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MORE INFORMATION:
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On the Fifth Anniversary of the Iraq War
Artists, Writers, Composers Discuss Artists' Response to War and Conflict
At Virginia Festival of the Book 2008 Panel; Free and Open to the Public

(AMHERST, VA)—On the fifth anniversary of U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA), one of the world's foremost international retreats for writers, visual artists and composers, and Second Street Gallery, have organized a Virginia Festival of the Book panel. *Depravity, Upheaval, and the "Good War"* will address how artists respond to the most pressing social and political issues.

Free and open to the public, *Depravity, Upheaval, and the "Good War"* will be held at the Second Street Gallery in Charlottesville, Fri. March 28th, 6:00 PM, with a reception at 5 p.m.

Panelists are: VCCA Fellows David Griffith, Assistant Professor of English at Sweet Briar College and Charlottesville composer and University of Virginia professor Judith Shatin; and Los Angeles-based artist Sandow Birk, whose exhibit "The Depravities of War," a series of 15 large-scale woodblock prints, is on exhibit this month at the gallery.

The event will be led in discussion by William Cleveland whose just released *Art and Upheaval* takes an incisive look at artists who heal unspeakable trauma, give voice to the forgotten and disappeared, and re-stitch the cultural fabric of their communities. Cleveland is the founder and director of the Center for the Study of Art and Community, an organization based in Washington state that works to build new working relationships between the arts and the broader community.

ABOUT THE PANELISTS

Sandow Birk is a west coast visual artist who, according to the *Los Angeles Times* "is pursuing one of the most fascinating, unpredictable careers in Los Angeles art." Birk's "Depravities of War" is currently at Second Street Gallery. The 15 large-scale woodcut prints follow the course of the Iraq war. His awards include the NEA, Guggenheim, Getty and Fulbright.

William Cleveland is an activist, teacher, lecturer, and director of the Center for the Study of Art & Community in Washington state. The author of *Art in Other Places*, his current book

projects are *Between Grace and Fear: The role of the Arts in a Time of Change* and *Art and Upheaval: Artists at Work on the World's Frontlines* published in February 2008.

VCCA Fellow **David Griffith** is the author of *A Good War is Hard to Find: The Art of Violence in America*. He has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and has appeared in the *Utne Reader*, *Image* and *Killing the Buddha*, and other publications. He is professor of creative writing at Sweet Briar College.

VCCA Fellow **Judith Shatin** is an award-winning composer. Her composition "Songs of War and Peace" is based on the work of Israeli poets. Honored with four NEA fellowships, Shatin is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor at the University of Virginia and the Director of the Virginia Center for Computer Music. Her work has been performed at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Tel Aviv Opera, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Founded in 1971, and located in Amherst County, the VCCA serves the world's most prestigious artists by providing time and space for the creation of new work. Fellows, as they are known, receive a private bedroom, private studio and all meals. Residencies last up to two months, and approximately 25 artists are in residence at any one time. Fellows apply to the VCCA through a rigorous and competitive jury review process, and are accepted based on the quality of their work, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to their residency. Over its 36-year history, the VCCA has served more than 4,000 visual artists, writers, composers and other genre individuals, adding in immeasurable quantity and quality to the literature, visual arts and musical resources available to all the world's citizens. Fellows have received major awards including the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Grammy Award and Guggenheim and Fulbright Fellowships.

The Virginia Festival of the Book is an annual five-day event, featuring readings, panels, and discussions with authors, illustrators and publishing professionals, in a week of public, mostly free literary programs that honor book culture and promote reading and literacy.