the opportunity to meet new and interesting people. The more I talk to and begin to understand the people in our community, the more it becomes clear the importance of the Veteran stories expressed in their artwork. At first glance it one may think that this artwork is only relevant to veterans and those serving or related to individuals in the military. Compared to other institutions, it seems at a glance that the art and ideas expressed here are separate, niche, or exclusive only to those who have served. However, the more we discuss it, the more we realize that these stories do not just define the artists, or just veterans, these stories define who we all are as a community, as a society, and as a Nation, and the ways that conflict, trauma, healing, and redemption all fit into our lives.

After coming to understand the incredible value inherent in these works, we view it as our earnest responsibility to ensure the artwork is accessible, and as we’ve built strong friendships and partnerships with those in our community, we have searched for more ways to engage with them. While we have many projects in the works, we’re very proud to have successfully formed the National Veterans Art Museum’s very first Associate Board. Even prouder still were we to see the Associate Board come to be made up of educated, compassionate, and engaged professionals armed with the desire to dedicate their time and energy to ensure that we fulfill our mission to the highest extent that we can. With new committees focusing on tasks involving arts and education, fundraising, planning social events, and further embodying our desire to ensure active community involvement in the way we preserve and share the art of our veterans.

Between new events and programs from the Associate Board, our upcoming Spring Ice Breaker, and our upcoming exhibitions, there will be more ways than ever for you to become an active part of our community and see how a powerful and thought-provoking collection of artwork can bring people together to do great things. I hope you’ll get to know us better, and I look forward to working alongside you.

NVAM SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

My first interaction with NVAM was the spring ice breaker, I had been invited by the American Legion Tattler Post 973 and went with a group of veterans to see what the museum had to offer. Immediately after I walked into the event I was drawn to the prints of the above and beyond piece that were being sold along with other items, at this point I knew the museum had something that I had not experienced in the veteran community. At that event both my wife and I joined as members and began wondering what we had stumbled upon. Two weeks later we visited the museum and began to understand how this collection was able to showcase so many feelings and memories that veterans have, many images were unique but even more were expressing something that is shared by those who served something that I know exists but have not been able to describe. This peaked my curiosity and is when I decided to be involved with the museum.

Recently I have been elected the chairman of the associate board, I am looking forward to being a part of this team and truly feel this year will be a defining moment for NVAM. The associate board's charter was signed by a group of motivated individuals that have a diverse set of abilities, this will be combined with the efforts of the museum itself and has the capability of capturing national recognition and then raising the museum to another level. I am a firm believer that hard work can bootstrap any organization and am truly excited to begin working with all of you.
CURRENT

Our current exhibit VIETNAM – The Defining Moment debuted last November here at the National Veterans Art Museum. Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the height of the Vietnam War, this exhibit explores moments that transformed the lives of those serving in Vietnam, and events that caused a shift in the public’s understanding and support of the conflict. The show was curated by Vietnam veterans Jim Moore and Mike Helbing, both of whom are intimately familiar with the National Veterans Art Museum’s permanent collection and have been deeply involved with the world of veteran-created art for decades. VIETNAM – The Defining Moment includes artwork created by over 30 Vietnam veteran artists with media ranging from mixed media and sculpture to photography and painting. The artwork was created over a period of fifty years beginning with photographs or drawings composed while serving in-country, or paintings and sculpture developed after many years of reflection. Collectively, the work addresses America’s evolving reaction to an increasingly unpopular war, and affords viewers insight into the specific moments that shaped the artists’ lives during their time in Vietnam and for the next five decades. When describing the artwork chosen to be included in the exhibit, Curator Jim Moore notes, “We aimed to identify moments that were turning points for the subjects of each artwork and examine the role of the veteran artist in capturing either their own defining moments or those of others.”

VIETNAM – The Defining Moment will be on display through Saturday, May 5th. Don’t miss your chance to come and engage with the ongoing impact of the Vietnam War as shared by those who served there.

UPCOMING

In a matter of weeks, the National Veterans Art Museum will unveil our exciting new exhibit titled Artifacts. Veteran artist and curator Aaron Hughes has amassed an eye-opening collection of artwork that examines the personal, cultural, and historical significance carried by objects that have specific meaning for those who have been directly and indirectly impacted by war.

The exhibition features The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist by internationally celebrated artist Michael Rakowitz; Exit Wounds and What We Carried by the award-winning photographer Jim Lommasson; Battle Beyond the Battlefield by former Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellow and veteran artist Alicia Dietz; Sum of My Father by former de Young Fine Arts Museum Resident and veteran artist Rodney Ewing; The Shrapnel Project by Purple Heart recipient and artist Phillip Schladweiler; and the award-winning Combat Paper Project by veteran artist Drew Cameron.

Bringing together photography, sculpture, and installation, the artworks in Artifacts serve to expand and touch upon the complex definition of the term “artifact”, and examine the ways in which collected objects hold meaning and significance for people, societies, and histories affected by war.

Hughes states, “This exhibition highlights what might at first seem like mundane objects, from snapshots to eyeglasses to packaging to a G.I. Joe doll, but actually help connect us to the profound effects of war and each other. This is an exhibition that examines those objects that hold the material legacy of war. It perhaps reveals how we imbue certain objects with meaning beyond their intended use.”

Artifacts will open May 19th with a public reception from 3PM-7PM, and will run through September 22nd at the National Veterans Art Museum. Be sure to join us as this exhibit should not be missed!
Creative Community refers to NVAM’s free arts workshops held in the museum’s galleries. The workshops engage professional artists, veterans, civilians, and museum patrons of all ages, backgrounds, and experience to come together to create artwork. At the end of September, current exhibition artist Jeanine Hill-Soldner hosted a Creative Community workshop “This Reminds Me” in conjunction with the Portraits and Memories: Legacies of Service exhibition. Hill-Soldner shared her artistic process of enlarging photographs to paint the images in Memories of an Era: Reflections of Our Time, and participants brought their own photographs to create image transfers and experimental collaged portraits commemorating family, service, and memory.

On Friday October 20th, join us for “NVAM After Hours: Intersection of Experience.” We invite you to join us for a free panel discussion with Jeanine Hill-Soldner and veterans featured in Portraits of American Veterans. The panel will be moderated by Dr. Anna Bretschneider, Chief of Hines VA Education Service. Register for free to reserve your spot on Eventbrite: http://bit.ly/2fUi4xt

Since October 2017, Andres “Andy” Diaz has been an incredible addition to the NVAM team through his fellowship with The Mission Continues. Having Andy’s perspective as a U.S. Navy veteran and a background in history has brought new life to our educational programming and guided tours at NVAM. In Andy’s own words:

“My fellowship at the National Veterans Art Museum has been a transformative and invaluable learning experience. Recently earning my degree in history, I wasn’t quite sure how that knowledge and my lack of experience in the non-profit professional world would be appreciated at an art museum. I was truly overwhelmed at first, as my knowledge about veteran art was minimal at best, and the last time I worked in an office was aboard the USS Harry S. Truman in 2005.

However, in six months, my confidence and abilities have grown significantly with the help of an amazing group of peers guiding me, as well as a personal effort to research and understand veteran art. After interacting with veteran artists, and learning more about their stories, and more about each piece, the passion in my voice for the museum’s mission is clearly evident to my audiences. I’ve been terrified my entire life about public speaking, but now I give tours to large groups of students and educators with a much larger presence than when I began (I still sweat a lot though!).

That same presence is helpful at outreach and development meetings, because it clearly presents the important work that we are doing here to potential partners and supporters. Also, working with other veteran organizations has undeniably made me feel more connected to the veteran community than I ever have before. I’m looking forward to learning much more in the coming months, taking pride in my work, and helping any objective the museum puts forth!”

We would like to thank the Mission Continues for partnering us with an incredible human being. Thank you so much Andy for your dedication and hard work over the past several months. You have contributed a great deal to the museum, our visitors, and the veteran art community. We are very grateful for the time and commitment you have shared with us!
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IN HONOR OF:
Veterans, their art, and the support given by NVAM
SUNDAY NOV. 12

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"SHARE YOUR SWEETS"

1:30-3PM