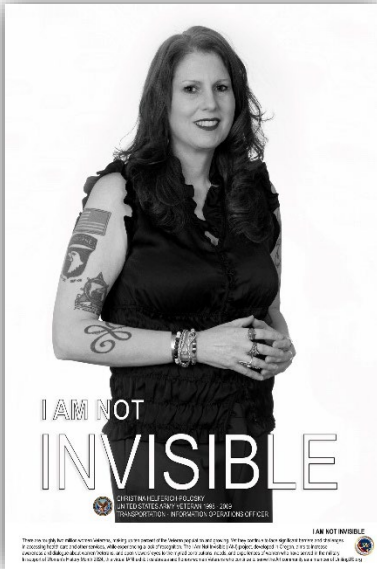


## Christina Helferich-Polosky Artist Statement



### The Artist:

I am Major (Retired) Christina Helferich-Polosky, and I was 100% disabled and medically retired by the US Army in 2009 because of multiple physical and mental injuries and illnesses I suffered after 11+ years of successful active-duty service as a Transportation and Information Operations Officer. Most of my disabilities were later attributed to burn pit exposures that occurred during my combat deployments to Kuwait/Iraq (OIF) in 2003 with the 7th Transportation Group (Forward) out of Fort Eustis, VA where I was awarded the Bronze Star and Bagram, Afghanistan (OEF) in 2008 with CJTF-101 out of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) from Fort Campbell, KY where I was MEDEVACd home after becoming seriously ill several months into my deployment. But some injuries—some wounds and abuse—I buried deep and couldn't bring myself to talk about—or report, until very recently. So, after decades of living in darkness and hiding the pain, I finally took steps to undergo Post Traumatic Growth as well as several other different and unconventional forms of art therapy.

### The Art:

Art—in all its healing forms; for me painting, sculpture and mixed media / collage—genuinely aids in helping me see that I am more than my broken past. A

major component of my process lies in attempting to translate my confusion and sorrow into some sort of tangible media using whatever is at hand—by physically displaying my story this way, it gives me separation to analyze my hurt instead of continuing to internalize it. I equally enjoy applying thick applications of acrylic paint mixed with heavy mediums on very large canvases as I do creating small intricate collages out of vintage scraps of paper and cloth—finding the ‘messy’ part of making extremely satisfying on a very basic level. The resulting effects range from paintings with a very sculptural aesthetic to intimate collages with painterly three-dimensional constructions—finding peace between the crudeness and beauty of it all reflective of how I am feeling on the inside on any given day. Recently, my artwork has been displayed in national art exhibits at the Military Women’s Memorial, the Library of Congress, and the British Embassy in Washington, DC, both Dulles International and Reagan Airports in Virginia, and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Maryland—all through a nonprofit called UnitingUS.org, centered on healing through the arts, where I am a featured artist. I am also currently collaborating with award winning author Col. Lisa Carrington Firmin, USAF (ret.) illustrating her most recent book *Latina Warrior* (Oct 2023 - Blue Ear Books) an authentically raw autobiography told in poems, prose and art. We also travel to events to promote our book and share our process about successful female collaboration.

### The Experience:

The power of art—to include the written word, has finally set me on a true and healthy path forward to finding the voice I thought I lost—or had taken from me—over all those years, finally being able to express what I could barely say out loud: "I may be wounded, but I am NOT worthless." Thus, as part of my specific healing process, I created the free online art gallery cooperative WoundedNotWorthless.com LLC for female military, veteran, and wounded warrior artists, like myself, as a source of inspiration and empowerment as we each find our own true artistic vision and voice. I invite all female military related artists to join my site for mentorship, guidance on how to write and develop their own artist statements, as well as just discovering a safe space to share works and brands within a galvanized network of support. I still have days where I feel like I am stuck in the murky pit of my past, falling back down into that gloom and muck. But now, I have a medium with which I strive to create a new self-narrative using my wounds as a positive source of inspiration, instead of something that I allow to drag me back down into that black pit of despair. I now accept there will be good and bad days and I will try to create my art through them all. I hope to spark conversation, won't you join in?

A comprehensive bio and more information about my art and work can be found at:

<https://www.woundednotworthless.com/about-christina-helferich-polosky>

