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*Tactical Formations, a new exhibit exploring three generations of veteran art collectives, opens at the National Veterans Art Museum, Friday, September 4, 2015*



Media Contacts:

Destinee Oitzinger, 312-326-0270

Curator, Gallery Coordinator

[doitzinger@nvam.org](mailto:doitzinger@nvam.org)

Georges Toumayan 312-326-0270

Communications Coordinator

[gtoumayan@nvam.org](mailto:gtoumayan@nvam.org)

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## ***Tactical Formations:***

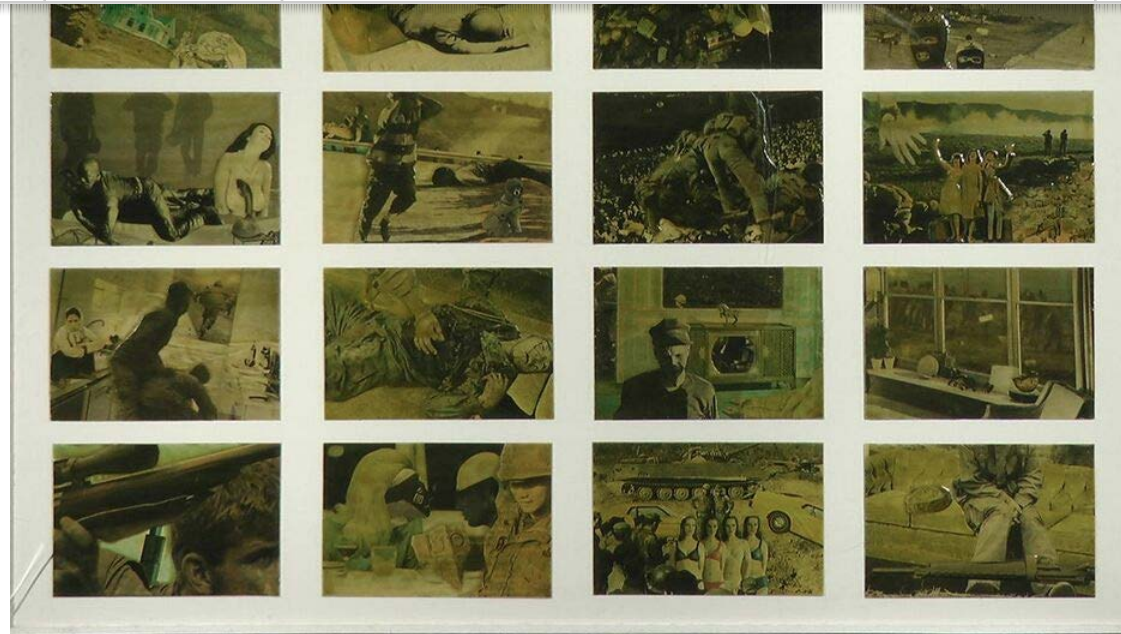
***Collective Practice in the Veteran Art Movement***

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Chicago, IL (September 2015) On Friday, September 4, 2015, the National Veterans Art Museum (NVAM) will open its newest exhibit, *Tactical Formations: Collective Practice in the Veteran Art Movement*. NVAM is pleased to announce the public opening on September 4, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. with the keynote by Michael Duffy commencing at 8 p.m.

*Tactical Formations* takes the basic military strategy of organizing troops into units to carry out tactical missions during combat and applies it to the practice of forming and operating art collectives in order to achieve socially grounded goals through artistic production. The exhibit explores three art collectives: The Vietnam Veterans Arts Group (VVAG), The Dirty Canteen, and the NVAM Teen Council. The VVAG first formed in 1981 when a group of Vietnam veterans began making artwork as an artistic response to their experiences at war. The VVAG was unique in launching the first exhibition composed exclusively of artwork made by combat veterans. The Dirty Canteen collective formed in 2013, and includes veterans from the Gulf War, Kosovo, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars, who strive to create and maintain open dialogues about past and current military engagements. Finally the NVAM Teen Council represents a growing group of high school students who create artwork while developing skills in leadership and museum practices in collaboration with veteran artists. These three groups represent NVAM's foundation, its growing population of post-Gulf War veterans, and its future leaders and artists.



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David Sessions - *Contained War*

Art collectives materialize in order to carry out a common mission. They display a strong creative spirit, and consistently generate collaborative learning experiences. The VVAG and The Dirty Canteen formed as groups to express and represent their experiences of war. Both collectives have aimed to facilitate conversations about past and present conflicts. A third component of the exhibition will be added with the formation of a new artist collective through NVAM Teen Council. Students will learn about art, contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding war and conflict, and create artwork to be on display in the third part of the exhibit. *Tactical Formations* will explore ways in which artwork created in a group context can support and implement the missions of three generations of art collectives.

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Thomas Dang - *Tactical Decision Game*

Featured artists in *Tactical Formations* include VVAG members Joseph Fornelli, Michael Duffy, William Hackwell, John Shimashita, John Plunkett, and Richard Yohnka; and Dirty Canteen members, Giuseppe Pellicano, Jesse Albrecht, Amber Hoy, Erica Slone, and Daniel Donovan and Thomas Dang.

Keynote speaker Michael Duffy is one of the original members of the VVAG and has

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exhibited with the National Veterans Art Museum for over 30 years. He served in 1968 as the Executive Officer of C Battery, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 9<sup>th</sup> Artillery in and around Bear Cat and Nha Be. Duffy holds a Bachelor's degree from Colorado College in Fine Art and has contributed art pieces to several university art collections as well as the Denver Art Museum.



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Daniel Donovan - *Domestic MK VI*

Curator Destinee Oitzinger states, “This exhibit showcases the power of the collective voice. Each of the artists in *Tactical Formations* shares their unique ideas and experiences through their artwork, but it is when they collaborate with others who share a common mission, that change and understanding begin to take root. Throughout history artwork has been a tool to challenge the status quo and instigate conversation. It is fascinating to see what can be achieved when talented individuals unite to create something much greater than the sum of its parts through visual art.”

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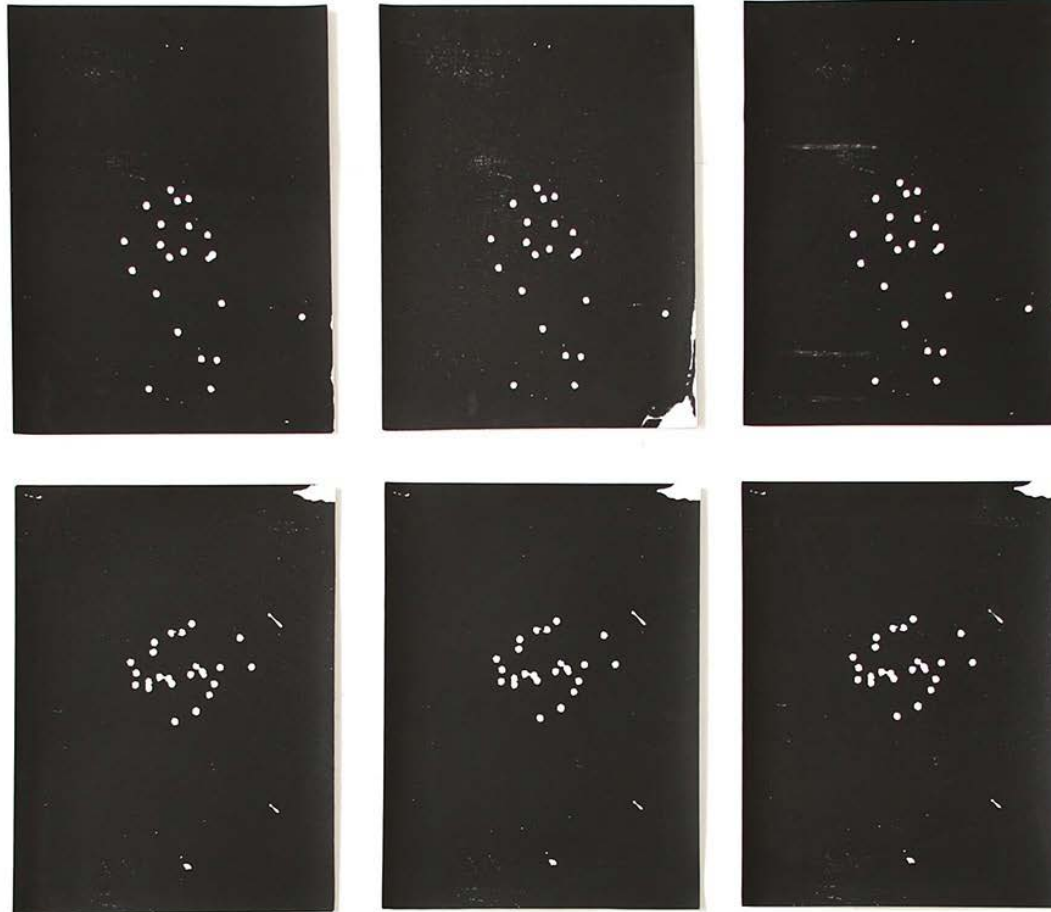
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Executive Director Brendan Foster notes, "Tactical formations have been a part of our military experience throughout the course of history. The exhibit explores military issues through this fundamental concept, where artistic response is widely varied based on different experiences from the artists. NVAM feels it is important to bring together these multi-generational collectives to encourage a deeper understanding of the impact of war among different communities."



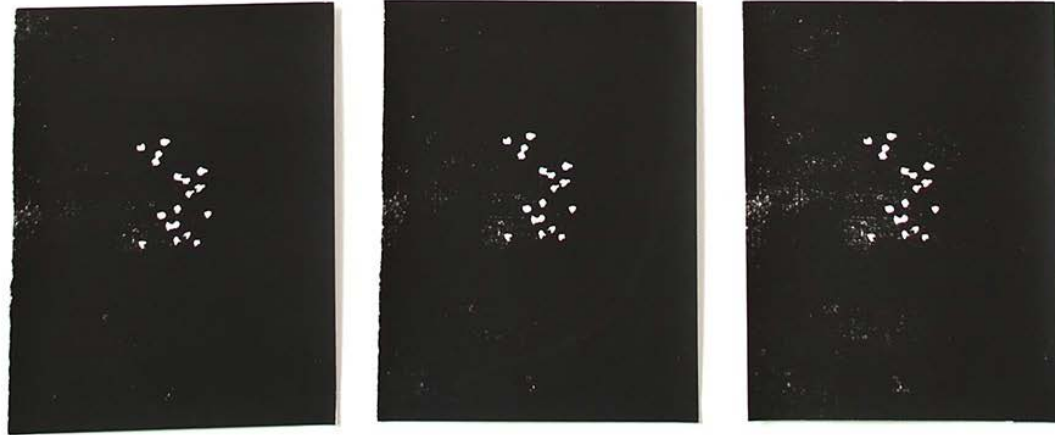
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Amber Hoy - *Zero Target Data*

### **About National Veterans Art Museum**

The National Veterans Art Museum, located at 4041 N Milwaukee Avenue, inspires greater understanding of the real impact of war with a focus on Vietnam. The National Veterans Art Museum is dedicated to the collection, preservation, and exhibition of art inspired by combat and created by veterans. It is home to more than 2,500 works of art by more than 270 artists. Personal narratives and artistic representations of war (including paintings, photographs, sculptures, poetry, and music) provide transformative learning opportunities in art, history, and civics.





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Richard Yohnka - *Guardian II*

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**National Veterans Art Museum**  
4041 N. Milwaukee Ave.  
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