



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Please List; Call for Interviews and Info

THE VET ART PROJECT WINTER 2009 PROGRAM **Sharing Stories of War to Help Our Veterans Find Peace**

Public Performance on Monday, February 23, 2009, 7:30 p.m. at Chicago Cultural Center

The Chicago-based **Vet Art Project** (www.vetartproject.com), in association with the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs Theater, will be in residence in Chicago DCA's Studio Theater in February 2009 as part of its Incubator Series. The Vet Art Project creates opportunities for veterans to work in collaboration with artists from all disciplines to create new art about war for public performance and viewing. The program aims 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 Vet Art Project is spearheaded by lead artist Lisa Rosenthal, a playwright from Forest Park, IL.

Community Building Workshops and Community Discussion programs are open to the public. Creative Arts Programming is open to veterans and artists only. All programs are opportunities for veterans and artists to connect to form collaborative artistic partnerships. **All events are free and held in the Studio Theater of the Chicago Cultural Center** located at 77 E. Randolph Street, Chicago.

Community Building Workshops (Open to the public):

- **Wednesday, February 4, 7-10 p.m.:** The journey of the warrior, language, and storytelling. Meet-n-greet between veterans and artists, sharing stories and building creative partnerships. Led by Lisa Rosenthal.
- **Saturday, February 7, 6-8 p.m.:** Discussing the needs and interests of veterans. Also a meet-n-greet between veterans and artists, sharing stories and building creative partnerships.
- **Tuesday, February 10, 6-9 p.m.:** Meet-n-greet between veterans and artists, sharing stories and building creative partnerships.

Creative Arts Programming: (These programs are open to veterans, their family members, artists, and practitioners who work with veterans **only**. Each requires advance registration. RSVP to 773-301-5366 or 708-715-5488.)

- **Thursday, February 5, 8 p.m.**
Picture Stories of War
Use collage to visually representing the experience of veterans focusing on emotions, sights, sounds, and the transition home. Led by Christina Reddington, RN, BSN
- **Friday, February 6, 6-9 p.m.: Part I and Saturday, February 7, 12-4 p.m.: Part II**
Inside Out: Crafting a Healing Memoire
Introduce personal writing as a form of self-reflection and a healing modality, and demonstrate the power of sharing and witnessing personal yet universal stories. Led by Kathleen C. Nesbitt, MFA
- **Saturday, February 7, 4-6 p.m.**
Diving into the Well: Yoga, Breath and the Creative Process
Combining gentle yoga poses, breathing techniques (pranayama), and journal writing to stimulate creativity, heighten awareness, and manage anxiety. Previous yoga or journaling experience not required; poses accessible to all. Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing. Led by Angela Dancey, MFA, PhD
- **Sunday, February 8, 1-4 p.m.**
Calming Practices: Art and Meditation
Learn how the qualities of art material can be used for creative visual expression and simple meditation techniques can be used to calm the mind and body. Both can help improve concentration. No previous art or meditation experience required. Led by Suellen Semekoski, ATR, BC, LCPC, Adjunct Associate Professor, Art Therapy Program, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Jaimie Peterson, MAAT; and Anna Pate Richards, MAAT Graduate Student

- **Wednesday, February 11, 7-9 p.m.**
Storytelling with Abstract Art
Create non-realistic visual art freeing you from the pressure to create accurate work and instead connecting you to the feelings or meaning of an event. Use shapes, colors, and textures to express internal thoughts and ideas, some just discovered. Led by Christine Krumsee, visual artist and art as therapy instructor, North Chicago VA Hospital
- **Saturday, February 14, 12-4 p.m.**
Archetypes and Myths in Our Own Lives: A Writing Workshop
Explore archetypes and myths, examining how these ancient symbols still resonate through our culture and society. Choose an archetype or myth and reshape it to tell your own story through writing and/or drawing. Led by Margaret Lewis, award-winning playwright

Community Discussions (Open to the Public):

- **Thursday, February 5, 7-8 p.m.: Talk with Vietnam Veterans** about their journeys through life and art.
- **Monday, February 9, 7-9:30 p.m.**
Loving Soldiers: The Costs of Offering Up Loved Ones to War. Nancy Ronquillo talks about her family's healing journey and how our community responds to war. Free-writing exercises, too, to help participants process ideas and relate them to their own lives by Lisa Rosenthal.
- **Friday, February 13, 7-10 p.m.**
Renaissance by Fire: Returning Veterans, Society, and the Forging of a New Enlightenment
A discussion of how combat veterans are leading us to a stronger awareness and consciousness of the pervasive connections that unite our community on issues such as conflict, love, honor, violence, and more—a program on the eve of the first anniversary of the NIU shootings. Led Ilona Meagher, author of *Moving a Nation to Care: PTSD and America's Returning Troops*, and recipient of NIU's 2008 Illinois Journalist of the Year Student Scholarship Award with NIU Veterans Club members
- **Saturday, February 14, 4-6 p.m.**
Art Therapy with Children of War. Sharing images of the development of situationally and culturally appropriate art therapy for children living in a war zone in the Phillipines. Discussing the challenges of bringing art therapy into a war zone, and how art can be used to support children growing up there. Led by Johanna (Hans) Buwalda, MEd, MA, LCPC
- **Sunday, February 15, 12-3 p.m.**
Healing PTSD through Prayer and Craft and We All Serve: The Effect of PTSD on Families. Led by John Zemler, visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Theology, Marquette University and Lin Daley, MEP, BSW, Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Wisconsin, with Nancy Ronquillo, mother, wife, daughter, and granddaughter of soldiers.
- **Tuesday, February 24, 6-10 p.m.**
War and the Soul
An introduction to war and how it touches us all—veterans, families, and community members—plus 10 things you should know about a returning Iraq veteran, what PTSD is and isn't, reviewing the seven steps to warriorhood, and the functions of the soul. Led by John Fisher, Vietnam Veteran and Soldiers Heart Advisory Board Member and Speaker

Public Performance (Open to the Public):

- **Monday, February 23, 2009, 7:30 p.m.**
New Art About War
The Vet Art Project will culminate in a public performance of new art created in the Vet Art Project in the Studio Theater of the Chicago Cultural Center, 77 E. Randolph, Chicago. Reservations are encouraged at 312-742-8497 or www.dcatheater.org.

The Vet Art Project is produced in association with the **City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs' Theater**. The project is supported, in part, by the **Puffin Foundation**, the **Illinois Humanities Council**, the **National Endowment for the Humanities**, and the **Illinois General Assembly**, **Chicago Dramatists**, **Stage Left Theatre**, **American Theater Company**, **Rivendell Theatre Ensemble**, and is fiscally sponsored by **Fractured Atlas**.

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"Veterans are the light at the tip of the candle, illuminating the way for the whole nation. If veterans can achieve awareness, transformation, understanding, and peace, they can share with the rest of society the realities of war. And they can teach us how to make peace with ourselves and each other, so we never have to use violence to resolve conflicts again."

—Vietnamese Buddhist monk **Thich Nhat Hanh**