Weinberg/ Newton Gallery













A Guide for Closer Looking

Glossary

Agency is the the ability to take action or to choose what action to take

Ascend is to move or travel upwards

Assumption is something that you accept as true without question or proof

Collaboration is the act of working together to create or achieve the same thing

Dialogue is a focused and intentional conversation, a space of civility and equality in which those who differ may listen and speak together

Escapism is the ability to escape from reality to a world of fantasy

Envision is to imagine as a future possibility

Equity refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances

Humanity is acknowledging that every human needs to be seen, heard, recognized for who they are, taken into account, valued, and given the chance to live a life of hope, freedom and fairness

Incarcerated is to be confined in a prison, jail, or detention center

Innocence is free from moral wrong or guilt; purity

Marginalize is to treat someone or something as if they are not important

Memoir is a story written from the perspective of the author about their life

Nuance is a slight difference that may be difficult to notice but can be important

Portal is an entrance or gateway

Prison Industrial Complex describes the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems

Restorative Justice is an approach to justice that focuses on repairing the harm done by socially unacceptable behavior rather than just punishment for breaking rules or laws

Symbol is a thing that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract

Transcend to go beyond or rise above a limit

Weinberg/ Newton Gallery

Can you see me?

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Can you see me? is an exhibition in collaboration with SkyART and Arts + Public Life.

Can you see me? features work by Arte Pro, ConTextos, Jim Duignan, Kirsten Leenaars and Circles & Ciphers, Ebony G. Patterson, Cheryl Pope, and SkyART Just-Us.

CURATOR'S NOTE

Can you see me? is a collaborative three-part exhibition exploring the impact incarceration has on young people. Across three galleries, artwork by currently and formerly incarcerated young people, contemporary artists and arts-justice organizations explores themes of ascendance, innocence and freedom. This exhibition aims to not only highlight the humanity and potential of young people affected by the juvenile justice system, but to create new aspirational possibilities for how art can be a tool of justice and healing. Visitors have the opportunity to interact and contribute to the exhibition, leaving with a lasting impression of humanity instead of criminality, perseverance instead of violence, and hope instead of despair.

In the poem that inspired the exhibition's title a Just-Us participant writes, "Can you save me from this damage that I can't erase? I ain't never felt this way before, until I put you in my arms. Can you see me?" The poem and the exhibition asks us to see young people affected by the juvenile justice system as children who have been failed by a system that all too often traumatizes and punishes Black and Brown kids as adults – depriving them of their childhood innocence – while also infantilizing them and taking away their agency.

Themes of healing, imagining, flying, ascending, freedom, play and innocence create nuanced and pluralistic portrayals of juvenile offenders. With a restorative justice lens, the exhibition aims to highlight youths' humanity and voice, exploring the impact of incarceration on our communities and questioning who has access to contemporary art spaces. The exhibition also connects three communities on Chicago's South and North sides across distinct spaces that are in conversation with each other.

Devon VanHouten-Maldonado, Director of Programs of SkyART;
Kasia Houlihan, Director of Weinberg/Newton Gallery; with
independent curator Rikki Byrd



















How can art create connection?

Why is it important to have nuanced and complicated conversations about youth incarceration?

How can we create a larger, international conversation about youth incarceration and freedom?







Arte Pro

Founded in Mexico City in 2014, Arte Pro creates prowith strong scientific evidence of positive impact on children born into abuse, neglect and violence. The children Arte Pro serves include those born to incarcerated mothers who are existent within prison walls until they are of school age.

This project imagines a portal between this and future and chicago, and between our present reavity and future possibility. The work highlights interact anguage. that transcend borders, social class and connections that ranscend borders, social class of the social social launched a virtual, billingua worksholt for a group of 18 girls from a shelter home in Mexico City and boys and girls from SkyART's SkyWAY program. Uncase was to create mindful moments and reflection through an art project built around "emotional state". The emphasion rather than a fixed outcome.

Arte Pro and SkyART both create programs with Social Emotional Learning (SEL)-centered methodology, which includes mindfulness, experimentation (freedom of choice) and reflection. The children were reminded that the purpose of sharing time is not to judge works on merit (good or bad) but to learn from each other, see how unique our creations are, and to appreciate our differences. The portal proposes healing and justice practices using art as a vehicle for connection and restoration across time and space, and illustrates the universality of childhood innocence, creativity



CAN YOU

SEE ME? - -



Gallery One

ConTextos

ConTextos uses the power of literary arts and education to promate healing and reflection, and to foster critical thinking and dialogue through personal storytelling. This multimedia installation presented by ConTextos Chicago highlights stories written by system-impacted Authors in Chicago and El Salvador Writing Circles. It features original poetry, memoirs, collages and video footage reflecting on their experiences, as well as an interactive writing and art activity.





What assumptions do people make about those who are currently or were formerly incarcerated?

How do both the author and reader benefit from memoirs?

Why is it important to hear stories by system-impacted authors?

ConTextos









Jim Duignan













Click on the blue dots to interact





Gallery One





How do you find inspiration when you feel isolated? How do societal attitudes towards incarceration influence the design of prison cells?

How can we envision a justice system that does not include incarcerating young people?

Cheryl Pope





Read

Gallery One







How can spaces of trauma, such as prisons and jails, be spaces for potential, creativity and freedom?

How can art be a tool for justice and healing?

What are alternatives to youth incarceration?

View

Click on the blue dots to interact

SkyART Just-Us









CAN YOUSEE ME?



Installation







Click on the blue dots to interact

Kirsten Leenaars and Circles & Ciphers



