

**Text for Final Day of Collaborative Multidisciplinary Workshops
Community-based Art, Prison Arts Collective
Summer 2017**

CIM

Let's give the artists another round of applause.

Thank you to everyone for being here. It means a lot to all of us that you made the effort to be here. This project has been incredibly inspiring and I am honored and grateful to be part of it.

I want to thank the artists, who you will hear from in a few moments, for their incredible dedication to this project. I have been teaching for many years and in all kinds of settings and this was truly one of the most dedicated and inspired group I have worked with on a project.

This was an expansive and collaborative effort so I have several additional people to thank.

I want to thank my co-facilitators on this collaborative workshop, our Guest Artist Phung Huyhn and teaching artist Christina Quevedo. I also want to thank our support team of interns that assisted with everything from video, photographic, and written documentation to material preparation and assisting in class: Alex Masushige, Ashley Woods, and Danielle Yellen.

I want to thank the California Institution for Men, and especially Warden Dean Borders, for welcoming us to the institution to teach weekly art classes since 2013. Here at CIM, I also want to thank CO Ward, Carmen Jimenez, the Community Resource Manager, Russell Cadigal, Office Technician, Lt. Thomas Lopez, the Public Information Officer, and Facility C staff for their support. From CDCR Headquarters, I want to thank Kristina Khokhobashvili and Bill Sessa from Media Relations.

The project wouldn't be possible without the support of an Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and I want to thank Beth Bienvenu and everyone at the NEA. We are also grateful to be part of Arts in Corrections, an initiative of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the California Arts Council, and we appreciate their support.

Those of you here today had the chance to see this performance live. But for those that cannot be here – whether due to distance, regulations, time, or any of the many factors that would prevent someone from being here in this room – it will be available in the coming months on a project website that will explore the process of creating this piece together. And for that, I want to thank two wonderful friends and mentors to the program, designer Diane Michaeli and photographer Peter Merts. Many of the photos are available now on Peter's website and the performance video will also be on view at CB1 Gallery in our exhibition, Beyond the Blue: Prison Arts Collective, opening tomorrow July 21 with a panel on Art and Restorative Justice at 3:00 pm and the reception from 4:00 to 7:00 so we hope some of you can join us.

We have been fortunate to be invited to teach weekly art classes here at CIM since 2013. Our classes include a range of arts from printmaking and collage to art history and critique, creative

writing and collaborative murals. Since last summer, with the support of peer leaders — participants in the program that help us coordinate and sometimes co-teach classes — we have also offered music. This particular workshop is part of a dream I had to start to integrate and commingle these disciplines and create a collaborative project that utilized the artists' varied talents and skills by working together. I also wanted to encourage the artists to think about the ideas embodied in their work and what they wanted to express. In a way, this project began nearly two years ago when I applied for a Multidisciplinary and Presenting Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The grant and its requirements inspired me to push these ideas further and to create the public dissemination component in the form of the project site.

Thanks to these artists and our team, this process has been more rewarding and incredible than I ever could have imagined. We began by asking everyone to apply and selecting men that worked in different disciplines. Then we asked the artists to reflect on and write about what really mattered to them, what they might change if they could change one thing in the world. From here, we began to select an idea for project and how to embody it. This took time, compromise, sharing, listening, and all the things that make for a successful collaboration.

In our discussions and reflections, we found many things that were important to the artists, from world hunger and the environment to fair trade and empathy for others. But one issue that rose to the forefront was that of changing stereotypes of incarcerated people by helping others to see their diversity and humanity. Interestingly, while working on this project, we led a similar workshop at the California Institution for Women nearby and, though much about the two projects and processes is very different, both groups ended up addressing and expanding on this particular social issue in their work. They did this by using their unique talents telling their own stories and transforming these through art into one collaborative performance and installation, strengthened by both the diversity and shared connections.

I want to welcome our guest artist, Phung Huynh, to say a few words and open the floor to questions. Thank you.

—Annie Buckley, Lead Artist and Found of Community-based Art, Prison Arts Collective

It has been my absolute honor to have worked with these men for the last six weeks. As you have seen today, they have collectively created a project well beyond what could have been an idea untested, words unspoken, or an endeavor embarked alone. The nature of this special art project was both multidisciplinary and collaborative, two distinct approaches that are challenging and difficult to unpack. The vision of these men was not imposed upon or given to them, rather, through a series of conversations, probing, and discovery, they have assembled an incredible piece that gently and poetically peeled away layers of social expectations, assumptions, and doubt to reveal the utmost humanist desire for redemption and transformation. They did this with intelligence, creativity, and most importantly, sincerity. How fortunate I am to experience this. Thank you men, Annie Buckley, and CSU San Bernardino staff. I never knew I could have encountered such a treasure hidden behind these walls and these gates.

—Phung Huynh, Guest Artist and co-Facilitator

CIW

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Thank you to everyone for being here. It means a lot to all of us that you made the effort to be here. This project has been incredibly inspiring and I am honored and grateful to be part of it.

I want to thank the artists, who you will hear from in a few moments, for their incredible dedication to this project. It has been a real pleasure to work with this group of women. They have been open, kind, creative, enthusiastic, thought-provoking, and, ultimately, inspirational.

This was an expansive and collaborative effort so I have several additional people to thank.

I want to thank my co-facilitators on this collaborative workshop, our Guest Artist Phung Huyhn and Site Lead Jenny Montenegro. I also want to thank our support team of interns that assisted with everything from video, photographic, and written documentation to material preparation and assisting in class: Oakley Ross, Ashley Woods, and Danielle Yellen.

I want to thank the California Institution for Women, and especially Warden Molly Hill, for welcoming us to the institution to teach weekly art classes since 2015. Here at CIW, I also want to thank Ronnie Shupe, the Community Resource Manager, Denice Green, support and analyst, Lt. Rosie Thomas Lopez, the Public Information Officer, and the staff for their support. I want to thank Kristina Khokhobashvili and Bill Sessa from Media Relations.

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We have been fortunate to be invited to teach weekly art classes here at CIW since 2015. Our classes include a range of arts from yoga and art to world crafts and 3D sculpture. This particular workshop is part of a dream I had to start to integrate and commingle these disciplines and create a collaborative project that utilized the artists' varied talents and skills by working together. I also wanted to encourage the artists to think about the ideas embodied in their work and what they wanted to express. In a way, this project began nearly two years ago when I applied for a Multidisciplinary and Presenting Art Works grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The

grant and its requirements inspired me to push these ideas further and to create the public dissemination component in the form of the project site.

Thanks to these artists and our team, this process has been more rewarding and incredible than I ever could have imagined. We planned to select women that worked in different disciplines but, as is often the case with our program, it evolved and we invited everyone from the summer program to participate so we had a large group and some that came and went, each helping in her own way. From the start, we asked the artists to reflect on and write about what really mattered to them, what they might change if they could change one thing in the world. From here, we began to select an idea for project and how to embody it. This took time, compromise, sharing, listening, and all the things that make for a successful collaboration.

In our discussions and reflections, we found many things that were important to the artists, from caring communities, arts for all children, and world hunger to the environment and being kind to others. But one issue that rose to the forefront was that of changing stereotypes of incarcerated people by helping others to see their diversity and humanity. Interestingly, while working on this project, we led a similar workshop at the California Institution for Men nearby and, though much about the two projects and processes is very different, both groups ended up addressing and expanding on this particular social issue in their work. They did this by using their unique talents telling their own stories and transforming these through art into one collaborative performance and installation, strengthened by both the diversity and shared connections.

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—Annie Buckley, Lead Artist and Found of Community-based Art, Prison Arts Collective

It has been my absolute honor to have worked with these women for the last six weeks. What you did is breathtaking. You have transformed this space into a collaborative art installation that allows us to inhabit your collective narratives, dreams, and imagination. You take us to this other world where we are allowed to wander, to float, to fade into the gentle lulling of your poems. It all came together, and it all came together so beautifully. Thank you women, Annie Buckley, and CSU San Bernardino staff. Thank you for the magic you created for us all today.

—Phung Huynh, Guest Artist and co-Facilitator