



For Immediate Release

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MY WAR: Wartime Photographs by Vietnam Veterans and A War Never Ends

Two upcoming exhibits at San Juan Islands Museum of Art display an intimate view of Vietnam War

Friday Harbor, WA... "Nothing, not the valor with which it is fought nor the nobility of the cause it serves, can glorify war." – John McCain. The new exhibitions at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art are testament to this sentiment. **MY WAR** and companion exhibit **A War Never Ends** open April 5th, 2019 and run through June 3, 2019 at the San Juan Islands Museum of Art (SJIMA), located at 540 Spring Street in Friday Harbor, WA.

MY WAR features the Vietnam War through the lens of the "average Joe." The exhibition showcases photographs, poems and journal entries by twenty-five Vietnam veterans from around the U.S. Rather than tell the familiar war stories of tragic loss, these photos express more intimate moments in the everyday life of a soldier. Most of us remember disturbing photos from Vietnam, such as "Napalm Girl," by noted photojournalist Nick Ut – a photographer looking in. The photographs in this exhibition are an insider's view looking out. They capture the in-between moments, in some cases, in between a friend's life and death, in between bombing runs or ground offensives and moments when the tedium of waiting inspires photos of one's surroundings and comrades.

"It's really about showcasing a perspective of the war that we don't even think about," Marissa Roth, the curator of the *My War* exhibit, said. "It's their perspective; it's personal. The pictures: most of them aren't gruesome or grim. They're poignant. Some are tender, some are funny."

This nationally touring exhibit is making its West Coast debut in Friday Harbor at SJIMA. Much of the material was previously hidden away, even from family and friends. It has been a healing and educational experience for many of those who contributed to the exhibition or have seen it elsewhere.

A main reason Roth put this exhibit together was to let Vietnam veterans tell their own story. "These veterans were not treated very positively when they came back, and so for them to now have a means of showing a different perspective on the war, on their war, it's indescribable. It's gratifying," Roth stated.

Complementing the photographs in the main gallery, the north gallery will hold a more intimate display called **A War Never Ends**. It honors and gives recognition to the Vietnam wartime experience of San Juan County men and women. Their stories will be told through personal artifacts and statements that reflect their scars and memories, good and bad, from the war. San Juan County has more veterans per capita than any other county in Washington state.

The atrium gallery will display **Vow** – a 10-foot sculpture by Seattle sculptor Mary Coss. Vow tells the story, from a feminine perspective, of birth and rebirth, the ties that bind, and the union of souls. It is an appropriately moving complement to the war-themed exhibits in the main and north galleries and will open and close on the same dates.

Dropbox of photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/746p2rbjny7hvo8/AACksvLDTNMZEA0dGZnPgZgCa?dl=0> All photo credits go to the individual photographers listed in the title of the image, and credit must be shown with all use of the images. Images may not be cropped.

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Media Contact SJIMA: Diane Martindale, Diane.Martindale@rockisland.com, (360) 370-5050