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K-State Today

October 10, 2018

The Earl Project: Engaging veterans and soldiers through art

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Kansas State University's Institute for the Health and Security of Military Families is showcasing a new program that engages veterans and soldiers in creating new, original works of visual art, called [The Earl Project](https://www.theearlproject.org/) (<https://www.theearlproject.org/>).

Developed by Kansas State University professor of art Geraldine Craig, The Earl Project is named for Earl Molzen, Craig's uncle and post-traumatic stress disorder survivor of World War II. Craig conceptualized its structure and meaning based on her love for her uncle, and her experience making art and teaching art to veterans.

As part of the project, veterans and active duty soldiers are invited to participate in single session Burn-out Art Workshops conceived as emblematic of the psychic burn-out that many soldiers experience. They will be taught simple but evocative methods in creating images and stories with fabric and paper burn-out techniques. Using these techniques along with mending stitches as both metaphor and realization of healing in a physical manifestation, they will transform lived experience into art.

Veterans and soldiers are asked to bring meaningful photos, cloth and stories of their time in service, and learn to create images and abstractions that are literally burned out, as they experiment and explore new techniques such as devore and stripping color with bleach. They also will learn fold and burn techniques with fire, print altered images on cloth or paper, and learn to layer stitching or drawing back over the image.

Participants also are invited to contribute their stories to a community-made war stories scroll sculpture, transformed into abstracted language so it remains as confidential as they choose.

The premier feature presentation is two exhibitions of individual and collective work produced by art workshop participants, at the Manhattan Arts Center and Mingenback Art Gallery in Lindsborg in summer 2019.

Read more about the Earl Project at militaryfamilies.k-state.edu/events/the_earl_project.pdf (http://militaryfamilies.k-state.edu/events/the_earl_project.pdf).

Register for the Burn-out workshops at [theearlproject.org](http://www.theearlproject.org) (<http://www.theearlproject.org/>). The free workshops are from 1-4 p.m.

2018 workshops:

- Saturday, Oct. 20, at the Manhattan Arts Center.
- Saturday, Oct. 27, at the Manhattan Arts Center.
- Sunday, Nov. 11, Veterans Day, at the Manhattan Arts Center.

2019 workshops:

- Saturday, March 2, at the Beach Museum of Art.
- Saturday, March 16, at the Beach Museum of Art.
- Saturday, March 30, at the Beach Museum of Art.
- Saturday, April 6, at the Manhattan Arts Center.
- Saturday, April 13, at the Manhattan Arts Center.
- Saturday, May 4, Manhattan Arts Center.
- Sunday, May 12, Mother's Day, at the Manhattan Arts Center.
- Sunday, June 16, Father's Day, at the Mingenback Art Center in Lindsborg.

Craig serves as the project director and lead for the artist-teacher collaborations with the soldiers, hiring the artist assistants for the art workshops and installation of the final exhibitions. Craig can be reached at gkcraig@k-state.edu (<mailto:gkcraig@k-state.edu>).

The Earl Project is funded by Mid-America Arts Alliance, the National Endowment for the Arts and the state arts agencies of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas. Additional funding was provided by the Kansas State University Small Research Grant.

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