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## ***National Veterans Art Museum to Reopen The Things They Carried***

***New Gallery Highlights Interactive and Virtual Experience***

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Media Contacts:

Georges Toumayan, 312-326-0270

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

**Chicago, IL (September 2014)** — The National Veterans Art Museum (NVAM) has announced the re-opening of its exhibit [\*The Things They Carried\*](#)—the newest exploration of the Vietnam experience—as told by those who were there. The re-imagined *The Things They Carried* will be on display in a new gallery space to provide a more interactive, comprehensive virtual experience. The exhibition will reopen on September 13, with a reception from 12 PM to 5 PM. Guest speakers include retired US Army Reserve Major Ned Ricks, Executive Director Levi Moore, and Education Coordinator Christine Bepalec-Davis.

Inspired by Tim O’Brien’s book of the same name, this exhibit serves as a visual companion that illustrates the narrative with fine art and photography from veterans that lived the stories in the novel. Much like the book, the exhibit explores the concept of storytelling and questions how one might share the story of the Vietnam experience. The exhibit takes as its central question “how to tell a true war story” and prompts viewers to consider their personal stories and contemplate how they might share their own narratives.

By literally incorporating the essential elements of storytelling: Who, Where, When, and What, *The Things They Carried* begins by chronicling the Vietnam conflict through first-hand visual accounts and descriptions. The exhibit culminates in the re-creation of an authentic Vietnam-era tented shelter to bring viewers into the

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intimate physical experience of sleeping, living and working in the field during that time.

With artworks and objects created and collected by over twenty Vietnam veteran artists, *The Things They Carried* also provides visual interpretations to viewers, illustrating the war by those who were there. This form of pictorial storytelling offers insights into the individual personalities of those who served, where they were in Vietnam both geographically and environmentally, and what the cultural climate of the time looked like. Representations and artifacts come together in *The Things They Carried* to offer an individuated and holistic presentation of the social and historical context of the Vietnam war.

With didactic guides and lesson plans that accompany the artwork and artifacts, visitors of all ages can gain a better understanding of “how to tell a true war story” as explored in Tim O’Brien’s book, as well as explore possibilities and benefits of personal storytelling.

Featured artists include [László Kondor](#), [Dean Sharp](#), [Charles Shobe](#), [William Myles](#), [James McJunkin](#), [John Hosier](#), [Michael Harac](#), and [Arthur Jacobs](#).

The National Veterans Art Museum is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

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THE NATIONAL VETERANS ART MUSEUM PRESENTS:



THE THINGS THEY CARRIED

THE NEWEST EXPLORATION OF  
THE VIETNAM EXPERIENCE  
AS TOLD BY THOSE  
WHO WERE THERE

BASED ON THE  
BESTSELLING BOOK  
BY TIM O'BRIEN

FEATURING WORKS FROM  
THE PERMANENT COLLECTION

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#### About the National Veterans Art Museum

In October of 1981, a group of Vietnam veterans put together an exhibition of artwork based on their war experiences. The success of that show led to the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Art Group. Fifteen years later, with a building donated, the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum was launched. In 2003, the museum began accepting work by veterans of all conflicts and, in 2010, changed its name to the National Veterans Art Museum. The museum made its home in Portage Park in 2012.

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 museum collects, preserves and exhibits 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 and enables programming for veterans and their families and for the community at large. The NVAM offers guided tours, teacher resources, workshops for students and student groups, and family-focused interactive programs. Creative community workshops take place the second Saturday of every month. The museum offers a free after-school drop-in arts education program every Friday.

For more information, visit [www.nvam.org](http://www.nvam.org) or call 312-326-0270.

#### About the Illinois Arts Council

The Illinois Arts Council Agency was created as a state agency by the Illinois

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General Assembly in 1988 through legislation sponsored by Senators Paul Simon, Thomas McGlooin, and Alan Dixon. The agency is governed by up to twenty-one private citizens chosen for their demonstrated commitment to the arts and appointed by the Governor. Council members serve in a voluntary, non-paid capacity and are charged with developing the state's public arts policy, fostering quality culturally diverse programs, and approving grants expenditures. A small professional staff with in-depth knowledge of the arts develops and administers the agency's programs, provides technical assistance, and ensures the responsible and impactful distribution of all funds. Resources to support the Illinois Arts Council Agency are provided by the Governor and General Assembly of Illinois and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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