

# 5.0

## INCARCERATION

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Artist projects by **Peter Collins**,  
**Tings Chak**, **Sheena Hoszko**, **Radiodress**,  
writing by **Lisa Guenther**, **Natasha  
Stirrett**, poem and text by **Jimmy  
& Donny Hogan**, interviews with  
**P4W Healing Circle participants Molly  
Goddard & Ann Hansen** by **Sara Wylie**  
and with **Amina Mohamed** by **Cameron  
Willis**, and photos from Canada's  
Penitentiary Museum.

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I dreamt of being held, touched and loved.

**Syphon** is an arts and culture publication produced by Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre that is meant as a conduit between the arts community in Kingston and communities elsewhere. It was created in response to the lack of critical arts commentary and coverage in local publications, and seen as a way to increase exposure to experimental and non-commercial art practices. Syphon has a mandate to feature local arts coverage in conjunction with national and international projects, and an emphasis on arts scenes and activities that are seen as peripheral. It acts, in essence, as a record and communiqué for small regional arts communities throughout the country.

**Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre** is a non-profit organization facilitating the production, presentation, and interpretation of contemporary visual, time-based and interdisciplinary arts. Modern Fuel aims to meet the professional development needs of emerging and mid-career local, national and international artists, from diverse cultural communities, through exhibition, discussion, and mentorship opportunities. Modern Fuel supports innovation and experimentation, and is committed to the education of interested publics and the diversification of its audiences.

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#### EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

It is with great gratitude and honour that I introduce this issue of Syphon, which aims to mine the visual and material cultures of incarceration and prison abolition activism within settler colonial Canada. Focusing predominantly on the geographical/cultural site of Katarokwi/Kingston (also referred to as "Canada's prison capital"), the essays, interviews, and artworks housed within this volume offer alternatives to the sensationalizing narratives of incarceration in this city. It should be stated that the interventionist approach that this issue takes is not new; rather, it is guided by the tireless work of activists and organizations within and beyond the Katarokwi/Kingston community who have been undertaking this work for as long as penitentiaries have existed here. Indeed, this issue would not have been possible without the work of CFRC's Prison Radio program, the Prison for Women (P4W) Memorial Collective, the Other Kingston Project, End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC), and numerous other groups and individuals who have continued to hold space for prisoner's justice.

Pushing back against popular narratives of Kingston's incarceration histories espoused and circulated by the 'dark tourism' of Kingston Pen Tours, this issue aims to (re-)centre the resiliency and creativity of inmates in the face of violence, neglect, experimentation, and isolation, as well as the creative approaches of allies and artists who aim to cultivate awareness and solidarity in their pursuit of prisoner's justice. While discussions of art's role within carceral sites often default to problematic notions of art-making as a form of occupational therapy and "rehabilitation," the artists, filmmakers, poets, and writers featured in this issue re-frame art-making as an act of resistance to and healing from systemic trauma, intergenerational trauma, colonial trauma, and/or the trauma of incarceration. It is with utmost respect and appreciation that I present their work to you.

**Robin Alex McDonald, Editor and Publisher**

**COVER** Still from Peter Collins, *Fly in the Ointment*

## Amina Mohamed of the Emergent Visions: No Prisons! Filmmaking collective

Interviewed by Cameron Willis

**Cameron Willis (CW):** So you were involved in the making of this film; tell me a bit about that.

**Amina Mohamed (AM):** So, I took part in a weekend brainstorming session in November [of 2017] and we explored various topics around science fiction and prison abolition, and we talked about different methods that science fiction as a framework, and as a platform, allows someone to imagine a world without prisons. [The film] was based on adrienne maree brown's 'emergent strategies'... Maude Matton [a co-creator of *Emergent Visions: No Prisons!*], who was also working on this for her master's, wanted to use brown's radical strategy to help us brainstorm. So we met up and we didn't really know if we were going to make a film or what the film was going to be. We originally ended up filming that process, and thought that maybe some of that would be used for whatever later project we put together. In the end we did not end up using anything from that, but using a lot of the conversations, even when we later met up in February as a smaller team in Toronto and we had the sort of transcripts of the two-day workshop that we had done, and so we used the strategies we came up with and there were a lot of ideas in it that we talked about that ended up influencing how we wrote the film. One in particular was focusing on how cameras and surveillance are used as a method by the state to incarcerate people and so how can we be making a film about prison abolition and similarly using the same tools that the state uses, so how can we repurpose that in an ethical way and what would that look like? Is it ethical to have new images? Is it our right to be recreating images of these circumstances? So that led us to using a lot of archival footage and repurposing that, and thinking about how we could use footage that we already had from a freedom demo where a lot of good folks went up to a... provincial prison just outside of Montreal and the purpose of it is to recognize that folks who are incarcerated aren't given the same opportunities to celebrate things as we are, and to give them a celebration and also uplift voices of solidarity and allow them to know that people on the outside care and know that they are present, that they are being incarcerated and taking that time to make that display. And so we used images from that event which culminated in us coming together and meeting up again in February and coming together and writing a script from the first person perspective of a drone, and part of the ideas that we came up with in the workshop was around how difficult it is to imagine a world without prisons and the work that needs to happen and what we would have to do to get to that potentiality, so I think the film isn't made for folks who like already allied with, or are abolition-minded folks, and moreso just trying to articulate the difficulty that we'll have generally, as people who want to see an empty prison. Part of the struggle I see is having to sway the larger majority of the population that sees prisons as valuable, that sees them as an ideological good, and sees them as a benefit for many people. So part of what we were trying to get across in the film was unpacking and displaying that this drone comes from a lineage of people who have come from... or working as different apparatuses within the state, so has been indoctrinated to believe a certain thing, that prisons are a public good and that they serve to benefit people on the outside. And the drone had never left prison so had never been outside. And a lot of people similarly don't have any relationship to prisons they're geographically removed from them, familial-y removed (in that they don't have folks in their families who are incarcerated), and so when you're not tied to the prison in that way and it's so removed from you, you can see it as a public good. So in building that empathy within the drone, part of what we wanted to do in the film was show empathy as one of many tools to use in order to get to a world without prisons. I think building empathy and showing folks who have no relationship to prisons why this is a dehumanizing environment and why it actually shouldn't ever, in any circumstance, be used as a means of supporting, protecting, rehabilitating folks [can be powerful]. So that was what we came up with in the workshop and that kind of influenced the tone we took in the film.

But the drone is also a very funny drone, there is a lot of humor to the film, which is funny because prison abolition is not funny, but there is an element to the film that you can laugh at. It cuts the tension. Humor is a tool that is often used to really break tense moments, and that tension is caused by being uncomfortable by an idea or an ideology or being confronted by something that is non-normative to you. So yeah, humor is something I always use, and my friends have always used, in moving through trauma. And prison abolition for us is a lot of heavy feelings... so it's easier sometimes to do it through humor and science fiction.

**CW:** I was thinking as you were saying that about fiction, because so much of fiction prison and polite work, normalization is buttressed by fiction, so they don't experience it firsthand they see a process that is carried out and seems totally ordinary in a T.V. show, and I guess that's what I like about science fiction in general is that it de-normalizes... there is a quote by adrienne maree brown that I really like about science fiction; that it makes the *unimaginable tangible*. So, in other words, that science fiction is a strategy for talking about difficult things.

**AM:** Yeah, it's a creative tool for articulating things that are unimaginable. And to explore those uncomfortable ideas and thoughts within a realm that is so fictionalized that we are allowed to take ourselves there. That was one of the reasons that we wanted to use it as a platform and as a way of exploring a difficult topic; mainly because, when we all sat down, we couldn't really imagine a world without prisons. For our realistic minds, or at least for our non-science fiction imaginations, it's really hard to see a world without prisons. So using these other tools allowed us the opportunity to be creative and explore something and for the viewer. It's easier for the viewer to explore something through science fiction than say, a documentary.

**CW:** Are there science fiction works you've read that have helped you wrestle with this, to touch in with the theme of the movie?

**AM:** Previous to doing this I wasn't super big into science fiction. Someone that I got into when I was doing this workshop was Nalo Hopkinson... but I never really delved into science fiction previous to doing this, so I did a lot of reading just to get comfortable and up to date with what science fiction was and what 'emergent strategy' was, and these kinds of things. But something that we did do that was really interesting was that we watched a lot of types of films when we were doing these workshops by other folks who have explored different methods of [filmmaking]. So, the theme was around how to make a film when you don't really have the means to make a film. For example, there was an Iranian filmmaker named Jafar Panahi who was on house arrest, and so he made this entire film from his home where he narrated the film to his friends, and in it, he walks through his home and he shows what scenes would happen where... And there is another film that was made, called *Fly in the Ointment* by Peter Collins. Collins was a person who was incarcerated who made a film all with the help of folks on the outside. And they ended up filming just one shot, and the entire film was just a fly in a jar — that was the entirety of the ten minutes. But then Collins was talking over it, and he had recorded his monologue over the phone... And so we were thinking about alternate ways to make films and different ways of exploring that. Originally we were just genuinely trying to think about ethical ways to make films about prisons without using peoples' images without their consent, using their names without their consent, and wondering if it is actually even our right to make a film about an experience we don't have. There were many questions that we pondered and thought about really deeply during the brainstorming session, and that *Fly in the Ointment* one of the films we watched during that time. In the end we used archival footage, and then we also filmed in Toronto in the winter. It was very cold, so we were looking for places where we could plug in lights and fly a drone without the drone freezing on us. It was a funny time, I want to say one of the coldest times to be filming...

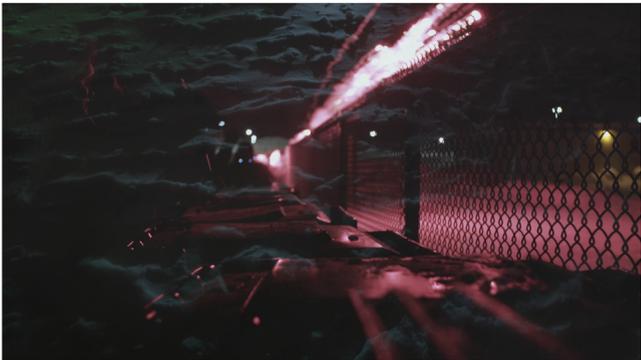
**CW:** Well I was thinking as you were talking, a lot of contemporary science fiction is just fundamentally dystopian but doesn't often offer an alternative, so it almost glorifies in the spectacle of the collapse of the world without offering any way out of it. And I'm thinking of like the recent *Blade Runner* film, and even the *Handmaid's Tale* sometimes, where it's dystopian, it's an exaggeration of our contemporary situation, but there isn't even a sense of using imagination as a way out of these structures, they just seem kind of miserableist. So a science fiction that offers a solution feels kind of novel, unfortunately, even though it shouldn't.

**AM:** Part of what we wanted to do too was... well, originally our thought was, clearly it isn't going to be just one method that will be the solution to prisons, and so similarly, it's not going to be one film that does that, either. Originally we were thinking about how we can provide a platform for other people to similarly think about their own communities, or tools and strategies they've come up with, through that mode of science fiction or through creating a film, or creating a project, or doing some sort of art around it. And we definitely want to expand the project because although we are offering some type of solution, it isn't *the* solution. Where we're at generally with prison abolition, I think, is that there's this large huge looming structure, and it's very powerful, and it's got its tentacles into many things... and so how can we actually undo it? Part of one of our strategies was to address people who affirm and uphold these institutions, and to reach out to those types of folks in our lives who do think it is valuable institution.

**CW:** I was reading an essay by Walidah Imarisha, who says something about how science fiction is just a process for discovering new ideas, it's not a solution... but we still need imagination in finding different ways of confronting this behemoth.

**AM:** Yes, and... I think it's always going to be a multi-method process, and many different types of abolition, that results in and culminates to the removal of prisons, just like any other grand movement. But I think this movement has a lot of stigma around it as well, which makes it harder to mobilize around sometimes. And I think, culturally, people were raised to think of justice in a very specific way: someone commits a crime and that means they're a bad person, and in order for the person who was harmed to feel whole again, this bad person must be incarcerated or must be punished for 'x' amount of years in order for this healing process for the victim to happen. And I think once you've been fed this ideology it's really hard to undo it, even within your own self. So one of the things I've been really thinking about lately, and which came up in our talkback when we did our film screening in Montreal, is, if we're going to do this big work of prison abolition... this taking down this behemoth structure... part of it needs to involve practicing abolition in our own lives on an individual, communal, and community level. So, for instance, asking: how is it that I also embody the aspects of punishment and the punitive aspect of the penal system? In which parts of my life do I practice disposability, or in what parts of my life do I mirror the same ways in which the police apparatus work or the state structures work and how punishment works in our society?

So that was part of what came out of the process for me as well. The whole process itself was very long — it started in November. Not long in an enduring way, but long in a good way, in the sense that there was much collaboration and dialogue and time given to it, and oftentimes there is a lot of urgency around doing work and with this conundrum in particular... the [prison industrial complex] has been an institution for a very long time and it's not going to go away tomorrow. and so really thinking how we can come to a solution that works for everybody and many people do think it's a process of their own individual healing... like with lost loved ones, they don't know how to have that dialogue around somebody who has had a family member whose life was taken away, and how do you come to that point of restorative justice in that situation? What does justice feel like or look like to that family and what does restoration look like to them?



**Cameron Willis** works as Operations Supervisor and Chief Researcher at Canada's Penitentiary Museum in Kingston, Ontario. He is also a member of CFRC 101.9 FM at Queen's University, where he helps produce short documentaries and interviews academics, activists and prisoners about prison and prison issues.

# Memory and Forgetting at Kingston's Prison for Women

Lisa Guenther

What is to be done with historical sites of state violence and psychiatric abuse? Should these places be set apart from everyday life as monuments to the past, reminders for the present, and warnings for the future? Should they be turned into museums for public education or archives for scholarly research? Or should they be reclaimed, transformed, and redeveloped according to the needs and desires of the community? And if so, who gets to speak for "the community"?

These are not abstract questions here in Kingston. Our city has the highest concentration of prisons in Canada, and it is home to the nation's first penitentiary, founded in 1835, as well as the first Prison for Women, founded in 1934. Both prisons are now closed and slated for redevelopment.

Kingston Penitentiary (KP) closed in 2013, and it is now the site of prison tours organized through a partnership between Correctional Service Canada (CSC), the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, and the City of Kingston. Redevelopment plans for the site include a 500-unit condominium, restaurants, retail, and a sailing club; it is favourably situated on the shores of Lake Ontario, near the Portsmouth Olympic Harbour.

The Prison for Women (P4W) closed in 2000, following an inquiry into a 1994 incident where an all-male Institutional Emergency Response Team (IERT) strip-searched women prisoners. The women were protesting in the wake of a string of suicides that took the lives of seven women, six of whom were Indigenous. There is no mention of any of this in the Penitentiary Museum, which is housed in the former warden's residence adjacent to P4W and across the street from KP. There is, however, a full-wall display honouring the Institutional Emergency Response Team, featuring a mannequin dressed in full riot gear and a photograph of IERT members in uniform, holding rifles and smiling for the camera.

In 2007, Queen's University purchased P4W, intending to house the university archives in the historic cell block. But after years of neglect, the building was full of black mold, and it would have taken a considerable investment to make it fit for use. The prison sat empty for over ten years until June 2018, when ABNA Investments purchased the prison and the eight acres of land on which it stands. Possible uses include condos, student housing, and a hotel.

A key issue in the redevelopment of sites like P4W is their place in public memory. Even today, a visitor to Kingston might walk past the former Prison for Women without knowing that, less than twenty years ago, women were fighting for their lives in there. What will happen to these memories when the site has been adapted to other uses? And what would it take to work through the painful history of violence and abuse at P4W, not just as individuals but as a community?

One of the most egregious examples of abuse at P4W took place in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when experiments with LSD and electroconvulsive therapy were conducted on women at P4W. Dorothy Proctor was one of 23 prisoners who were given LSD as part of a 1961 study conducted by Dr. Mark Eveson, a graduate of Queen's University, under the supervision of Dr. George Scott, the prison's head of psychiatry. Due to missing or destroyed records, only four of the other 23 women have been identified.

Dorothy Proctor was arrested in 1960 and sentenced to three years at P4W for auto theft. She was just 17 years old. As a mixed-race woman of African and Mi'kmaq descent and a survivor of sexual abuse, Proctor struggled against racism, settler colonialism, sexism, and sexual violence from a very early age. At P4W, she was regularly punished with solitary confinement for "defiance" or "abusive and indecent language."

In solitary, Proctor says, "I thought I was going to die... I never thought of a future, because right then and there, there was just absolutely no future, there was no future to think about." As I have argued elsewhere, solitary confinement is a form of touchless torture. By isolating a person from others and blocking their participation in a shared world with open-ended horizons, prolonged solitary confinement attacks the very structure of personhood as a Being-in-the-world and a Being-with Others. At P4W, Proctor was isolated in a "dry cell" with no toilet and no running water, just a filthy hole in the middle of the floor.

It was during one of these periods of disciplinary segregation that Dr. Eveson approached Proctor, offering her a way out of solitary if she participated in a research project. In an interview with CBC radio, Proctor reflects, "Now I know that I was being primed with sensory deprivation to prepare me for the other experiments. At that time I didn't know, I was just told it was for disciplinary reasons".

Dr. Eveson gave Proctor her first hit of LSD in 1961: five blue pills, or 200 milligrams. Proctor recalls, "I don't think it was 15, 20 minutes later before I had experienced the inferno. What's his name, Dante's inferno. I mean it was, obviously I can't get out, I can't run away, I'm locked in a cell and the walls start to move in towards me and melt. The bars turn to snakes, there was an awful physical vibration in my body. It was just awful, it was just awful."

Proctor remembers at least 10 LSD sessions with Dr. Eveson, as well as numerous electroshock therapy sessions, during her incarceration at P4W, but due to incomplete records, direct evidence has only been located for four sessions. No written consent was obtained from Proctor or the other prisoners subject to experimentation.

Proctor continues, "I was a nothing, I was just something to experiment on. They probably discussed it among themselves but it was never discussed with me, I was not worthy of that respect." In another interview, she says that from the perspective of prison doctors, "I was just a biological unit." This reduction of a complex Being-in-the-world to a captive biological unit informs other notorious experiments on prisoners, including dermatological research at Holmesburg Prison in Philadelphia and behavior modification programs at Marion Federal Penitentiary, which explicitly targeted politically-active prisoners. And it continues to drive pseudo-scientific research into the biological basis of "criminality".

In 1998, Dorothy Proctor sued Corrections Service Canada for psychiatric abuse at P4W, and in 2002, they settled the case out of court. According to Proctor, the settlement did not even cover her legal bills.

The abuse that exploited her feeling of "no future" in the early 1960s continued to haunt Proctor for decades:

I have flashbacks, I have, I have to live alert 24 hours a day. Like most people just sort of can take their days and their movements and their actions for granted, I can't, I'm always, I'm always making sure that I'm stepping the right way, I'm doing, but it's not noticeable to anyone who is watching me. It's something that I've learned to live with and I handle. I don't go into deep sleeps. I've been drug free for 11 years and it took me about the first five years before I could get some clarity and understand what was wrong with me. These are things that will live with me forever.

Dorothy Proctor carries her experience of P4W everywhere she goes. But does P4W carry the memory of Dorothy Proctor? And who will remember the twenty-two other women who were also treated as lab rats and biological units by prison doctors at P4W, but whose records have been lost or destroyed?

Advocates for the commercial development of the former Prison for Women seem keen to put the unsavory past of incarceration, psychiatric abuse, state violence, and suicide behind them. But the economic life of this city has been fueled by prison industries for almost two hundred years. Not only has the confinement of men and women paid the wages of many Kingston residents, but the very stuff of the city — from the hand-worked limestone masonry of P4W to the hollowed-out field of Richardson Stadium — was built by convicted laborers.

What happens to the memory and the materiality of the city when we treat former prisons as "heritage buildings" and focus on the preservation of door handles or window dressings, while failing to engage with the life stories of people like Dorothy Proctor? And how is the drive for commercial development still haunted by the history of punishment and abuse that it tries to repress?

For years, the P4W Memorial Collective has called for a memorial garden on the former prison grounds, both to mourn the dead and to remind the living of the ongoing challenges faced by federally-sentenced women. I joined the collective in February 2018, shortly after moving to Kingston. Since then, I have learned not only of the damaging history of P4W, but also of the strength, wisdom, and collective power of women who survived P4W, and who are committed to honouring their fallen sisters. The future of the P4W site, and the collective future of all Kingston residents, depends upon our capacity to listen and learn from our past, however painful and difficult this reckoning may be.

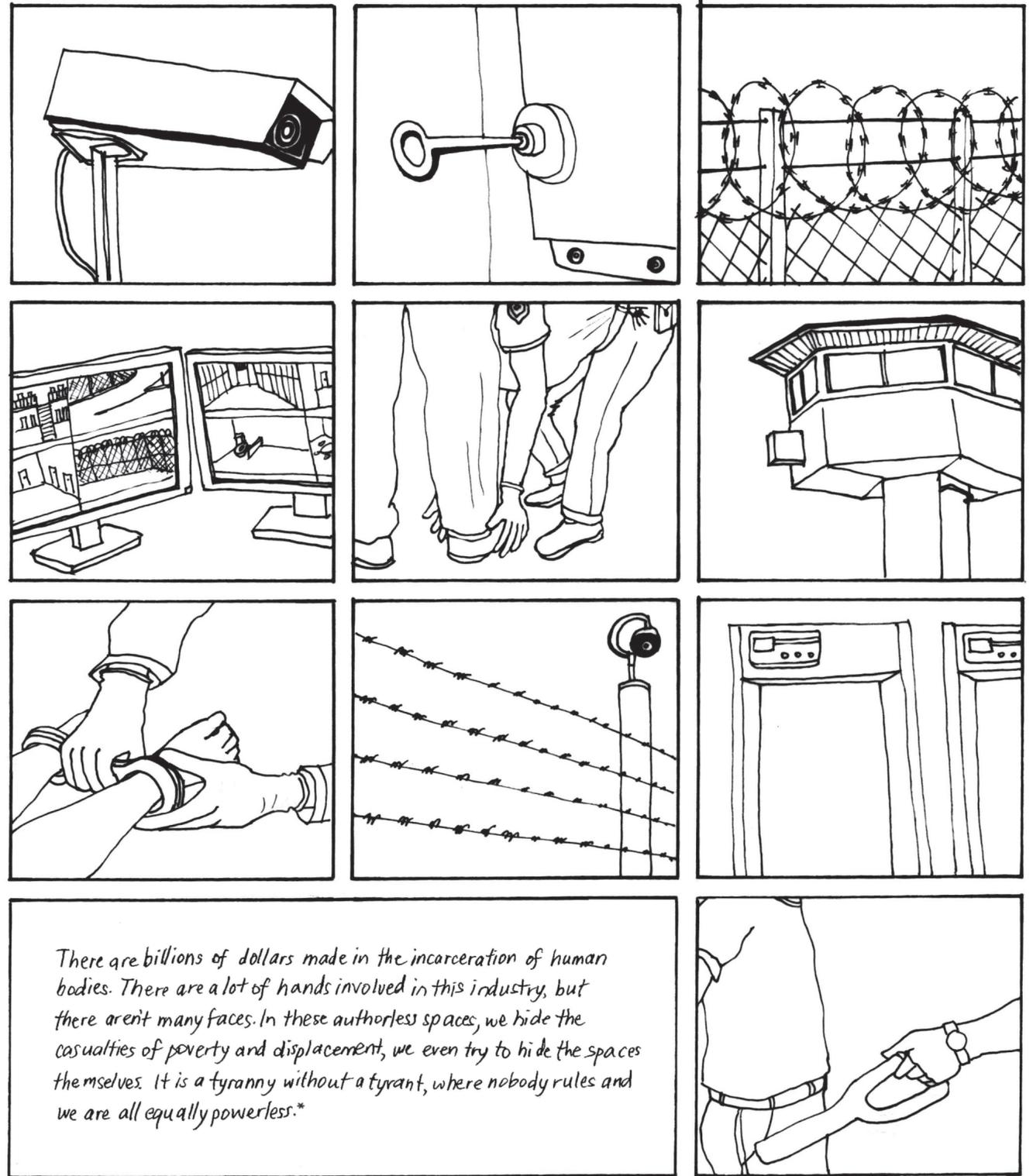
*A version of this text was originally published in Hidden Persuaders.*

**Lisa Guenther** is Queen's National Scholar in Political Philosophy and Critical Prison Studies. She is the author of *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives* (2013) and *The Gift of the Other: Levinas and the Politics of Reproduction* (2007), and co-editor of *Death and Other Penalties: Philosophy in a Time of Mass Incarceration* (2015) with Geoffrey Adelsberg and Scott Zeman. Recent publications include "An Abolitionism Worthy of the Name: From the Death Penalty to the Prison Industrial Complex," in *Deconstructing the Death Penalty: Derrida's Seminars and the New Abolitionism* (2018), and "Seeing Like a Cop: A Critical Phenomenology of Whiteness as Property," in *Race and Phenomenology* (forthcoming). As a public philosopher, Guenther's work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Globe and Mail*, *Aeon*, and *CBC's Ideas*. She is a member of the P4W Memorial Collective, and she worked with REACH Coalition in Nashville, Tennessee, from 2012-17. She is currently working on two research projects: 1) a critical phenomenology of carceral space, and 2) a feminist analysis of the relation between incarceration, reproductive politics, and settler colonialism in Canada, Australia, and the United States.

# Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention

Amsterdam/Montreal: Architecture Observer, 2014

Tings Chak



\*HANNAH ARENDT IN "REFLECTIONS ON VIOLENCE" NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS (1969)

**Tings Chak** is a Hong Kong-born and Toronto-raised multidisciplinary artist trained in architecture. Her work draws inspiration from the migrant justice, anticapitalist, and internationalist working-class struggles she is a part of. Her graphic novel *Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention* explores the role and ethics of architectural design and representation in the prison-industrial complex.

## Excerpts from *Please Don't Tell*

Jimmy Hogan

“I used to wait by the garbage for the garbage man to come by. Usually he would find some toy in his travels, and he'd give it to me. While waiting I noticed a Lipton Tea box on the ground. I picked the box up and looked inside. There was a bird inside that appeared to be dead. I threw the bird up in the air hoping it would fly. It didn't and it came down with a terrible thud. I tried a second time and the bird came down landing on the cement. I was thinking that if the bird wasn't dead, it would be after my second try. I recall feeling very sad to the point of crying, and I looked up to the sky and asked my Higher Power to please make the bird come alive. On my third throw, the bird flew away. It was a miracle, one that I will always remember. There amongst the chaos and insanity the prayers of a little boy were heard.”

**Untitled Poem** (Assembled from excerpts from *Please Don't Tell*)

IF I BRING FORWARD WHAT IS IN ME, WHAT I BRING  
FRONTWARD WILL SAVE ME. IF I DO NOT BRING FORWARD  
WHAT IS WITHIN ME, WHAT I DO NOT BRING FORWARD WILL  
PUT AN END TO ME.

I.  
BORN WITH A HAND, NOTHING SO GRAND. ONE THAT WAS DESTINED TO FOLD.  
NOT MEANT FOR MUCH, JUST POVERTY AND SUCH. OFTEN HUNGRY AND COLD.  
FIFTEEN MOUTHS TO FEED AND ALWAYS IN NEED WITH OUT A CHANCE IN HELL.  
BE TOUGH DON'T CRY, LOVE IS A LIE. IM SORRY, PLEASE DON'T TELL.

II.  
STEALING TO EAT, GET CAUGHT YOU GET BEAT. YOU SEE I HAVE TO GET DADDY  
HIS BOOZE. CHILDREN OF MEANS, FORGET YOUR DREAMS. WHEN THERE IS  
NOTHING, THERE IS NOTHING TO LOSE. STRIKING OUT WITH LOTS OF DOUBT  
THAT EVERTHING WOULD GO WELL. FORGET YOUR HOPES, JUST LEARN THE  
ROPES. I'M SORRY, PLEASE DON'T TELL.

III.  
PLEASE HOLD ME DAD AND DON'T GET MAD, MOM WILL BE HOME LATE. IF LOVE  
MEANS PAIN AND SUN MEANS RAIN I'LL GLADLY TAKE THAT FATE. DON'T LET THEM  
TAKE ME AWAY. I WANT TO STAY AND IT'S YOU WHO HOLDS THE KEY. IF LOVE IS A  
CRIME, I'LL DO MY TIME. I'M SORRY PLEASE DON'T TELL ON ME.

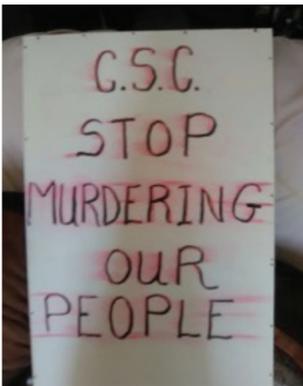
IV.  
I WANT TO GO HOME. I'M NOT TREATED AS THEIR OWN. THE ABUSE IS HARDER TO  
BARE. AT LEAST AT HOME I'M NOT ALONE EVEN IF THERE IS NOTHING THERE. YOU  
SEE, I MISS MY BRO'S AND THAT'S THE WAY IT GOES. I LONG TO BE ROCKED ON  
DADDY'S KNEE. SO KEEP YOUR NEW CLOTHES. MAYBE SOMEDAY I'LL GET OTHERS,  
WHO KNOWS. I'M SORRY DON'T TELL ON ME.

V.  
I CAN LOVE NOW BUT THIS I VOW. MY BODY HAS SCARS BEHIND THESE PRISON  
BARS. I MAKE MY HOME A CELL. FORGIVENESS WILL COME, WHEN ALL IS SAID AND  
DONE. I'M SORRY PLEASE DON'T TELL.

VI.  
FREEDOM AT LAST, I CAN'T FORGET MY PAST. I'M SURE I WON'T SEE ANOTHER  
TOMMORROW. IF I HAVE HOPE I'LL BE ABLE TO COPE. IT'S SOMETHING I MAY HAVE  
TO BORROW. I'M ON THE STREET, NOW I HAVE TO PICK UP MY FEET AND MAYBE  
I'LL GET WELL. I STILL HAVE PAINS WITHOUT THOSE CHAINS. I'M SORRY, PLEASE  
DON'T TELL.

VII.  
I COULD'NT WAIT TO GET BEHIND THE BARBED GATE, APPARENTLY EVEN CHRIST  
HIMSELF FELL. I'M MAKING MY ROUNDS, ON THESE PRISON GROUNDS. I'M SORRY  
PLEASE DON'T TELL.

VIII.  
TODAY I CAN LIVE, TODAY I CAN GIVE. LIFE UNFOLDS AS IT WILL. RESENTMENTS  
HAVE LURED, AND LOVE HAS CURED. I'VE CLIMBED A MOUNTAIN, I'VE CLIMBED A  
HILL. TODAY I WALK WITH PEACE ON A LEASE AND YES, MY SPIRIT IS WELL. I'M NOT  
SORRY ANYMORE BECAUSE I KNOW THE SCORE. SO PLEASE LET'S GO AND TELL.



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

1. Jimmy and Donny Hogan with Prisoner's Justice Day Banner, designed and created by Donny Hogan and signed by attendees at the 2018 Prisoner's Justice Day 2. Drawing to Commemorate Plans to Create a P4W Memorial Garden 3. C.S.C. Stop Murdering Our People (Images courtesy of Jimmy and Donny Hogan)

**EDITOR'S NOTE**

I was introduced to Jimmy and Donny Hogan through a business card handed to me at the Prison for Women (P4W) Healing Circle for the 2018 Prisoner's Justice Day, held annually on August 10th to commemorate lives lost to incarceration. "Prison Experimentation Survivors," the card read. "What's this for?" I heard someone a few seats beside me ask. The individual who was passing out the cards replied warmly and simply: "To talk."

After reaching out to Jimmy and Donny via the e-mail address on their card, the brothers invited me to meet with them in person. They were eager to speak about their experiences of incarceration, and more specifically, about the unethical experiments they had been subjected to during their time spent incarcerated. Initially, their claims that they and other prisoners had been subjected to what they have called "horrific" experimentation (including psychic driving experiments, sensory deprivation experiments, and experiments involving unknown pharmaceutical drugs), and that these experiments can be linked to Queen's University, were met with suspicion from the public and the university.<sup>1</sup> However, the combination of an investigative series conducted by Mike Blanchfield and Jim Bronskill and published in the *Ottawa Citizen* in 1998<sup>2</sup>, and a 2005 article by University of Alberta professor Dr. Geraint Osborne titled "Scientific Experimentation on Canadian Inmates, 1955 to 1975"<sup>3</sup> has generated an overwhelming amount of evidence in support of Jimmy and Donny's testaments.

Over the last decade, Jimmy and Donny have worked tirelessly to shed light on their experiences. They have spoken with the *Kingston Whig*, the *Queen's Journal*, and with CFRC Prison Radio. They have met with Queen's University administration, seeking an official apology from the university in acknowledgement of their role in the experiments. They have marched in protests as part of Prisoner's Justice Day. Jimmy has written a book of his memoirs, entitled *Please Don't Tell*, and Donny has employed his artful drawing and painting skills to create a visual representation of the P4W Memorial Garden before it can be physically manifested.

1. Megan Glover, "Former inmates claim unethical treatment," *The Kingston Whig* (August 10, 2017), <https://www.thewhig.com/2017/08/10/former-inmates-claim-unethical-treatment/wcm/2798d164-bded-7c9d-29be-0f46e6d388ca>
2. Mike Blanchfield and Jim Bronskill, "Military funded McGill LSD trial Eight volunteered in '60s", <http://web.archive.org/web/20000409095223/http://www.aches-mc.org/documentation.html>
3. Geraint B. Osborne, "Scientific Experimentation on Canadian Inmates, 1955 to 1975," *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice* 45. No. 3 (July 2006): 284-306.

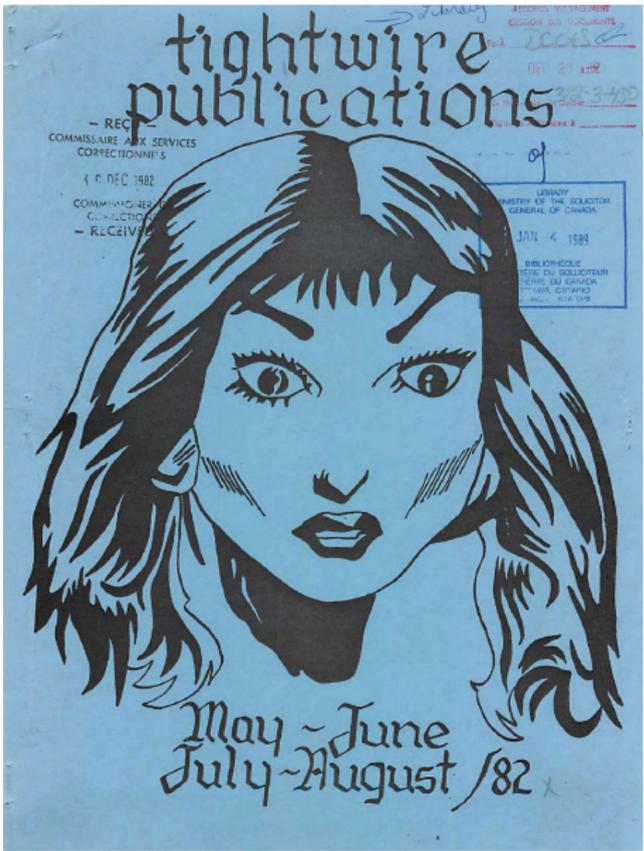
## Looking Back: Creative Resistance Behind the Walls of P4W

Natasha Stirrett

When we think of prisons, images of enclosed, surveilled, and controlled spaces often enter our minds. We envision iron bars, stoic guards, and the shuffling of inmates from one cell to another. Separation from loved ones and support networks isolates those inside. These are places where dreams and happiness often die — but importantly, these are also spaces of expression.

The Prison for Women (P4W) in Kingston was such a space for many women who spent time incarcerated behind its concrete walls during the course of its operation, between the years 1934 and 2000. The experiences of those who lived in P4W offer us a harrowing and painful mirror that reflects how we handle traumatized communities, crime, and victims of violence. Crucially, a significant portion of those incarcerated in P4W were racialized or indigenous. *Tightwire*, an annual journal collection written and circulated four times a year by incarcerated women from within P4W during 1970's, 1980's and early 90's, transcended the prison 'boundary'<sup>1</sup>. It provided a platform for the marginalized to challenge dominant narratives and offer a space for their creative expression. While the border — or, in other words, 'boundary' — of the prison functions to create a barrier between the 'outside' and the 'inside,' the prisoner self-published journal *Tightwire* reveals that this boundary can be permeated. The poetry, art, and writings in *Tightwire* embody tensions between confinement and freedom, representing the complexity of prisoners' lives and working to trouble static imagery of imprisonment. The creativity of incarcerated women at P4W offers us a lens into a world often unseen and bears witness to truths too often unheard. Such forms of creativity allow us to see their creators through their artistic expression, offering us a story of who they are beyond societally-imposed labels.

P4W was the only federal prison for women in Canada until it finally closed its doors in 2000 after decades of bureaucratic and public complaints of appalling conditions<sup>2</sup>. Women from across Canada were moved from various parts of the country and in many cases displaced hundreds of miles from their communities. Through my experience of researching this institution's histories and dialoging with those who had been incarcerated, I found P4W represented a suffocating and loud dungeon for many women who were confined there. P4W became a killer of dreams. Far too common women at P4W arrived traumatized and in handcuffs with lengthy histories of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and incest from as early as childhood. It is clear from the writings and artistic expressions of the incarcerated women that they viewed their circumstances as excessively punitive after experiencing such painful trauma in their lives. The iron cages in P4W were devoid of any sense of happiness, comfort and safety — a cruel and inhumane joke. Plagued by despair and unresolved trauma, coupled with a tense and harsh environment and insufficient supports, many women self-harmed by cutting and some took their own lives.



*Tightwire* (Summer 1982). Edited by Teri Kirby. Cover artwork by Angie Hope-Guagliardo.

Of the women who were confined to P4W, many self-identified as indigenous. What I found particularly notable from engaging with *Tightwire* is the representation of indigeneity that often appears on the pages. Indigenous women make up only a small part of the population, however, indigenous women are over-represented in prison because of the interconnected factors of intergenerational trauma, colonialism and racism within the settler society. In many of the writings in *Tightwire*, women in P4W acknowledged how disproportionately-impacted indigenous women were by the prison environment and by the failure of the institution to recognize the importance of culture in their healing process. Often *Tightwire* editors reserved a "Native Sisterhood" section for the poetry, drawings, and short stories of incarcerated indigenous women. The representations of their experiences are candid and heartbreaking, but the importance of these expressions to their healing process is obvious. For many incarcerated indigenous women, there was never an opportunity to name their own experience during their trials; they were spoken for first by their lawyers and then again in their sentence by a system that denies indigenous women the colonial, systemic violence that led them to that situation in the first place. In this way, *Tightwire* provided indigenous women an opportunity to express a wholeness of their stories that were not permitted in their legal trials or within mainstream society. The complexity of their creative expressions in *Tightwire* encompassed their trauma and the pain of confinement, but also their cultural meanings and teachings.

Art in the *Tightwire* journal depicted important cultural symbols and representations that embodied spiritual connection and gestured to something larger than the material reality of confinement. In an issue of *Tightwire* published in 1984, a drawing by an unknown artist depicts a mature indigenous woman outdoors in an open green space drying a recent harvest among some trees<sup>3</sup>. While we may not know the personal meaning this imagery held by the artist who created this piece, her art appears to symbolize a free, spiritual connection to creation. The drawing could be a remembering of an existence of a life outside the confined space of prison and affectively represents a stark contrast to harshness of being incarcerated in P4W. As noted by Jennifer Turner in her 2016 book, *The Prison Boundary: Between Society and Carceral Space*, there is a literal physical division that is articulated by the concrete walls of a prison, between the world inside the prison and the world outside<sup>4</sup>. The artist's representation of an "outside" in her drawing symbolically transgresses the limits of this prison boundary. Art in *Tightwire* worked to explore the tensions of confinement and notions of freedom and provided women the ability to express parts of themselves outside of the image of the prisoner. In other publications of *Tightwire*, we can observe the cultural representations of an eagle soaring through the sky with a hybrid animal (perhaps a fish) in their claws<sup>5</sup>. Yet another artist draws a chief wearing his traditional headdress, a powerful image of leadership and sacred meaning juxtaposed with the sterile materiality of the confined spaces in P4W<sup>6</sup>.

Beyond the symbolic permeation of the prison boundary produced through the artistic expressions on the pages of *Tightwire*, there also existed the physical movement of the publication from inside the prison outside its concrete walls. From reading *Tightwire* I learned there was a significant degree of interaction from the "outside" within P4W, especially during the early years of the prison's operation. P4W regularly drew people from the "outside" inside the walls of the prison, including members of non-profit organizations, professors from Queen's University who delivered guest lectures, and the families and loved ones of the women inside who were coming to visit. Despite persistent attempts of censorship, *Tightwire* publications continued to move beyond the confines of P4W. The journal went on to be read by a large external audience, which further disrupted the prison boundary and empowered women incarcerated at P4W to continue telling their stories through creative channels.

Creative expression in *Tightwire* provided an opportunity for women incarcerated in P4W to challenge dominant narratives through the production of poetry, short stories, and art that circulated inside and outside the prison walls and allowed these women to define who they were on their own terms and using their (visual) language. *Tightwire* served as a valuable platform for women to build community and informal networks, and it was also highly significant in revealing the complexity and nuances of the experiences of those who spent time in P4W. The contents of the journal tell the stories of the marginalized and how they came to see themselves as a casualties of a society far too ignorant to the root causes of crime. In many ways, their creative expressions and the journal itself are a call for us as society to do much better.

**Natasha Stirrett** is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Cultural Studies at Queens University. She is a member of Ermineskin Cree Nation and grew up the Cornwall/Akwasasne area.

1. Jennifer Turner, *The Prison Boundary: Between Society and Carceral Space* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016).
2. Canada's Penitentiary Museum. "History," 2018, <http://www.penitentiarymuseum.ca/default/index.cfm/history/>
3. "Native Section," *Tightwire Journal* (1984), <http://penalpress.com/en/name/tightwire/page/2/>
4. Ibid.
5. Monica McGuire. "Eagle," *Tightwire Journal* (1980), <http://penalpress.com/en/name/tightwire/>
6. "Chief," *Tightwire Journal* (Summer 1992), <http://penalpress.com/name/tightwire/tightwire-21/>

## Distance to all the prisons in Québec from Modern Fuel Artist-Run Centre

Sheena Hoszko

FÉDÉRAL	KM
Établissement Archambault (moyenne)	321
Établissement Archambault (minimale)	322
Établissement de Cowansville	375
Établissement de Donnacona	513
Établissement de Drummond	408
Établissement de formation (multiple)	307
Établissement de formation (minimale)	306
Établissement Joliette pour femmes	358
Établissement de La Macaza	396
Établissement de Port-Cartier	1141
Centre régional de santé mentale	322
Centre régional de réception	322
Centre de guérison Waseskun *	377
Le Centre de prévention de l'immigration de Laval **	322

This list is comprised of sites visited by Sheena Hoszko from August 2016-August 2017. Additional provincial institutions in Sept-Îles and Sorel-Tracy were added in late 2017, post-visits.

\*Waseskun Healing Center added to the list of official Federal Institutions in 2017, then removed after six months.

\*\* Laval Immigration Holding Centre removed from the list of official Federal Institutions in 2017; construction of new detention site currently in progress

\*\*\* Tanguay detainees moved to Leclerc in 2016; site still on official provincial list.

**Sheena Hoszko** is a sculptor, anti-prison organizer, and settler living and working in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), in Kanien'kehá:ka territory. Her art practice examines the power dynamics of geographic, architectural, and psychological sites, and is informed by her family's experiences with incarceration, the military, and mental illness. Selected exhibitions include Centre Clark and La Centrale (Montreal), A Space (Toronto), Artspace (Peterborough), The New Gallery (Calgary), and Blackwood Gallery (Mississauga), La Ferme du Buisson (Paris). Hoszko presented at the Queens Museum (NYC) as part of Open Engagement. Her writing has appeared in M.I.C.E magazine and within Free Inside: The Life and Work of Peter Collins, published by Ad Astra Comixs.

PROVINCIAL	KM
Établissement d'Havre-Aubert	1699
Établissement de détention d'Amos	688
Établissement de détention de Baie-Comeau	972
Établissement de détention de Rimouski	846
Établissement de détention de Roberval	725
Établissement de détention de Saint-Jérôme	327
Établissement de détention de Sept-Îles	1198
Établissement de détention de Sherbrooke	451
Établissement de détention de Trois-Rivières	422
Établissement de détention Leclerc de Laval	306
Établissement de détention de Montréal (Bordeaux)	295
Établissement de détention pour femmes Maison Tanguay ***	293
Établissement de détention de Québec - Secteur féminin	564
Établissement de détention de Québec - Secteur masculin	564
Établissement de détention de Rivières des Prairies	310
Établissement de détention de Sorel-Tracy	388
Établissement de Hull	200
Établissement de Longueuil	324
Établissement de Montréal	294
Établissement de New Carlisle	1175
Établissement de Percé	1277
Établissement de Valleyfield	240

## P4W Healing Circle Participants Molly Goddard and Ann Hansen

Interviewed by Sara Wylie

Molly Goddard

Date: August 11, 2018

*Great, let's start — introduce yourself.*

**0:04** My name is Helen Margaret Goddard and I am my mother's namesake but everybody calls me Molly. My Indian name is Bidabinokwe and I am from the Moose Clan.

**01:06** I spent the majority of my younger years in Prison for Women. I was 19 when I went in and I was 29 when I finally got out for good. A common pun is called doing life on the instalment plan. Which means I was in prison more than I was out. In my opinion the system is set up to fail. I was an angry, confused young woman when I was sentenced to Prison for Women and I was still angry and confused 10 years later. There were no programs to help me with the underlining issues of sexual abuse and being brought up in a dysfunctional home. They were only worried about my alcohol and drugs abuse. The justice system is a revolving door.

**02:29** I was finally at the end of my rope literally and I was running out of options when I decided enough is enough. I stayed away from the home made brews and the drugs that always made it over the walls and I became heavily involved with the Native Sisterhood and the Elders Program that was implemented after the loss of some of our sisters to suicide. It seems so unfair that they created programs for Native women after they committed suicide. It just wasn't right.

**03:21** After the suicides and the riots it seemed like the prison settled down. The Native Sisterhood was a place we could go to talk and beat out our frustration on our drum and have access to Elders from all the four directions. I was finally released on a day parole to Newbury house which is a Native run halfway house approved by Corrections. It was there I was finally able to settle down and heal through ceremonies, I got accepted into College and went on to do some Native Studies at Laurentian.

**04:22** So we had at that time in Prison for Women, it was after — I was there during the suicides as well. I lost a very, very, very very good friend of mine, Johnny. And I lost another very good friend of mine, Lorna. They both committed suicide while they're in there. And (pause), it's very hard for me to... talk about them because I don't really think that I've dealt with their deaths, you know? I still miss them today. And they were just young women, like, I'm older now, but we were all young Native women back then. We had our whole lives ahead of us. You know? And I made it — I'm one of the women that made it out of that hell that was in that prison for women.

**05:24** I am not sure when but years ago a judge commented that the prison wasn't fit for bears to live in and Justice Louise Arbour echoed the same sentiments. So why house women who are already broken into a cold callous environment. The prison is so old and all the cells were open bars and we were given old brown shams to hang for privacy. It was not a kind environment but for any women who was sentenced to over 2 years that where you were sent.

**06:25** When I was first sentenced to Prison for Women. I was given 27 months for a Break and Enter. I admit in the beginning I too believed all the crap that was on TV. I was so scared. But it was Johnny who took me under her wing and showed me the ropes. I lost her in that place but she will always have a place in my heart.

**07:08** I tried to commit suicide. I was in segregation for something and I actually made the noose put it around my neck and jumped. I talk about it now like it was nothing but I guess, the Creator had different plans for me. I woke up in the hospital and Art Solomon who is credited for bringing our culture into the prison system. I am not sure where I would be if I wasn't allowed to have our ceremonies, our medicines and our way of life in prison. I was able to use our culture in a good way and I was able to share with my sisters and our elders all those things that brought me to prison in the first place. When I left Prison For Women for the last time I wasn't the same angry young woman from years before. I was proud and beautiful. I carried our way of life with me everywhere. It felt good. I wasn't scared anymore because I had courage and strength with me everywhere.

*You can really sense the bonds that you had together, just from being here with you all.*

**10:34** Yes, I would definitely say we all share a bond. I hadn't seen Ann or Fran for over 30 years and it was just like I seen them yesterday. I don't know I think women do time differently. I think that maybe we have shared similar experiences in one way or the other and I think because as women we are usually the care givers. Not always but it's like we all took care of each other. Even at Christmas little gifts were given and I remember I just came back off a parole violation and I was still given a little bag of goodies.

**11:38** I guess what I'm trying to say is that women like I said, just handle things differently, we just do things differently. It's more caring, giving, sharing, rather than anything else. And I think because of that, that's where we've bonded like sisters. Because we were a family in there. We had nobody else but ourselves, right. And then those other sisters took their lives a lot of us were really affected by that because they were part of our family.

*[Plane noises] Sorry, it's so loud. Could you just say that last part again about your sisters. Sorry to ask you again.*

**12:36** Just about the sisters, you know, we were all family, right. So we all took care of each other. That's why we have that bond with each other, like sisters, you know, in arms almost. So, sisters in spirit, you know, that's what we are, so... *[Sara: it shows]* And we'll never lose that bond. We'll always have it. We all text each other, we're all back online with everybody, right. You know some sisters are different — there are some sisters that are no longer with us, you know, they're at different points in their lives.

**13:20** I don't know, there are people I haven't seen here that I would like to have seen, but unfortunately they couldn't have made it. I would have made it here any way, I was coming, right. So, yeah. *[Nothing was stopping you]* No, no, not for coming here today.

*So I just wanted to ask you a bit about the idea of a memorial. What does a memorial to P4W mean to you?*

**13:45** Well for me — I know — I was listening to them in their talking and I know that the memorial has to incorporate something to do with these owners, right. I think that the memorial should encompass those sisters that have died in the walls, inside those walls. And when I was sitting there, and I was thinking about women, in our culture, women are the givers of that life, we're the keepers of that water right. So I was thinking that it would be really nice to have a fountain or water to represent that women — to represent women — and maybe a plaque that maybe doesn't have — incorporate all the women's names — and maybe those names don't need to be mentioned. Maybe those sisters, something in sisters in arms, or sisters in spirit, you know. Something has to be put there to remember the struggle that women went through in there, and I think that they should have a water fountain, they should have water that represents women, they should have a plaque that's maybe not the sisters name, but maybe something similar.

**15:19** They should also incorporate the Native culture, because the majority of the women that died in prison were Native, except for one. But the majority of them were Native, so there should be some Native aspect, maybe for the four colours, or the four medicines. But I think that those kinds of things should be incorporated within the garden, even, yeah. That's all I sort of came up with. And maybe the four colours that represent all sisters, you know. The black, the — because it doesn't matter what culture you come from. I think that sisters that are black or yellow, red or white, we all have struggles. I mean this is our time now to speak out, right.

**16:19** And I think that there are still women out there of all cultures that are still struggling and they need to — this is the time for them to speak out, and to speak up. And to stand up, you know, and start doing what they were meant to do. Because a long time ago, it was women who did the work, it wasn't men. Men — we could have got done it without men, you know what I mean. I mean, we needed them for our children, besides that, we were the caregivers, we were the gatherers (noise) we took care of the house. Men start coming... I know, you know I love my man right. He gets on my nerves sometimes, you know (laughs). It's the women you know so.

*That was really nice — my last question for you — if you're addressing a public or people who don't know about P4W, if someone asked you why is it important that we remember this or mark it with a memorial or a garden, what would you say?*

**17:30** I think it should be remembered especially in Kingston because when I was in Kingston, that trolley, that friggin' tours bus — they would go in front of Prison for Women and say "There's where we house 115 of Canada's most violent women". That's what they would say as the little trolley car went by. So, this city of Kingston benefitted from the tours, right. They benefitted from coming by and seeing the prison. You know, it's very strange for a Prison for Women, that looks like an old-fashioned jail, right. But I think that — for that reason in itself, even though we were in prison, we still contributed to this city.

**18:30** Right, so I think that even the city should kick in and say "C'mon" you know they should give us something, to remember those women, to remember that place, because they made money off it. Because the guards in there, they lived in Kingston, they contributed to the — not profit, but the economy. I mean everybody — if it wasn't — they all had jobs, they all lived in Kingston. And Kingston, I know that's what it's known for — you're either — I was going to say a screw — but you're either a guard or you're a biker or whatever else in Kingston. Or student, right?

**19:18** But yeah, for years they would trolley in front of the — I heard it when I was in the hospital one day. And I heard it, I said, "Are you friggin' kidding me?" I couldn't believe it, and here I was, a little — a 19 year old, you know, young like you, in prison for a break and enter. So it's not fair, you know. Nothing's fair in life. But I think that they should, they should you know, for that reason, that memorial should be put up, you know, for that reason, we contributed. You made money — even if it was a little pence, whatever. You know Kingston is known — when they — a lot of people even today, when you talk about Kingston, a lot of people talk about Prison for Women, right? It's well known, all across Canada.

*Especially now, that the men's prison KP is being turned into a tourist destination, and then the women's prison might be forgotten or developed into something.*

**20:25** Exactly, and that's not fair right. That's another reason too right, to have that memorial.

*That was great, thank you so much for sharing.*



Ann Hansen

Date: August 5, 2018

*Where did the idea for a memorial for P4W come from? Explain that story.*

**02:56** Well I have to say, my friend who was in prison with me, I would have to give her credit for the whole concept of having a memorial. Both of us were involved with a woman — different women, separate partners — which is quite common, I think probably moreso in women's prisons. So we had deep personal relationships with a woman and in both cases the women died. In my case, my friend committed suicide a little after I left, and my friend's partner died in a car accident about 9 months after she got out, and she had been in for 15 years, or something like that. So, there was a bit of a personal reason, but we were also in P4W when there was — they call it a cluster — of women committed suicide. I think it was over a period of 2 years, there were 7 women who committed suicide and 6 of them were Indigenous women, so it was really front and centre the years that I was in P4W.

And then also, there were things, when we were in P4W, it was quite well known amongst the prisoners, and staff, there were these graves, tombstones under the gym. We didn't actually look at the names but we had seen them — we were going under there helping one of the workers move stuff out, like various reasons, and saw them. So it became common knowledge that women had died at some point in the history of P4W, and didn't have their tombstones put on their graves. Like, maybe they weren't claimed by their family, which happened. You know, so anyways, that's why we decided there should be a memorial.

*Can you explain a bit more about who these women were and their unclaimed tombstones, why is that an important part of the memorial?*

**02:58** Well it's just the fact that these are like forgotten women. It appears as though — well it is a fact — that there were women whose families did not claim them for whatever reason. And they were actually used as cadavers at Queen's Medical School. This was quite a ways back, I don't know what years, I would say in the 40s, 50s, something like that. So we felt that they should be remembered and honoured, we call them our fallen sisters, you know?

*And did P4W ever acknowledge any of that history?*

**02:58** They've never denied it. I think there is an implicit acknowledgement in the fact that its been publicized and there's been no denial. And there have been articles written as well about the controversy around during the 60s, women were used in experiments involving LSD and electric shock treatment. In the McGill Reporter, and I don't know off the top of my head the exact volume and date, there was an article that was well researched and documented, regarding women — the names of some women who were used in these experiments. And before the 60s, women who were used in experiments involuntarily. Well they were involuntary in the 60s too yeah.

*What to you would be an ideal memorial? If you envision something, like a garden, that would really do justice to that, what do you see?*

**03:00** I think a memorial that was... that's a tough question because I haven't really given it enough thought to put it really succinctly. A memorial that I think would do justice to the women would be a memorial I think that put their identity as a prisoner within a broader context, you know, and in some way would acknowledge that the vast majority of women in prison are there as a result of unjust political and social policies of the government — throughout — since settlers first arrived in Canada. Inequality in the economic system, you know. Usually the vast majority of women are from very poor families, and have chosen to commit crimes in order to survive in many cases — prostitution, drug addiction, drugs, drug trafficking, fraud. These are the main kind of crimes that women are in prison for, and men as well, and I think that that should be part of the memorial so that people can recognize — just so that we have to start taking responsibility. Society has to take responsibility for the fact that we are imprisoning people, who are really victims of the most unjust and inequitable circumstances that we've created.

**03:01** I think it starts at the top with the wealthiest people. They may not sit there and consciously plot to do this and it happens. And it permeates throughout the media and the educational system — that "these are the people, the scapegoats, the bad people, the people we should be afraid of, so we need more prisons". We shouldn't be afraid of car accidents, of global warming and cancer. We've got to be afraid of the prostitute, the person whose dealing drugs downtown, the people who break into your house when you're gone, stuff like that, are the people to be really afraid of. When in fact those are the people — generally — who are racially abused and poverty stricken people.

*Do you think attitudes within Kingston have changed, with the recent momentum around the memorial, or that there is more public acceptance?*

**03:03** I'm not so sure that we — I think that would be giving us a lot of credit. I hate to say it but I don't think we've fundamentally changed the attitudes of society, in our own way we're trying to make some change. But I have to say — everything I say here doesn't represent the P4W memorial collective — I don't think everyone would say what I just said. That is how I feel. But I think it is a feeling we share to some degree or other.

*Give us an update on what is happening with the memorial.*

**03:03** Well at this point, the Dornekamp's construction company, ABNA, have bought P4W from Queen's and we have been speaking with Nate Dornekamp, and we have been

pleasantly surprised that he has been accepting of the idea of a women's memorial and he acknowledges that there has been a lot of abusive situations that have occurred there and he seems to be very supportive of having a memorial. So we are really happy about that. But its early days, you know. But I'm very hopeful that we can work with Nate Dornekamp and we can get a memorial that has some meaning.

*Could you explain the idea or meaning behind the memorial as a garden?*

**03:03** Well, because its a place where people could actually sit and relax, and think about the women who died in prison, and in particular, if there are families and friends of women who've died, and want to visit the prison. That's why we wanted to have some benches, and hopefully there would be some trees, and just a comfortable spot to sit and reflect. At this point, that is how we've been thinking, but we haven't really spent a lot of time yet articulating or discussing what more we could have. So we're just starting off with a simple garden like that. Where people could sit, perhaps with a piece of art done by an Indigenous woman, or sculpture by an ex-prisoner or something, that represents the women who've died.

*Are you feeling optimistic overall about the memorial, or at this point, are you just taking it step by step?*

**03:03** Yes, I am feeling optimistic. I'm not optimistic about the entire prison being used as a woman's museum, for example, I'm not sure if that's going to actually unfold. But I am optimistic about a memorial for the women who died in Canadian prisons, yes.

*Some women have mentioned that they wouldn't feel any closure with P4W until this memorial is built, how do you feel about that? Do you feel that once it is built, that chapter of your life is closed? Or is it more of an ongoing process for you?*

**15:09** I think on a personal level, it gives you closure for the women that you've known that died in there, but for me, it doesn't give me closure at all, because I have been in Grand Valley Federal Institution for women, which is one of the new P4Ws. And my experiences there, were that it's actually, and other women that were in GVI who were in P4W, all the ones that I've talked to have agreed, that it is worse than P4W, in fact. If I had a choice, I'd rather do 7 years in P4W than in Grand Valley.

*How is GVI worse?*

**15:09** Well, they have a maximum security unit, which if you have any kind of charges, like say a guard tells you that you are not locked up on time, and you haven't — they actually on the compound — they have these units, but they're like little bungalows. And you have to be in your room at a certain time, so let's say you're late and the guard gets a little upset with you and you talk back to them and they charge you. Well if you go to segregation or the charges are all serious then you end up in the maximum security unit which is like the special handling unit. There are little pods with 5 women in them. They can be double bunked as well. So there can be up to 9 women. That's one of the negative features — P4W didn't have that. There's a lot more women in these sort of administrative isolation units or special handling units and there was no such thing at P4W.

**17:05** And I think it's around 20% of the prison population is double bunked now, which is really a drag you know? One of the solaces when you are in prison is knowing that you can be alone in your cell at night, you know, the doors are locked, it's your own little private space. That no longer exists, so there's a lot more intrusion in terms of programming and behaviour modification programs, you know like dialectical behaviour therapy is considered — they call it a dynamic security model. In this special handling unit. Like the static security model is the walls, or you know, bars — physical structures that never moved are called static security systems. Dynamic security systems are like behaviour modifications systems. So all the federal prisons for women now — there are 6 of them — they have these units, they're like bungalows called the SLEE — that's the acronym.

**18:21** Structured Living Environments is what it stands for. And that particular prison unit or bungalow which holds 10 women is a behaviour medication unit. And there is staff that work there all day long, guards, counsellors who work with the women to help them change their behaviour. Dialectical behavioural therapy was originally designed to help people with bipolar disorder and severe depression, for example, to not solve the root causes of bipolar disorder or depression but to learn to cope with it. In some cases you could see the validity in that... like if you're severely depressed and you cannot change the root causes, then you have to learn to somehow develop a more positive outlook, lets say. Or learn how to deal with your rage or anger, you know? Without having to somehow remedy the past, right?

**19:37** But when you put people in prison, and they have to be involved in this dialectical behavioural therapy, they're not voluntarily participating. And they are also — again going back to the root causes of crime — dialectical behavioural therapy doesn't recognize the social causes of behavioural problems, you know? Yes, so let's say you were abused as a child and you were racialized — you're an Indigenous or black person — you have a number of factors: you've experienced a lot of racism, you've been abused, maybe there's been a lot of addiction going on in the family, so you have a lot of unresolved rage. So yes, you want to learn how to cope with the rage no matter what, and the same time, it would not hurt to understand the social causes of it, and perhaps be doing something in your life to try to change that for other people and yourself, you know? So dialectical behaviour therapy doesn't acknowledge or encourage trying to change root causes of behaviour. It's a behaviour modification therapy.

*Could you talk more about what is Prisoners Justice Day, and what's going to happen on August 10th?*

**36:44** In the early 70s, it started in Millhaven institution penitentiary out here. And a guy named Eddie Nolan lived in segregation and he had seen the segregation review board. They told him he'd be released in the beginning of August and he wasn't, and he'd be already been in for quite a long time. And I believe he started, they call it slashing you know, cutting himself because he was getting no response from the guards about when was he getting out. And so the guys in the cells around him were pushing emergency buttons — they didn't realize that the guards had cut them off in their towers and in their guard control units. So they didn't know. So Eddie bled out. Eventually they did come but they didn't go in the cell because they didn't have enough back up, they said. And then they started having a day, it was August 10th, in which the men said they weren't going to eat and they weren't going to work for that one day to honour all the men and prisoners in jail that had died.

**05:47** And then the next year a guy named Bobby Landers, also, he died of a heart attack in the same place, Millhaven Segregation Unit. And he's buried actually at Kingston in a cemetery and the guys at Millhaven actually saved up money to get a tombstone for him and his brother, who was killed in an escape attempt too.

**06:10** Every year on August 10th, prisoners across Canada — when you're in prison, don't eat, they fast and don't work — they refuse to work for that day. And it's a day to honour the other prisoners who died. And generally the idea is that people on the outside can also fast, but you know, it's not as important that they fast, but more so that they can think of ways to increase awareness of what's going on in prisons, and also honour that as a day to recognize the people that died in prison.

*And so, maybe could you talk a bit more about what's happening on PJD with the healing circle...*

**06:57** Yeah that's right so, we are hoping to have healing circle at P4W, which is an indigenous thing — an indigenous sort of ceremony. And then have speakers and drummers after and also in the morning, or probably around noon, we're going to have a little bit of a memorial also at the cemetery, where Bobby Landers and his brother are buried as well. So I think it's going to be — women who are coming from out of town who were in P4W who are going to be there as well and we — it was also supposed to be part of a campaign as well to get this permission to have this memorial garden at P4W. But we're hoping that's going to happen now since it's been sold to Dornekamps and they seem amenable to the idea.

*I have one more question — how do you want the people of Canada to remember P4W?*

**08:06** That's a good question. I guess I want them to remember it as a place, where in the same vein as residential schools, and I know it sounds a bit extreme, but any kind of like, you know like the slave plantations, concentration camps, like along that vein. That prisons really are a place where people who are, like I said earlier, racialized, poverty-stricken, victims of sexual abuse, also true for men's prisons. There's an extremely high percentage of men who also been abused sexually and physically as children.

**08:45** Where society has taken these people, and used them as scapegoats for all the policies that are unjust, and you know, a lot of those people die young or commit suicide or die in prison and I think that they should be seen for what they are, like places that should not exist anymore. They serve no purpose whatsoever, other than, you know to scapegoat the victims, and to prevent them from protesting or rebelling or acting out I guess.

*And P4W specifically, this institution, how should we be thinking about it and remembering it?*

**09:28** Well I think we should be glad its closed and that it's too bad that they're not all closed, it's just a beginning really.

*Just one piece of this larger problem (sirens in the background). Okay well we can pause there and take a break. That was great.*

Yeah that was great.

From the film **Remembering P4W**, set to come out in June 2019 at the Doc Now Festival, Toronto (with a screening to follow in Kingston.)

## 835.934.994: certain events

### Radiodress

As part of Queer Ecologies, a two-day performance art event held in September 2016, Radiodress presented their ongoing investigations of queer listening practices as strategies for empathy and transformational justice. Part ritual, part performance, *835.934.994: certain events* fostered attunement with moon cycles, St. Lawrence River water and the physical receptiveness required for solidarity with incarcerated people past and present.

Working in the morning light of the 3/4 moon, Radiodress invited an embodied vibrational synchronicity from participants. Harmonized in silence, they collectively carried water from the St. Lawrence River to the sites of the former Kingston Penitentiary and the Prison for Women, (P4W) where Radiodress was politicized as a young queer in the 90s by older lesbians organizing for prison abolition. Radiodress' experiments with the transformational possibilities of water focus on its life-sustaining, nourishing and mysterious properties. In *835.934.994: certain events*, water is both a conduit and an offering. It's ephemerality honours the incarcerated people who were scattered across the province when both institutions closed, and the ancestors of those incarcerated there since. It's fluidity invites non-binary thinking around gender, suffering and marginalization.

The title of the work gestures to 1835 and 1934, the opening years of each prison as well as 1994, the year in which incarcerated women at P4W rioted in protest of the abuses and overcrowding happening there. The missing 1's speak for themselves. The report that emerged from the riots and solidarity demonstrations argued for a closing of the prison, and a recognition of the complicated conditions of women's lives. *Commission of Inquiry into Certain Events at the Prison for Women in Kingston*<sup>1</sup> represented a delicate success, a surface acknowledgement without many palpable shifts in the systemic racism, criminalization of poverty and misogyny that constructs Canada's carceral system.

The artists' movement from each prison site culminated at the Queer Ecologies symposium later that day, in full sunlight. The empty water vessels represented a shared vulnerability and despair; the abolitionist drive to find better solutions to our so-called justice system, and the lost voices of incarcerated people, now ghosts in Kingston's landscape.

<sup>1</sup>. Available at: [http://www.caefsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Arbour\\_Report.pdf](http://www.caefsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Arbour_Report.pdf)



Photos courtesy of Kala Raju



**Radiodress** uses live and recorded talking, singing, yelling and listening to consider bodies as sites of knowledge, and communication as a mystical and political practice. Through guided participation, ritual and broadcast in public space, their projects propose a vulnerable relationship between the echoes of colonial violence and potential acts of empathic listening.

Radiodress' ongoing ritual bath project, MKV was exhibited as part of Blackwood Gallery's Take Care exhibition in November of last year, curated by Letters & Handshakes. Other projects, spanning two decades of community practice have been exhibited and performed in North America, Europe, South Asia and the Middle East.

As part of their ongoing empathic service, Radiodress practices spiritual care with people who are incarcerated in the federal prisons of Southern Ontario, the traditional territory of the Anishnabek, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Mohawk, Odawa and Mississauga of New Credit in Williams, Treaty 57 and 13 territories.

# Photos from Canada's Penitentiary Museum

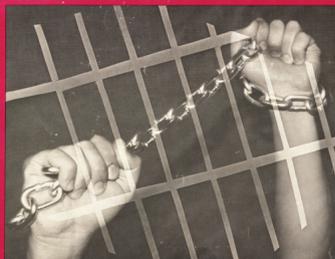
Courtesy of Cameron Willis, Canada's Penitentiary Museum

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Photographs, c. 1985, showing anti-prison graffiti on the P4W wall - Uncatalogued  
Selection of photos showing protesters at Kingston Penitentiary during riot, 1971 - Photo Proof sheet #6 - 2015.022.06  
Prison Justice Day T-Shirt, 1995 - 1998.033.16  
"Justice flag, 1971" - Kingston Police evidence set, 2002.05.24  
Prison Justice Day Poster - 1978 - Tom French Collection - 2001.009.05



**PRISON JUSTICE DAY  
AUGUST 10th  
FOR AN END TO SENSELESS  
DEATHS IN PRISONS**



**IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN  
RIGHTS FOR PRISONERS**

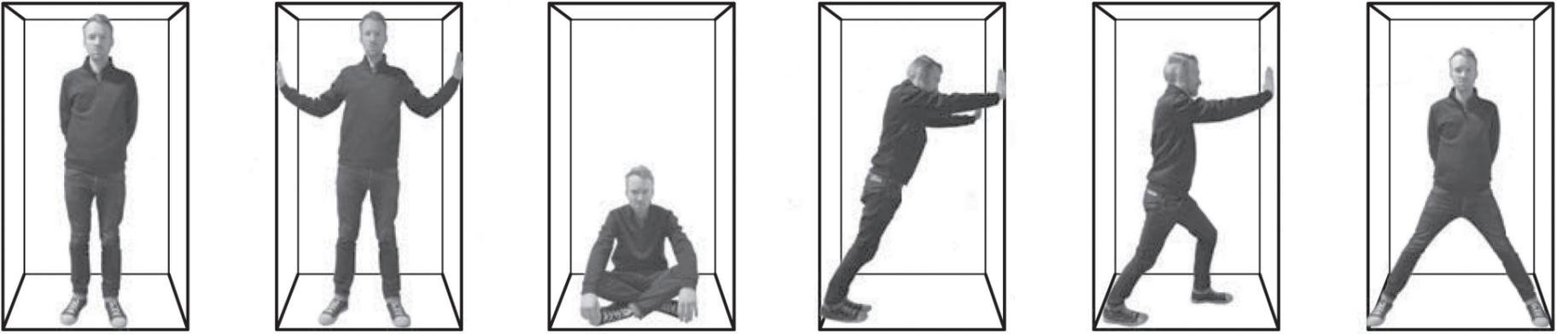
THE RIGHT TO MEANINGFUL WORK WITH FAIR WAGES	THE RIGHT TO VOTE
THE RIGHT TO USEFUL EDUCATION AND TRAINING	THE RIGHT TO FORM A UNION
THE RIGHT TO PROPER MEDICAL CARE	THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE WORK AND FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS
THE RIGHT TO FREE, ADEQUATE LEGAL SERVICES	THE RIGHT TO OPEN VISITS AND CORRESPONDENCE
THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION	THE RIGHT TO NATURAL JUSTICE AND DUE PROCESS
THE RIGHT TO INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF ALL PRISON DECISION-MAKING AND CONDITIONS	

# Undocumented: The Architecture of Migrant Detention

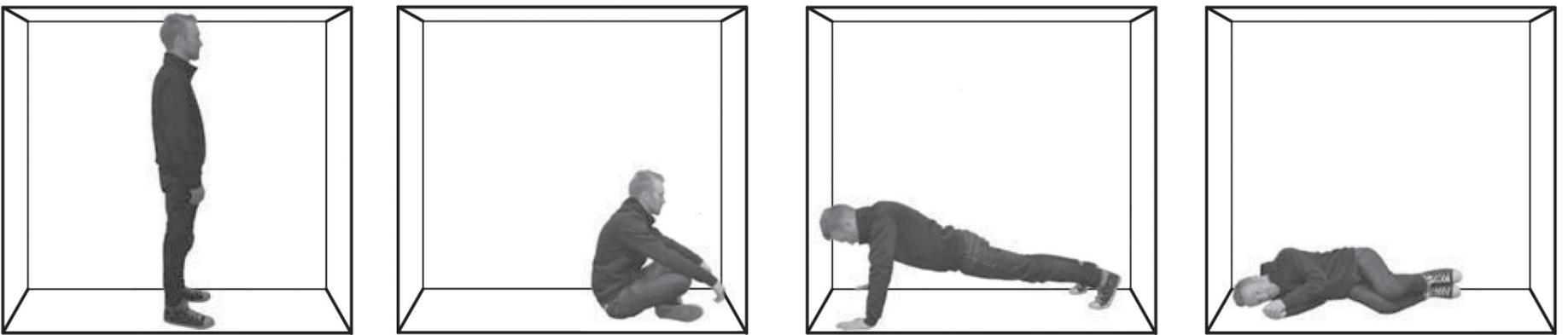
Amsterdam/Montreal: Architecture Observer, 2014

Tings Chak

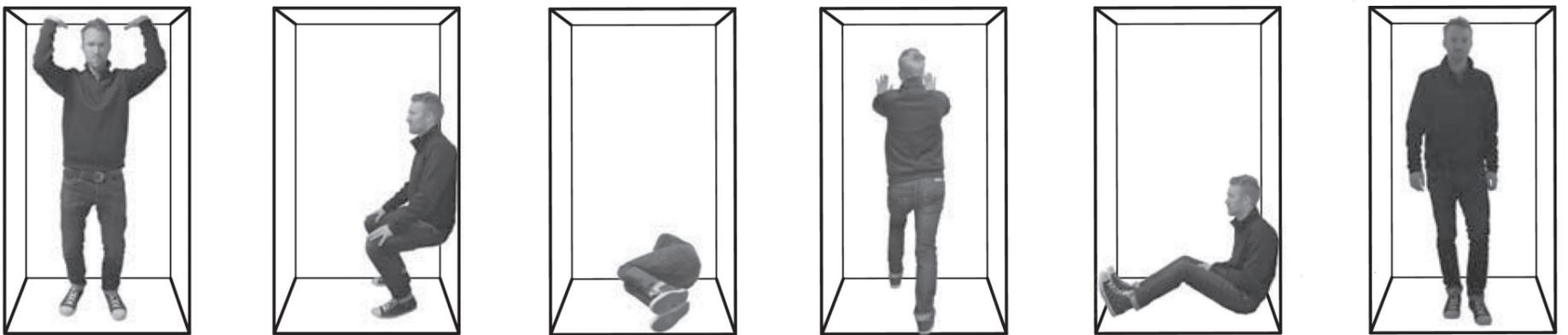
*According to the International Red Cross,*



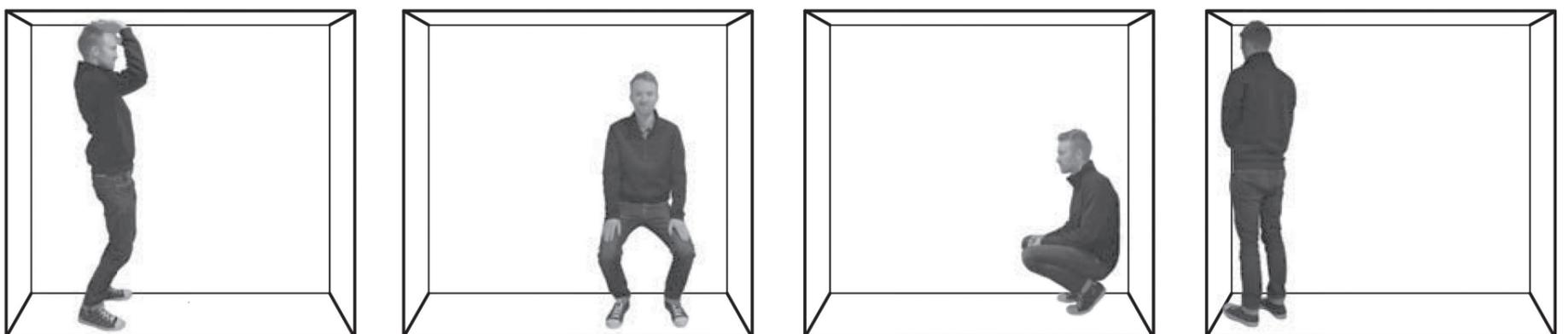
*the minimum habitable space for an incarcerated individual is measured.*



*2 square metres of floor area*



*and 3.5 cubic metre of air space.*



*In this volume, the contents of your life are caged. But not every human action can be programmed or predicted, our bodies always find ways to carve out space, to refocus our attention from the geometry to the lived experience, from the container to the contained.*