

Press Release

Exhibition
*Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront
the Justice System*
August 25, 2018–January 6, 2019



Martin Wong, *47-04 (detail)*, 1992. Acrylic on canvas. 28 x 70 inches. Image and work courtesy the estate of Martin Wong and PPOW, New York, New York.

#WallsTurnedSideways
#atCAMH
@camhouston

Media Contact

For high-resolution images or media inquiries please contact:
Kent Michael Smith, Director of Communications and Marketing
ksmith@camh.org | 713.284.8255

HOUSTON, TX (June 20, 2018)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) is pleased to announce its upcoming exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System*, the largest and most comprehensive museum presentation to investigate the criminal justice system in the United States. Presented through the eyes of more than thirty artists, with works spanning the past forty years, *Walls Turned Sideways* is organized by Guest Curator Risa Puleo. CAMH will host an opening reception on the evening of Friday, August 24 from 6:30–9PM, with the exhibition remaining on view through Sunday, January 6, 2019.

Walls Turned Sideways features work by artists from across the nation that addresses the criminal justice system, mass incarceration, and the prison-industrial complex. Representing a range of contemporary art production

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Jamal Cyrus
Eroding Witness, 2014
Laser-cut papyrus
27 x 16 ¾ inches
Image and work courtesy the artist and Inman
Gallery, Houston, Texas



Dread Scott
Wanted, 2017
Wanted posters
Pigment prints
Image and work courtesy the artist

made both in the studio and the social realm, the exhibition includes artworks that take social justice issues as a subject matter; and position the prison and court systems as structures for dismantling through institutional critique. The artworks in the exhibition are extraordinary for the scale and ambition by which they mobilize in order to bring visibility to offenses within the justice system.

Walls Turned Sideways recognizes the artist as a figure capable of changing society and poses the questions: 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? Moreover, the exhibition considers the relationship between the museum and the prison, focusing on their shared history of collection. *Walls Turned Sideways* asks if the museum is the repository for all that society values, how is the prison the repository for all society seeks to disown?

The justice system in the United States is complex; as a result, artists tend to tackle one component at a time. *Walls Turned Sideways* utilizes the work of artists to construct a dynamic and nuanced portrait of the prison-industrial complex in the United States according to how people move through the criminal justice system. The conditions of being profiled as a criminal makes one more susceptible to arrest. Once arrested, one moves through a set of procedures related to due process, including the courtroom and trial, and onwards toward 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.

The title of the exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways* comes from a quote by political activist, academic, and author, Angela Davis: "Walls turned sideways are bridges." The exhibition hopes to serve as a bridge or connecting conduit for conversation, contemplation, and change.

Exhibition Artists

Andrea Robbins and Max Becher | New York, New York
Josh Begley | Brooklyn, New York
Zach Blas | London, United Kingdom
Chandra McCormick and Keith Calhoun | New Orleans, Louisiana
Luis Camnitzer | New York, New York
Jamal Cyrus | Houston, Texas
James Drake | Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Estate of Chris Burden | 1946–2015
The Estate of Martin Wong | 1946–1999
Tirtza Even | Chicago, Illinois
Andrea Fraser | New York, New York

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Suzanne Lacy with Julio Morales and Unique Holland

Code 33: Emergency, Clear the Air!
(performance still), 1999

Performance by Suzanne Lacy, Julio Morales and Unique Holland

Image and work courtesy the artist
Photograph by Michelle Baughan



Mary Patten
Panel, 2013

Four-channel performance-based video
installation: color, sound, 24:40 minutes

Dimensions variable

Image and work courtesy the artist

Maria Gaspar | Chicago, Illinois
Danny Giles | Chicago, Illinois
Sam Gould | Minneapolis, Minnesota
Michelle Handelman | Brooklyn, New York
Coco Fusco and Paula Heredia | Brooklyn, New York
Suzanne Lacy with Julio Morales and Unique Holland | Los Angeles, California
Alexa Hoyer | Brooklyn, New York
Ashley Hunt | Los Angeles, California
Richard Kamler | San Francisco, California
Titus Kaphar | New York, New York
Kapwani Kiwanga | Paris, France
Autumn Knight | New York, New York
Deana Lawson | Brooklyn, New York
Shaun Leonardo | Brooklyn, New York
Glenn Ligon | New York, New York
Sarah Ross and Damon Locks | Chicago, Illinois
Lucky Pierre | Chicago, Illinois
Mark Menjivar | San Antonio, Texas
Trevor Paglen | New York, New York
Anthony Papa | New York, New York
Mary Patten | Chicago, Illinois
Jenny Polak | New York, New York
Carl Pope, Jr. | Indianapolis, Indiana
Lauri Jo Reynolds | Chicago, Illinois
Sherrill Roland | Raleigh, North Carolina
Gregory Sale | Phoenix, Arizona
Dread Scott | Brooklyn, New York
Sable Elyse Smith | Brooklyn, New York
Rodrigo Valenzuela | Los Angeles, California

About the Curator

Risa Puleo is the Guest Curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas. In 2017, Puleo was the Curator-in-Residence at Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts in Omaha, Nebraska where she curated the exhibition *Monarchs: Brown and Native Artists in the Path of the Butterfly*. She is currently working on exhibitions that will be presented at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts; Charlotte Street Foundation, Kansas City, Missouri; ArtPace, San Antonio, Texas; Franklin Street Works, Stamford, Connecticut; and the Leslie-Lohman Museum in New York, New York. Puleo holds Master's degrees from the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College and Hunter College's Art History program (both New York, New York), and has been accepted into the doctoral program in Art History at Northwestern University, Chicago, Illinois.

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Josh Begley
Prison Map, 2012–present
iPhone app
Image and work courtesy the artist

She has written for *Art in America*, *Art Papers*, *Art 21*, *Asia Art Pacific*, *Hyperallergic*, *Modern Painters* and other art publications.

Publication

CAMH will produce a significant catalogue to accompany *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System*. The catalogue is being published by the Miami-based non-profit [NAME] Publications, under the editorial direction of Natalia Zuluaga, Lucie Steinberg, and Gean Moreno. The publication includes a forward by CAMH Director Bill Arning, essays by curator Risa Puleo, theorist Che Gossett, and other contributions by Elizabeth Alexander; Jimmy Baca; Evan Bissell; Andy Campbell; Chicago Torture Justice Memorial; Melanie Crean, Shaun Leonardo and Sable Elyse Smith; Laurie Jo Reynolds and Stephen Eisenman; Nicole Fleetwood; Michel Foucault and others in conversation; Sam Gould; Unique Holland; Ben Jones; David Joselit; Theodore Kerr; Chaédria LaBouvier; Suzanne Lacy; Roger Lancaster; Shaun Leonardo; K.Tsianina Lomawaima; Shoshana Magnet; Sarah Ross and Erica R. Meiners; Gean Moreno; Robert Morris; Robert Nelson; Isamu Noguchi; Otabenga Jones & Associates; Anthony Papa; Cameron Rowland; Jared Sexton; Rashad Shabazz; Shawn Michelle Smith; Daniel Tucker and Rosten Woo; and Rebecca Zorach. Artists' projects in the exhibition and social realm will be documented with full-color images and interpretive essays and include the artists' voices in interviews and statements. The overall scope and comprehensive material featured in the accompanying catalogue promises to serve as a lasting scholarly document for the exhibition.

Publication design is being completed by Stacy Asher and Aaron Sutherlen, who are faculty in the School of Art, Art History & Design at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Exhibition Support

Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System is made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The catalogue accompanying this exhibition is made possible by a grant from The Brown Foundation, Inc. of Houston and a grant from the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation.



Public Programs

This selection of events are free, open to the public, and take place at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, unless otherwise noted. Seating is limited. Please check CAMH.ORG for the most current information.

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Opening Reception | *Walls Turned Sideways*

Friday, August 24, 2018 | 6:30–9PM

Celebrate the exhibition opening. Complimentary beverages available for select membership levels from 6:30–8PM.

In Conversation | Guest Curator Risa Puleo

Saturday, August 25, 2018 | 2–3PM

Join Guest Curator Risa Puleo, for a gallery walk-through of *Walls Turned Sideways*.

Talk | Lines in the Landscape with Josh Begley

Thursday, September 13, 2018 | 6:30–7:30PM

What does the geography of white supremacy look like? In this talk, Josh Begley one of the artists included in the exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways*, will speak broadly about his artistic practice, specifically focusing on ways of visualizing race, data, and representations of violence in the United States. This program is hosted at CAMH in partnership with AIGA Houston.

Workshop | Words & Art

Saturday, September 22, 2018 | 12:30–1:30PM

Join us as we explore *Walls Turned Sideways* using prompts, group discussion, and your imagination. Participants delve deeply into the exhibition through stories and poems. This workshop is open to all writing levels.

Performance | *Open Letters* with Mark Manjivar

Rothko Chapel | 1409 Sul Ross Street, Houston, TX 77006

Wednesday, October 10, 2018 | 7–9PM

A socially engaged project inviting Texas communities to explore capital punishment by responding to open letters written by death row inmates. Register at rothkochapel.org. Space is limited.

Community Day

Saturday, October 20, 2018 | 2–5PM

Come explore current exhibitions using writing prompts, meditation exercises, and find resources from community partners and organizations.

Reading | Words & Art

Thursday, November 1, 2018 | 6:30–7:30PM

Houston-based authors and poets share new works inspired by the exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways*.

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Open Studio | Safe Space

Saturday, November 3, 2018 | 2–4PM

Design a 3D replica of a safe space inspired by artists in the exhibition *Walls Turned Sideways*. What does a safe space look like to you?

Performance | Scriptwriters Houston

Thursday, December 6, 2018 | 6:30–8:30PM

Scriptwriters Houston will present a series of ten-minute plays selected through a competitive process. The site-specific productions are inspired by and set within the current exhibitions. Small audience groups will experience the plays as they move through the Museum. Register at CAMH.ORG. Space is limited.

CAMH Mission

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is a leading destination to experience innovative art. CAMH actively encourages public engagement with its exhibitions through its educational programs, publications, and online presence. Always fresh, always free.

General Information

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday 10AM–7PM, Thursday 10AM–9PM, Saturday 10AM–6PM, and Sunday 12PM–6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit CAMH.ORG or call 713.284.8250.