

THE ART OF HEALING: Veterans' Artwork from Art4Vets Therapy Program



American Studies

Honors Thesis

Art4Vets

Artwork Exhibition



Skidmore College

About

Art4Vets was founded in 2016 by Penny Lee Deere, when the arts therapy program at her VA was cut. Art4vets would become an intricate part of the Zaloga Post #1520 American Legion as "support our troops committee / Art4Vets. "It is a not-for-profit initiative that offers therapy programs for veterans. One of their programs is art therapy, and their works have been shown in exhibits, such as the Dulles International Airport in D.C., and the Art Associates Gallery in Albany. Some of the projects they've worked on that are documented here are the Poppies, White Roses, and Letters From Mom. The artists remain anonymous to respect their privacy and personal experiences.



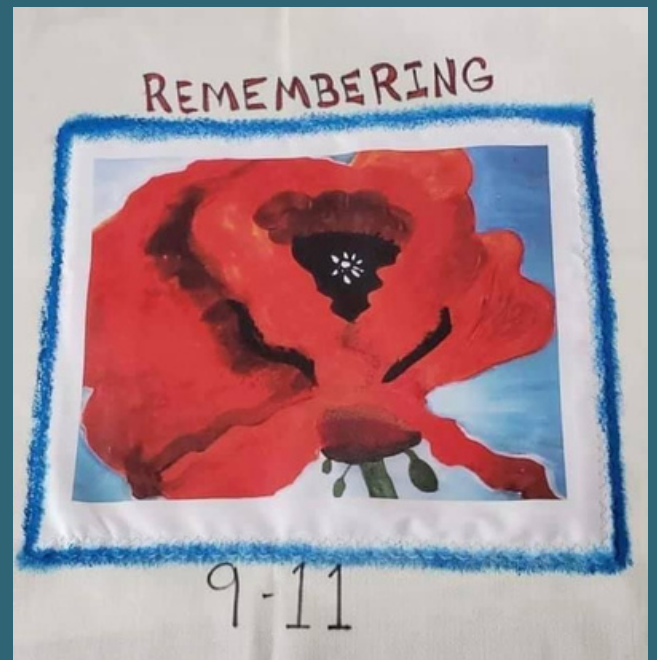
Poppies

Project



Poppies

The red poppies are an international symbol of remembrance for the sacrifices that many people have made while in military service. The choice for the poppies as the symbol comes from the poem, "Flanders Field."





The last painting is based on the poem, "Flanders Field."

This was written by a Canadian surgeon that looked over the former battleground, and now gravesite of WWI. He noticed the poppies growing among the crosses naturally. The land was very fertile because of the bombing and buildings that had lime in it. They grew like weeds across the plains.

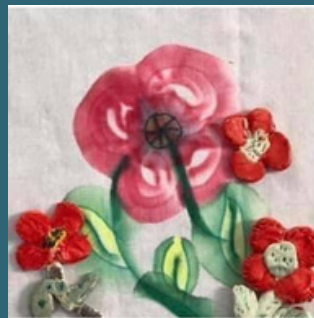
The poem by John McCrae

In Flanders' fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place: and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders' fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high,
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders' Fields.









White Roses *Project*



White Roses

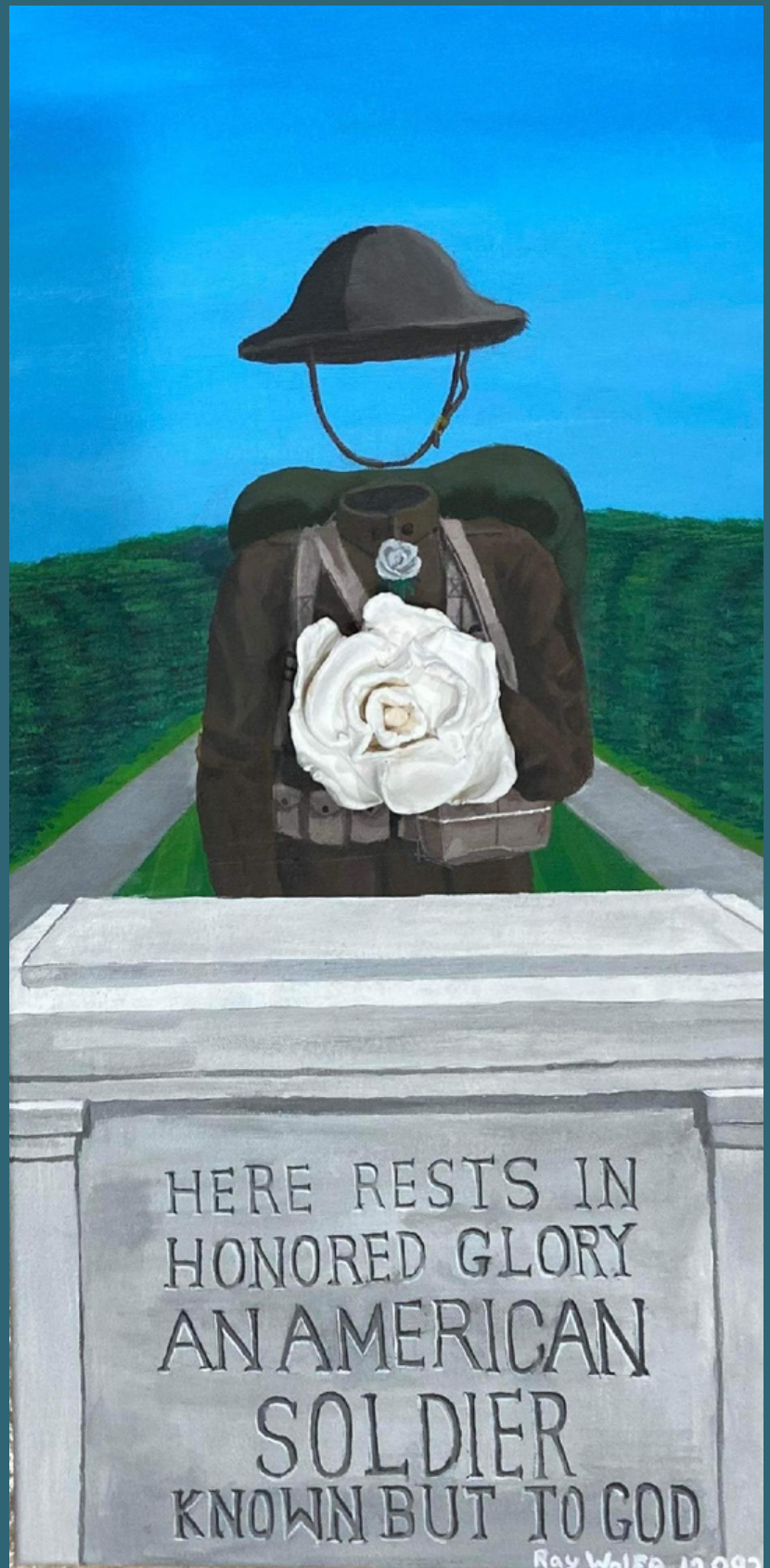
The White Rose is linked to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, which is a monument dedicated to the deceased U.S. service members whose remains are unidentified. The White Rose also came to symbolize the sacrifices of all U.S. service members.

History of White Roses

On March 4, 1921, the United States Congress approved the burial of an unidentified American serviceman from World War I in the plaza of the new Memorial Amphitheater. On November 11, 1921, the unknown soldier brought back from France was interred below a three-level marble tomb."

"On Memorial Day, 1921, four unknown servicemen were exhumed from four World War I American cemeteries in France. U.S. Army Sgt. Edward F. Younger, who was wounded in combat, highly decorated for valor and received the Distinguished Service Cross selected the Unknown of World War I from four identical caskets at the city hall in Châlons-en-Champagne, France, on October 24, 1921. Younger selected the World War I Unknown by placing a spray of white roses on one of the caskets.

A century after its white roses were placed on the casket of first Unknown Soldier in 1921, a French family rose grower (The Ducher Rose Growers, founded in 1845) has created a "Never Forget" variety to mark the upcoming centennial of Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier."





Responses to Military Sexual Trauma



Penny Lee Deere

Stuck in the muck and the mire
struggles persist ,exist
Bog you down
keep one captive
Let it go!

lift out of the fog
Follow the light
let it guide you
Your spirit lives

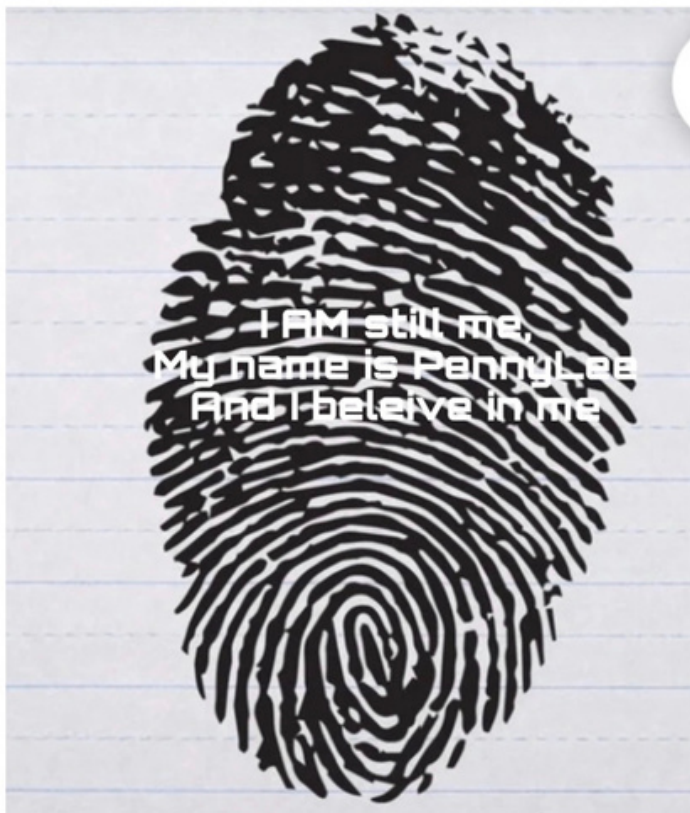
Call them Out
Demand justice

I am still here
Penny Lee
I believe in me
you have no power over thee

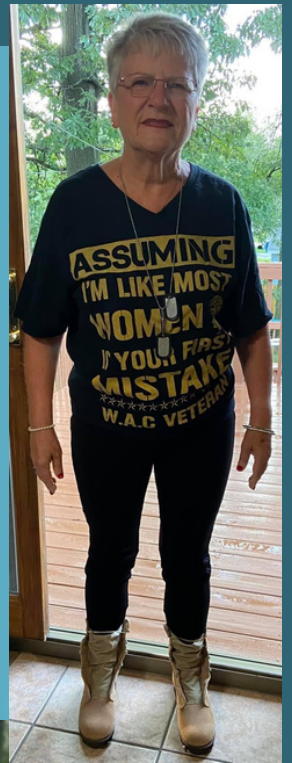
Reach out ask for “ help “

There is a lifeline
there is light within yourself
let it shine
Peace as possible
embrace, welcome the new beginning





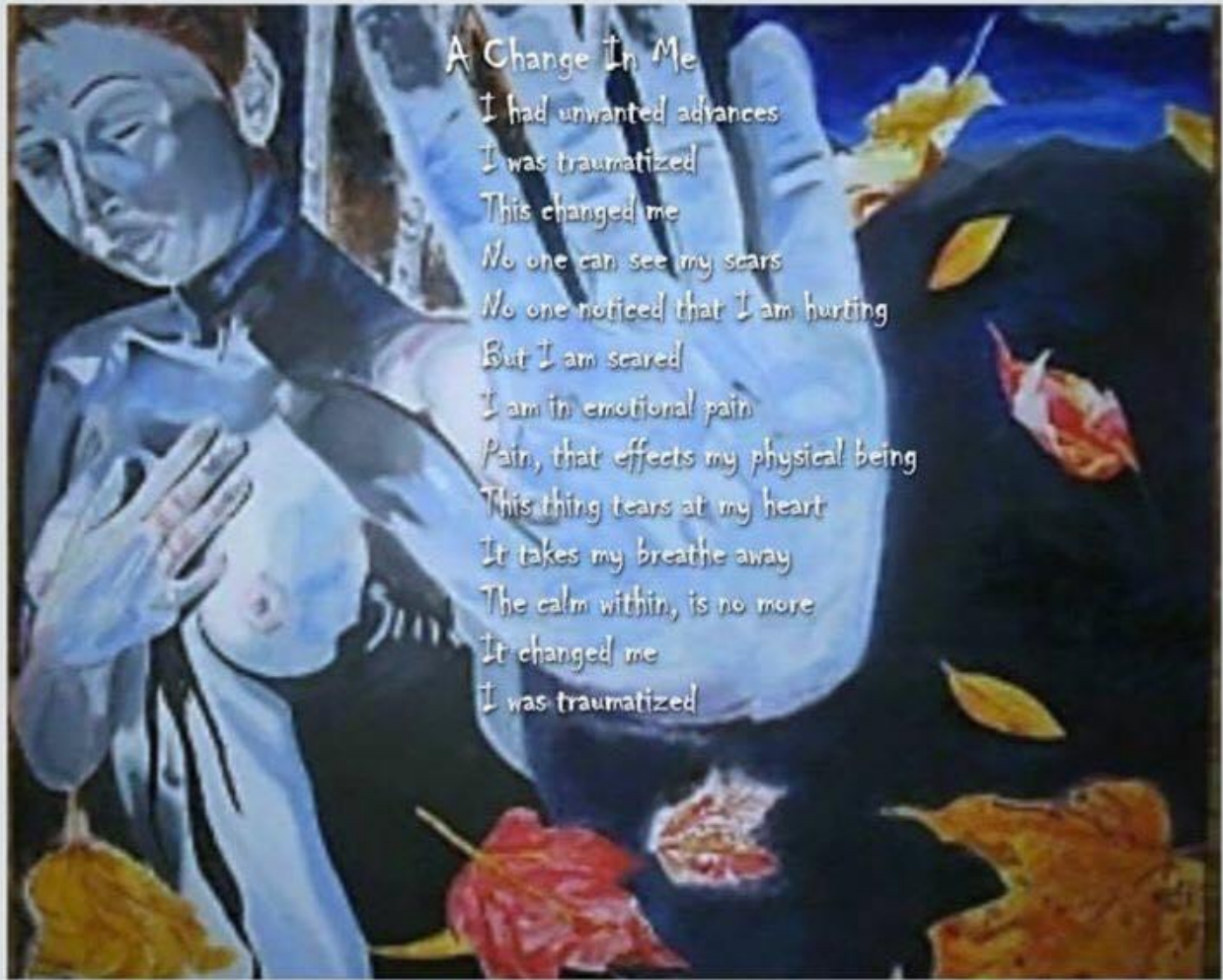
Transition



TRANSITION



Penny Lee Deere

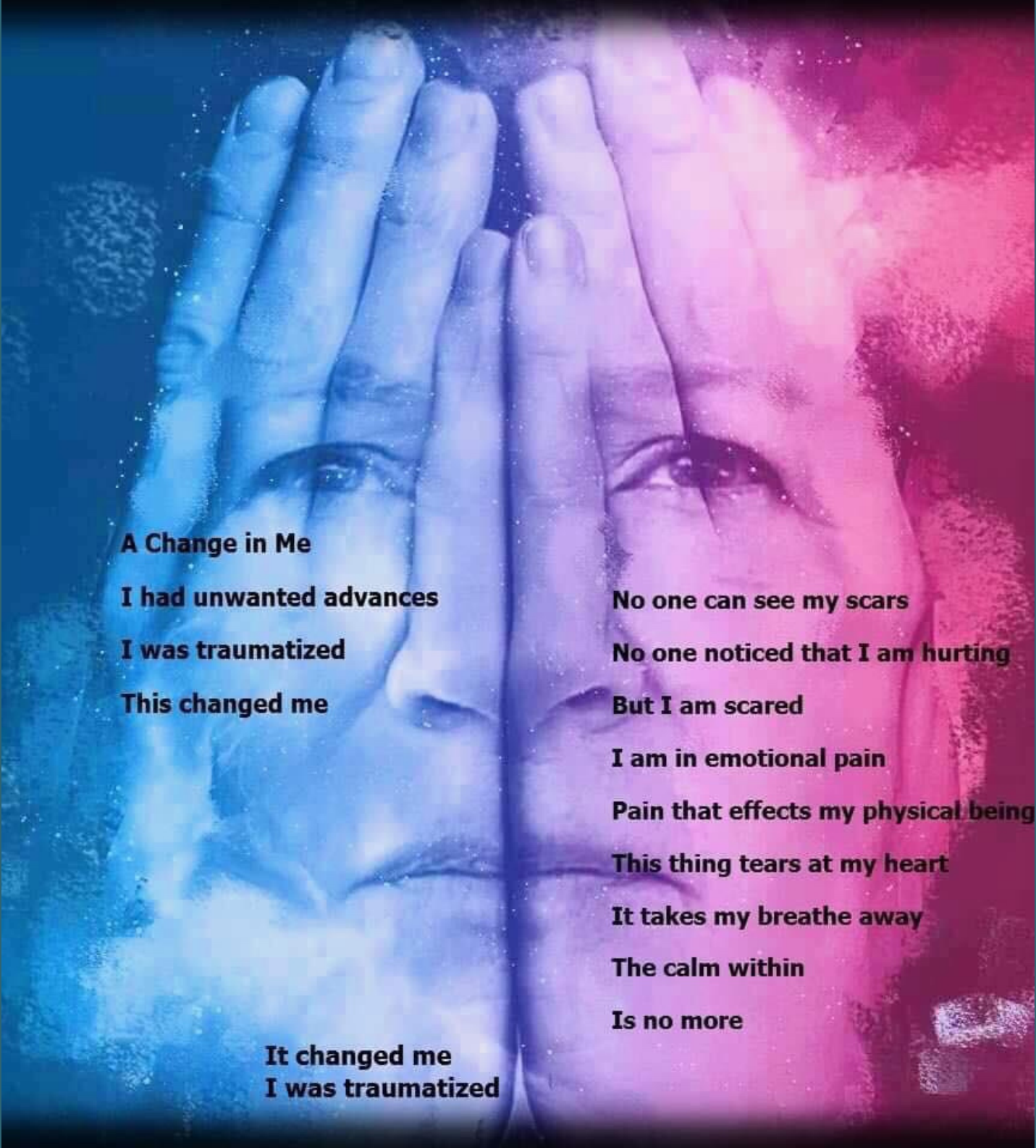


A Change In Me

I had unwanted advances
I was traumatized
This changed me
No one can see my scars
No one noticed that I am hurting
But I am scared
I am in emotional pain
Pain, that effects my physical being
This thing tears at my heart
It takes my breathe away
The calm within, is no more
It changed me
I was traumatized

Words by Penny Lee Deere

Art by Megan Wallace

The image is a vertical composition featuring two hands, palms facing each other, with faces superimposed on them. The left hand is tinted with a vibrant blue light, and the face within it has a matching blue hue. The right hand is tinted with a vibrant pink light, and the face within it has a matching pink hue. The background is a dark, textured gradient of blue and pink, with some white speckles. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

A Change in Me

I had unwanted advances

I was traumatized

This changed me

**It changed me
I was traumatized**

No one can see my scars

No one noticed that I am hurting

But I am scared

I am in emotional pain

Pain that effects my physical being

This thing tears at my heart

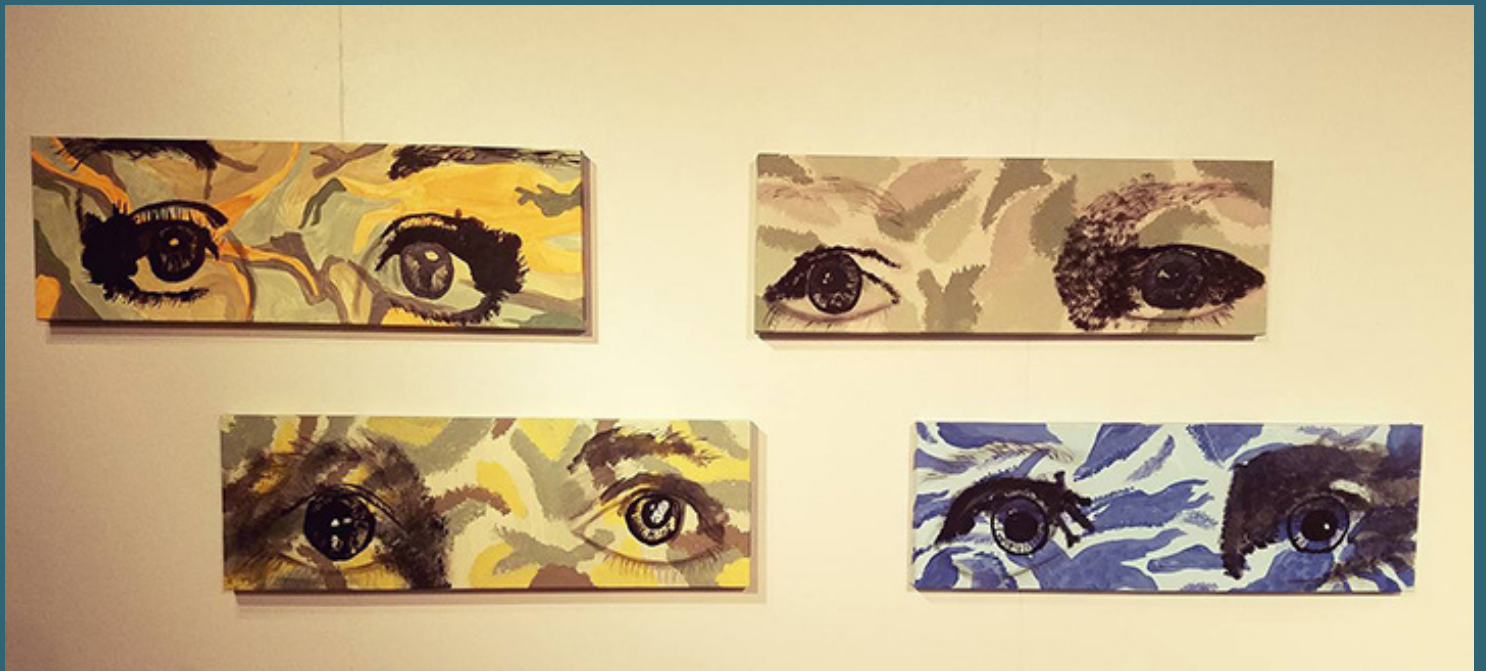
It takes my breathe away

The calm within

Is no more







WHO WILL BE



ONE OF THREE?

Artist Statement

I'm very eclectic in my art and my music, I find music helps to inspire artistic ideas and thoughts. I enjoy photography, silk screening, ceramics, drawing, painting. In most of my art I am able to include some form of my photography. My most central theme at this time is Military Sexual Trauma (MST). "The Stages of MST" in which I made cups with various flowers that have different meanings for each of the stages one might go through dealing with MST. "The Eyes of MST", I took photos of eyes of women vets and some who sent their photos to me who had been sexually assaulted while in the military, these were cut and mounted on mat board then on the back a questionnaire where the women had answered questions anonymously about their attacks and whether their attackers were prosecuted or not. In 2017 I expanded my "Eyes of MST" to "Who Will Be One Of Three?" To bring the attention to one in three women going into the military have a chance of being sexually assaulted.



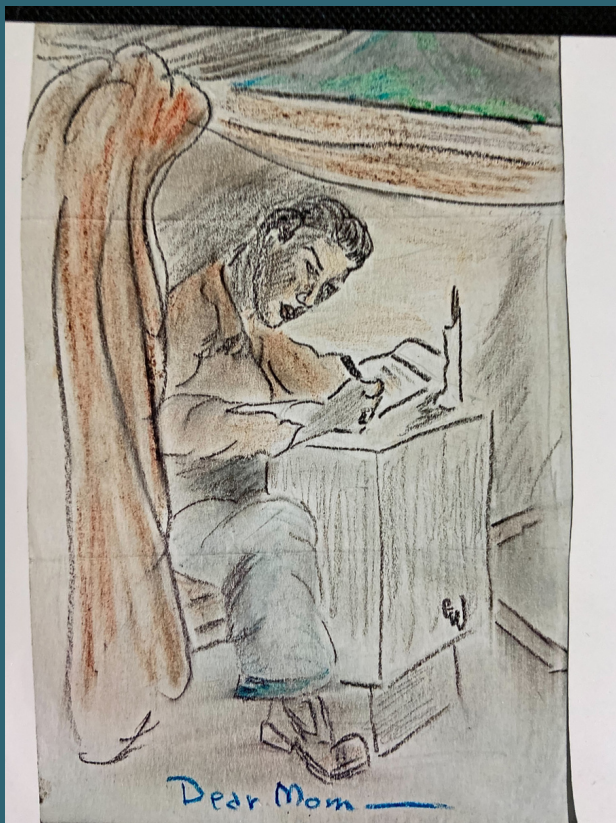
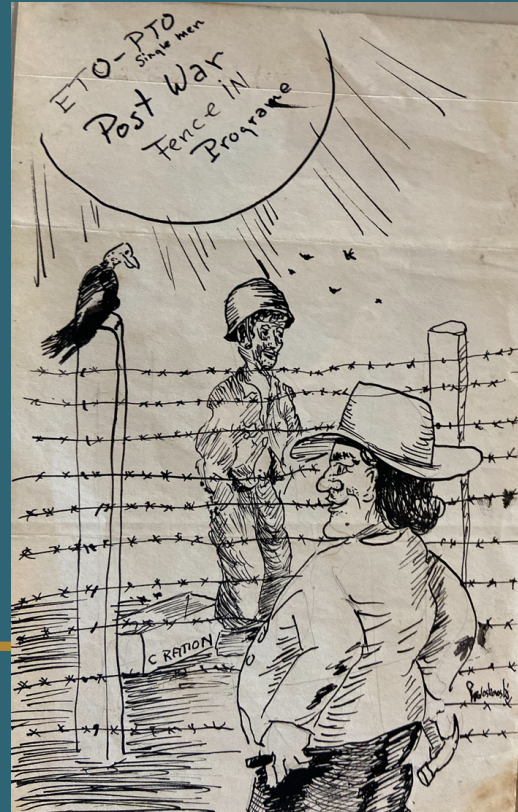
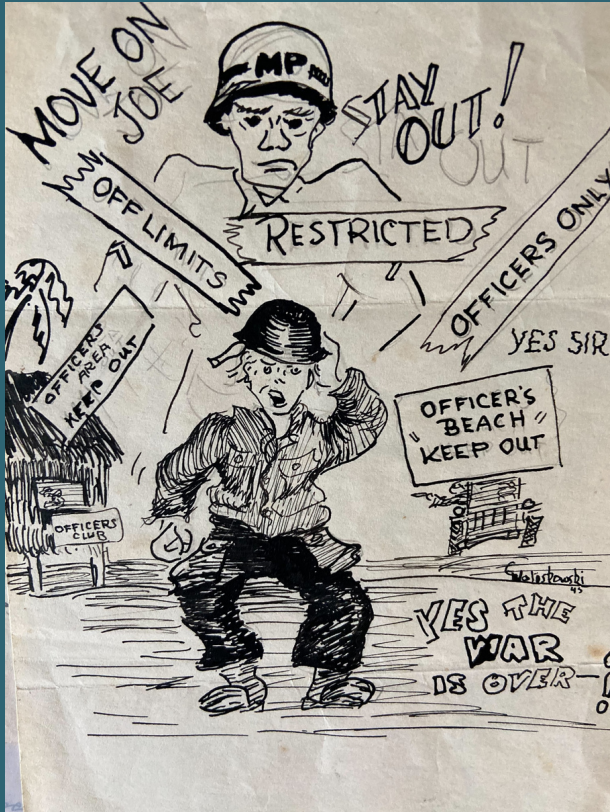






"The slate is from a 120 year old barn that was being torn down in Argyle, NY. I wanted to paint a patriotic painting on it."

Letters From Mom



Gpl. E. Woloskowski - 32660391
28th. Rec. Tact. Sqdn.
Campbell A.A.F.
Camp Campbell, Ky.



Mary Woloskowski
43 Olmstead St.
Cohoes, N.Y.

When the goings get rough!

Gpl. E. Woloskowski - 32660391
28th. Rec. Tact. Sqdn.
Campbell A.A.F.
Camp Campbell, Ky.



Gpl. E. Woloskowski - 32660391

28th. Rec. Tact. Sqdn.
Campbell A.A.F.
Camp Campbell, Ky.



The Blood Thirsty —
B — Take a Few Drops



— The Medic Bomber —

Gpl. E. Woloskowski - 32660391
28th. Rec. Tact. Sqdn.
Campbell A.A.F.
Camp Campbell, Ky.



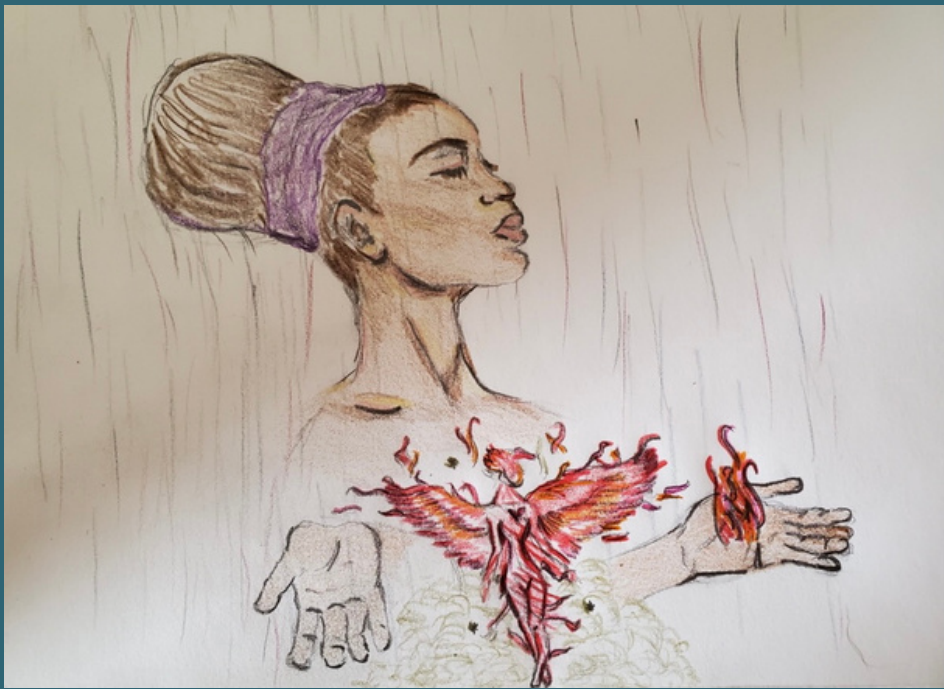
"To Gether"

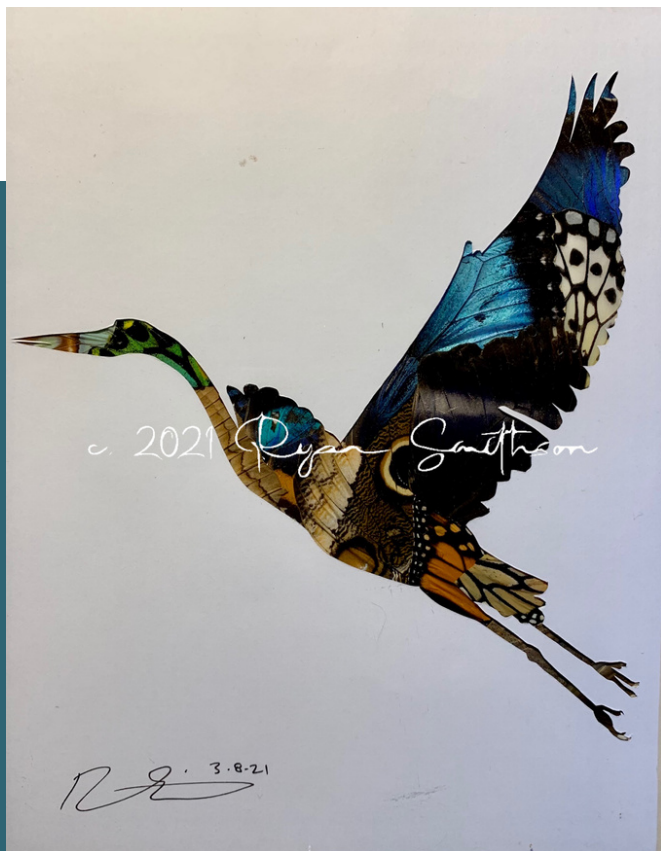
Mary Woloskowski
43 Olmstead St.
Cohoes, N.Y.











Skidmore

Exhibit



"Fabric of American Service"



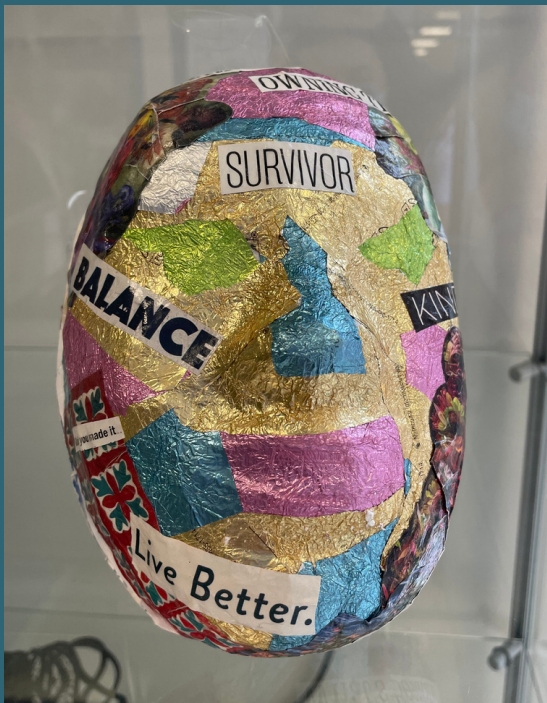
Tisch 3rd Floor Hallway

Toolboxes



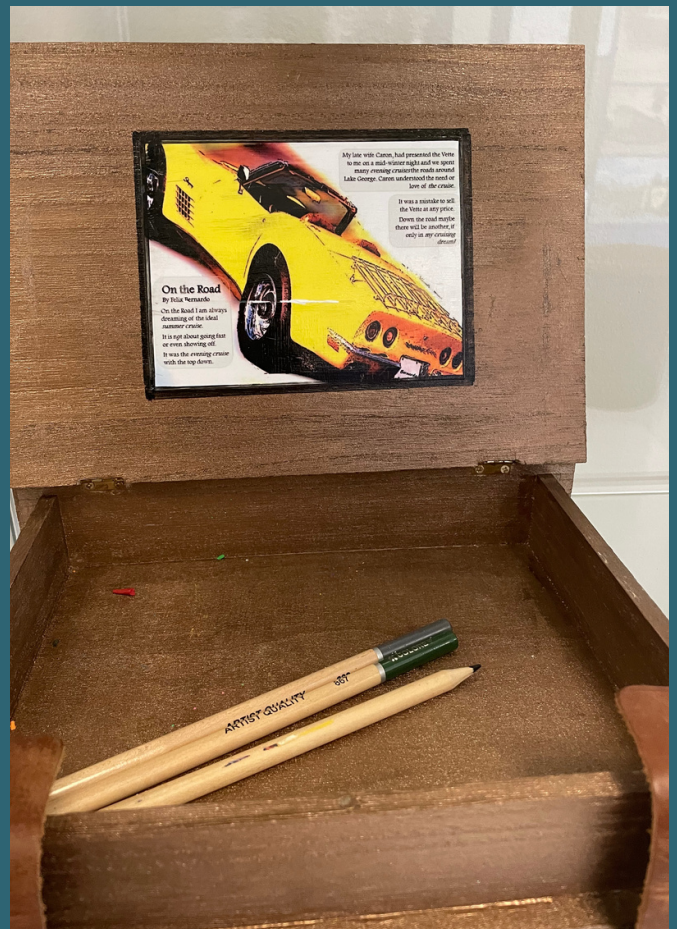
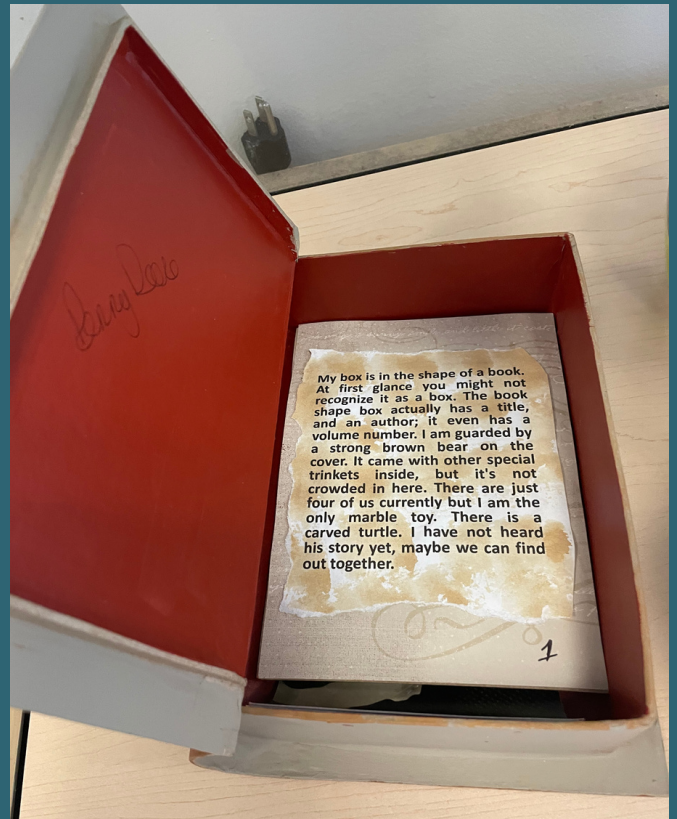
Masks

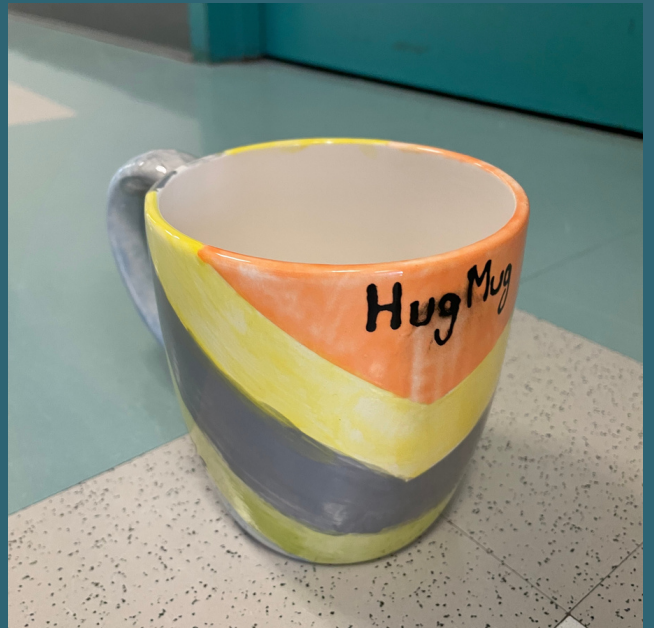
WHAT WE FEEL ON THE INSIDE AND
WHAT WE WANT THE WORLD TO SEE









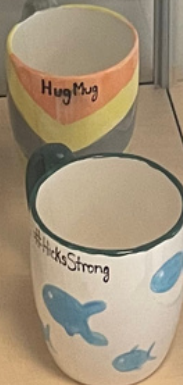
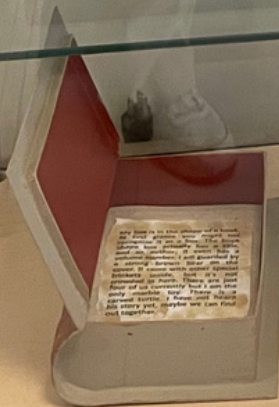






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Gregory P.
Professor and Chair
Department of Art







This exhibit is part of Maya Gmash's American Veterans Series. The cards and hallway are filled with the local veterans' group, American Veterans, a public initiative that offers therapy programs for veterans. These programs in art therapy, and the veterans have been shown in exhibits all over the country. The exhibit is part of the Veterans' Art Project at the Dallas International Airport in D.C., and the Veterans' Art Project in Albany. The veterans' art projects are designed to support veterans who are proud of their service and the variety and range of their work. The art projects are designed to support veterans who are proud of their service and the variety and range of their work. The art projects are designed to support veterans who are proud of their service and the variety and range of their work.

Please respect the works of the veterans exhibited here and kindly refrain from touching the artwork.







Thank You

I'd like to thank all the veterans who created these artworks and allowed me to showcase their vulnerability. A special thank you to Penny Lee Deere who provided me with all the artwork and gave so much of her time for my project.