

# Good Road to Follow



Artists can play an important role in documenting and recognizing **marginalized** groups of people. *Good Road to Follow* shows the work of two artists—Adolph Vandertie and David Eberhardt—who **immersed** themselves in the culture of **hobos and tramps** and documented their culture.

Adolph Vandertie (1911–2007) was fascinated by the stories, lifestyle, and material objects of the hobos and tramps who would pass through his hometown of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Starting in the mid-1950s, Vandertie began teaching himself hobo and tramp carving, eventually mastering the ball-in-the-cage. He created thousands of carvings, co-wrote a book about hobo and tramp carving to share his collection and teach others about the craft, and created a museum in his small home to display his artwork and collection.

David Eberhardt, a documentary filmmaker and photographer, lived in a tramp community in the 1990s. During this time, he photographed and filmed everyday life. He produced a documentary film, a series of photographs, and will soon publish a book of photographs using the artwork he created.

Neither artist captured a full history of hobo and tramp culture, but it is important that they were committed to documenting a population of people on the margins.

## Words to Know

**Marginalized:** A group or culture of people who are treated as less important than others.

**Immerse:** To be fully involved and focused on one thing for a long period of time, for example a culture or a job.

**Hobos and Tramps:** Both hobos and tramps might be considered homeless. A hobo travels to look for work and a tramp travels to different places and does not want to work. There were many hobos and tramps during times when the economy was not doing well, for example during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

**John Michael  
Kohler Arts Center**

608 New York Ave  
Sheboygan, WI 53081  
+1 920 458 6144  
[jmkac.org/learn/education-resources](http://jmkac.org/learn/education-resources)

# *On Being Here (and There)*



*Good Road to Follow* is a part of an exhibition series that asks us to think about how we care for our community.

Documenting our communities is an important part of showing care. By recording our history, we can ensure that future generations will learn about the people, places, and objects that have existed and events that have occurred.

How are we all a part of documenting history, just like Adolph Vandertie and David Eberhardt helped to document hobo and tramp culture?

**Be Here:** Document a skill that you, your family, or a friend has. Photograph the objects or events related to the skill and collect any objects that help tell the story. Arrange the photos and objects into a museum display in your home and write labels for the objects. Invite your friends and family to tour your museum, or record a video that you can share with family and friends virtually.

**Be There:** Take a walk around your community and find something that is interesting to you—trees, street signs, decorations on front lawns, or cars. Take pictures of different examples of the category you chose and then write about them. Share your collection with others—create a digital photo album or print them and make a book.