

Teacher Guide

Walls Turned Sideways: Artist Confront the Justice System

August 25, 2018–January 6, 2019



Martin Wong, *47-04* (detail), 1992. Acrylic on canvas, 28 x 70 inches. Courtesy the Estate of Martin Wong and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York, New York.

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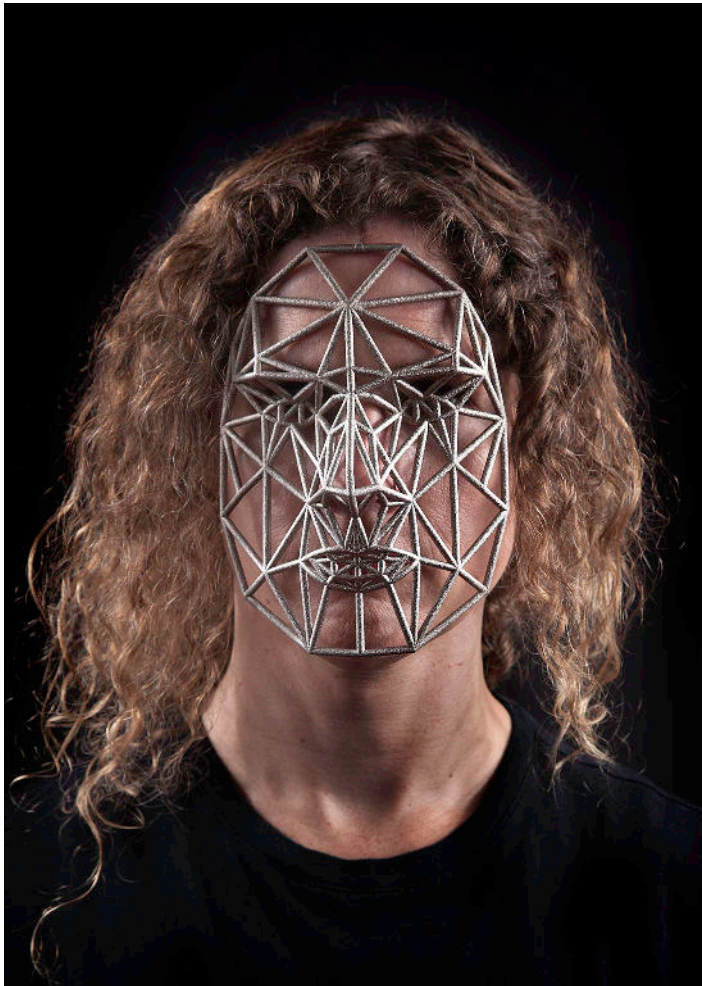
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#WallsTurnedSideways



Zach Blas, *Face Cage 3*, 2014. HD video of endurance performance, 12:00 minutes.
Performance: micha cárdenas. Courtesy the artist

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

- *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System* features work made by artists across the nation that addresses the criminal justice system, mass incarceration, and the prison industrial complex.
- The exhibition features over 40 different artists and artist collectives working in a wide array of media including sculpture, photography, video, installation, and social practice.
- The exhibition moves a viewer through the United States justice system via the work of artists, here is how the work is organized:
 - A person entering the system is first **profiled**.
 - Being profiled makes one more susceptible to **arrest**.
 - Once arrested, one moves through a set of procedures related to **due process**, including the courtroom and trial.
 - If a person is found guilty through due process, this leads to **incarceration**.
 - After incarceration there are three potential ways one can **exit** the physical structure of the prison: a life sentence that guarantees death inside the institution, the death penalty, or the possibility of reentry into society.

Key Questions

- What do you know about the prison system? How did you get this information?
- How has the prison system changed throughout history? How has it stayed the same?
- How is the prison system similar or different to other cultural institutions?
- How have movies and media shaped your assumptions about prison and prisoners?

- How can ex-prisoners reenter and be accepted by society? Is this in line with current laws in your state?
- What is the social role and responsibility of the artist in times of political urgency?
- What functions can only art and artists fulfill in the social and political landscape?
- How can art impact current events and ideas?

Curriculum Connections

History and Current Events | Many works in the exhibition reference past and current events. Is there a past or current event that you would like to know more about? How do you get your information? Does the information change depending on your resources? Use a current event to inspire a work of art – this could be a performance, a film, a sculpture, a photograph, a poem, etc.

Language Arts | Many works in the exhibition reference works in literature. Is there a book that you have read that relates to the themes explored in the exhibition? Can you use the book as inspiration in creating an essay, poem, or story? Use Shaun Leonardo's *Eulogy* (2017), work by Danny Giles, and James Drake as examples.



Jamal Cyrus, *Eroding Witness, Season 3 episode 20_a*, 2018. Laser-cut papyrus, 36 x 25 inches. Courtesy the artist and Inman Gallery, Houston, Texas