

Work from the Community Partners in Action Prison Arts Program Permanent Collection

The **Prison Arts Program**, initiated in 1978, works inside Connecticut prisons to positively and constructively change the lives of the incarcerated and the prison environment by encouraging unique, personal, and evolving artistic pursuits. These pursuits can engender hope in an often hopeless place. Participants develop purpose, creativity, self-discipline, work ethic, self-esteem, technical and communication skill development, thoughtfulness, introspection, critical thinking, and calm.

Art is one of the most prevalent activities in any prison. There is no store to buy a present for your wife, husband, child, parent, grandparent, or friend. A portrait, a landscape, a bouquet of roses made out of toilet paper – these are the presents sent by incarcerated loved ones. Drawings are made on handkerchiefs and folded into envelopes. “Envelope Art” – envelopes leaving prison covered in drawings – is the most practiced folk art in America!

Building upon this, the program asks participants to create work that only exists because they exist – work that is unique, emotive, thoughtful, and thought provoking. Participants are challenged to undertake projects that require rigorous effort, careful consideration, demanding critiques and an open mind. And, while the resulting artwork is often beautiful, the greatest value of the work lies in its ability to build hope, create personal space, provide a widening perspective, foster connection between the incarcerated and loved ones, and elicit empathy – within and between the incarcerated, staff, and the world.

The **Permanent Collection** brings some of this work to you. Here is a window into the world of the prison – into lives lived surrounded by cinder block walls, and the work being done to transcend those walls.

Community Partners in Action (CPA) is a nonprofit agency created in 1875 as the Prisoners’ Friend Corporation. CPA focuses on behavioral change and advocates for criminal justice reform. Together, with the help of many partners, CPA’s employment, basic needs and recovery services positively impact lives, while helping to reduce recidivism and enhance public safety.

This exhibition and the work of the Prison Arts Program is made possible through support from: J. Walton Bissell Foundation, Common Sense Fund, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Connecticut Community Foundation, Connecticut Department of Correction, Greater Hartford Arts Council, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Hartford, Nutmeg Foundation, and many individuals and collaborating organizations. We are honored to have your faith in our work! Thank you to all of our incredible colleagues at the Department of Correction!!!

Thank you to everyone at The Dodd Center for Human Rights at UCONN and The Art Gallery at Eastern Connecticut State University for their support in organizing this exhibition.

For further information or to support the CPA Prison Arts Program please contact:
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"Keep your gate money"
By RINGO HARRIS
11-19-10





SPICY
JALAPENO
SQUEEZABLE CHEESE

KRAFT
Velveeta

MICROWAVABLE

NET WT. 16 OZ. (16) 454g

MAYONNAISE
SQUEEZ-UMS

SPICE
CLASSICS
GARLIC
POWER





Emilio Colon, Casket with the Artist's Face, 2010
Mark Despres, Fighting Commissary, 2019
Ringo Harris, Keep Your Gate Money, 2011
Shonda Northup, Love Among the Ruins, 2011
Lamont Thergood, I Am a Free Man, 2010