

# Veteran Voce: Veterans Weekend of Art, Music, & Conversation

By Giovanni Reyes

Soon, Veterans Day will be here. Department stores, car dealerships, furniture stores, you name it, will offer Veterans Day Specials at discounted prices. Restaurants may even offer free food for vets. Why? Because that is what Veterans Day is all about! That, and getting the day off from work, BBQs, and the occasional "Thank you for your Service" from strangers. Few will sit and reflect on what Veterans Day is really about, how it began and why there are two other days when veterans get celebrated—Memorial Day and the 4th of July. Nor, do people stop and think about what they're "thanking" veterans for: For the destruction of Iraq? For the killing of over two million Vietnamese? Or, for assisting Israel in committing genocide... None of these were or were a threat to U.S. territorial security or American freedoms. No American freedoms would have been threatened had the U.S. not engaged in warfare against these people. Millions would be alive today, and millions more would have not been displaced.

Veterans Day is celebrated in the U.S. every November 11<sup>th</sup> because November 11, 1918, marked the cessation of hostilities among belligerents on the European front. It became known as Armistice Day. It's recognized as the day the 1<sup>st</sup> World War ended, which claimed the lives of over 16 million people and inflicted horrors never before seen. The most advanced weaponry of the day were deployed to destroy human flesh. It is considered the first industrialized war and the first where mass propaganda was used to convince people of their duty to kill other humans in distant lands. It was a war fought, not for moral reasons or justice, but to advance capitalism by securing markets and redistributing colonies.

Armistice Day became an official U.S. holiday in 1938. It was a day of reflection and honoring the dead, to remind oneself of the devastation of war and the need to prevent future conflicts. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed in 1928, making war illegal. However, the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and the Korean War happened. In 1954, the Eisenhower Administration signed into law the renaming of November 11 to Veterans Day, an act to honor all veterans from all wars, whether dead or living. This on the surface seemed harmless, but it shifted the focus from 'reflection' to the celebration of an identity—the warfighter. This was most recently notable with the invasion and occupation of Iraq

when the Bush Administration proliferated the slogan "Support Our Troops" to rally the public behind the war effort and discourage protests and dissent that was framed as demoralizing for the servicemembers and unpatriotic.

As veterans are superficially celebrated at every sports event, at airports, in amusement parks, in TV shows, and any public space imaginable, very few people are interested in what veterans actually have to say about the wars they were in. That's especially true if it runs counter to the official narrative or the Hollywood version in people's heads. There is little tolerance for veterans who speak ill of these wars. Yet, one of the ways to honor veterans is by listening to them.

Veterans often struggle to convey the complex emotions and experiences of war, and many do so through art. Art serves as an outlet for self-expression, allowing veterans to process trauma and share their stories in profound ways. Veteran Voce: A Veteran's Weekend of Art, Music, & Conversation will showcase dissident art by veterans who opposed the conflicts they were involved in, offering insight into their struggles for peace and justice. Attendees can expect a diverse range of artwork, including photos documenting acts of resistance, paintings, sculptures and printmaking exploring the psychological and generational impact of war, multimedia installations addressing social and political issues, live musical performances and interactive activities. Help us honor their experiences and amplify their voices through the transformative power of art and honest conversation.

*BIO: Giovanni Reyes is an Army Veteran of 12 years whose opposition to the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, led to him to leave the military and become an advocate for peace and an educator.*

## VETERAN VOCE

A VETERANS WEEKEND OF ART,  
MUSIC, & CONVERSATION

**GALERIA E.V.A**  
3412 S FLORES ST.  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78204

**NOV 9-11, 2024**

SATURDAY, NOV 9TH, 5-9PM

SUNDAY, NOV 10TH, 2-6PM

MONDAY, NOV 11TH, 11:30AM-8PM



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS



DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE WITH THOUGHT-PROVOKING ART AND SUPPORT OUR VETERANS THROUGH ACTS OF WITNESSING THEIR EXPERIENCE, BEYOND THE "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE".