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**ILLINOIS HUMANITIES COUNCIL NAMES CHICAGO DRAMATISTS AS
RECIPIENTS OF 2009 LAWRENCE W. TOWNER AWARD**

Launched the “Vet Art Project” for veterans to collaborate with artists

CHICAGO - Chicago Dramatists have been named the winner of the Illinois Humanities Council’s (IHC) 2009 Lawrence W. Towner Award for its program, The Vet Art Project. The award will be presented to Lisa Rosenthal, creator and director of the Vet Art Project, and to Russ Tutterow, artistic director at Chicago Dramatists, on **Monday, February 23rd** in the **Studio Theater, Chicago Cultural Center** (78 E. Washington St., Chicago). The award will be presented just following **the 7:30 p.m.** performance and before the talkback session with participating veterans and artists. The project’s culminating performance, which includes a viewing of new art created during the project, is **free and open to the public.**

Launched in early 2008, The Vet Art Project is a humanities initiative that seeks to create opportunities for veterans to work in collaboration with artists to create new art about war for public performance and viewing. The goals of the Vet Art Project are to support our veterans, create stronger voices among our veterans, provide new opportunities for artists, offer a venue to hear the voices of our veterans and artists, and foster discussions about how war affects us all. The program includes community outreach and creative arts programming in addition to the final showcase.

Every January, the IHC board selects a Towner recipient from a list of five grant applicants from the previous year, identified by IHC staff for its unconventional or unique methods in pursuit of ambitious goals.

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The Towner Award was created in 1985 by the Illinois Humanities Council Board of Directors in memory of a past chairman, Lawrence W. Towner. It was instituted to encourage “risk-taking in the development and execution of a public humanities project.” It is more appropriate to recognize such qualities at the beginning of the project when the risk was undertaken, rather than after its completion.

Previous winners of the Towner Award include the John Howard Association for its “Stateville Book Club;” DeKalb Public Library for its “Heroes At Your Local Library” teen reading group; Center for Working Class Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago for the “Chicago Labor and Working-Class History Map;” and Video Machete for its “Global Youth Project.”

For more information about Illinois Humanities Council programs, visit www.prairie.org or call 312.422.5580.

The Illinois Humanities Council is a nonprofit educational organization [501 (c) 3] dedicated to fostering a culture in which the humanities are a vital part of the lives of individuals and communities. Organized in 1973 as the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the IHC creates programs and funds organizations that promote greater understanding of, appreciation for, and involvement in the humanities by all Illinoisans, regardless of their economic resources, cultural background, or geographic location. The IHC is supported by state, federal, and private funds.

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