



Gregory Van Maanen (b. 1947)

Gregory Van Maanen was born in 1947 in Paterson, New Jersey. He received a **Purple Heart** after serving in the Vietnam War between June 1968 and January 1970. His art making offered an escape from his upsetting memories from the war. He described it as “**self-preservation** sometimes shared with others.”

Van Maanen believes in the healing power of art for veterans and nonveterans. Today, his body of work includes several thousand paintings, drawings, sculptures, and found objects featuring skulls, all-seeing eyes, open palms, glowing hearts, and a range of personalized symbols of protection and “good magic.”

Van Maanen continues to create art and resides in upstate New York. His work has been widely shown in group exhibitions and is in several **permanent collections**.

Purple Heart

A military decoration for those wounded or killed in action, established in 1782 and re-established in 1932.

Self-preservation

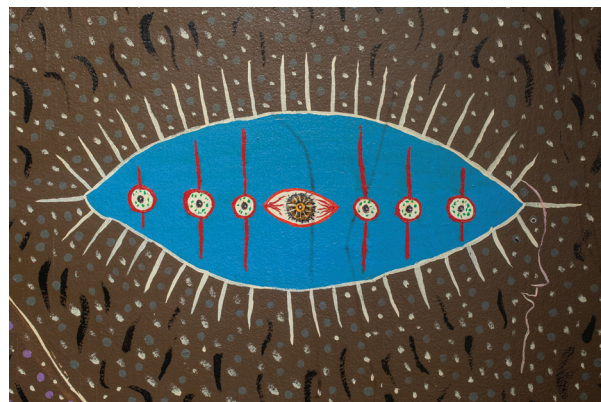
The basic instinct in human beings and animals to protect oneself from harm or death.

Permanent Collection

The artwork that a museum owns; the museum either purchases or is given the work. When a museum decides to keep a work or purchase a work, it is called accessioning.



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Processing through Creating

Connect to Gregory Van Maanen’s work by creating your own artwork to process trauma or express ideas about caring for your mental health.

This project was designed in 2020 in collaboration with Sheboygan high school student Sara Vang. She was inspired to create a project about mental health because she sees it as a crucial focus in an age of overwhelming information and limitless connection through technology. She shares, “We become lost in seas of media, and when we are lost, we fail to reach out. The purpose of this project is to counter this by reaching out to the community and encouraging connection. It offers an outlet for those who wish to share about their lives.” Sara hopes that her project, called Project Vividly, will help us find connections we have never thought of before.

Create your artwork

1. Design an artwork about your experience with mental health. You can use any media—for example, paint, collage, sculpture, and photography.
2. Consider these questions when designing your artwork:
 - How has your life been affected by mental health, either personally or through someone you know?
 - How has your life affected your mental health?
 - Are there any moments in your life that you feel fundamentally changed who you are?
3. Create your art! You can be abstract, simple, whimsical, wild. You can even write a poem! Be yourself and put your experience down on paper.
4. Choose how to display your art.
 - You can work with a group, for example, with friends, family, or a classroom, to create a group of artwork to display together.
 - Display your artwork in your room or home.
 - Give your artwork as a gift or share a picture of it with friends and family through e-mail, text, or social media.

Additional Information

View more of Gregory Van Maanen’s artworks at artpreserve.org/artists/gregory-van-maanen.

Explore mindfulness resources at mhasheboygan.org.

Visit socialstudio.space to view the work created for Sara’s project, Project Vividly, and displayed in the Social STUDIO in May of 2021.