

UC SANTA CRUZ



SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

UC SANTA CRUZ INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES,
THE SAN JOSÉ MUSEUM OF ART,
AND JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE PRESENT
BARRING FREEDOM, A NEW ARTS INITIATIVE ON PRISONS,
POLICING, AND JUSTICE FROM OCTOBER 2020 THROUGH JULY 2021

The exhibition at San José Museum of Art and a participatory public art project at UC Santa Cruz will be on view from October 30, 2020–April 25, 2021, followed by a presentation of the exhibition at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City

Online programs launch on October 20, 2020 with a conversation between noted prison abolitionists Angela Y. Davis and Gina Dent

For Immediate Release

October 8, 2020 — The Institute of the Arts and Sciences at University of California, Santa Cruz (IAS), the San José Museum of Art (SJMA), and John Jay College of Criminal Justice are pleased to announce *Barring Freedom*, a new initiative on art, prisons, policing, and justice. With a contemporary art exhibition, participatory public art project, interactive website, and online event series, *Barring Freedom* engages audiences nation-wide around critical issues of mass incarceration, policing, and the ongoing struggles for racial and economic justice. Building on the legacy of research, education, and activism at UC Santa Cruz, including the contributions of Distinguished Professor Emerita Angela Y. Davis, the initiative highlights the important creative work underway by artists, activists, and scholars to imagine alternatives to current injustices. Programming is ongoing from October 2020 through July 2021.

At the center of *Barring Freedom* is a bi-coastal exhibition that will debut at the San José Museum of Art on October 30, 2020 and run through April 25, 2021. *Solitary Garden*, a participatory public art project made in collaboration between artist jackie sumell, UC Santa Cruz students, and Tim Young—who is currently incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison—will simultaneously be on view at UC Santa Cruz. *Barring Freedom* will travel to New York City, on view at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2021.

The artists in *Barring Freedom* were chosen for how their works engage the complex and historical social issues within the US criminal justice system. Artists include: American Artist; Sadie Barnette; Sanford Biggers; Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick; Sonya Clark; Sharon Daniel; Maria Gaspar; Ashley Hunt; Dee Hibbert-Jones and Nomi Talisman; Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts; Deana Lawson; Prison Renaissance; Sherrill Roland; Dread Scott; jackie sumell; Hank Willis Thomas; Patrice Renee Washington; and Levester Williams.

The exhibition will be supported by a series of online events on Visualizing Abolition, organized with Professor Gina Dent, feminist studies, UC Santa Cruz. With panel discussions, artist talks, and film screenings, the online events will emphasize the importance of the arts and creative practices in envisioning alternatives to ongoing injustices.

Visualizing Abolition will launch on October 20, 2020 with a conversation between noted prison abolitionists Angela Y. Davis and Gina Dent. Bryan Stevenson, founder and executive director of Equal Justice Initiative, will be featured on October 27, 2020 and online events will continue through May 2021.

“We have spent over four years talking with artists, activists, and scholars around the United States about prisons and policing and how the arts can bring light to these issues. We hope this program will add to the ongoing conversations and both highlight and inspire creative solutions to our humanitarian crisis,” said Rachel Nelson, interim director of UC Santa Cruz Institute of the Arts and Sciences. “With more than two million incarcerated people, a majority of them Black or Brown, virtually all of them from poor communities—our prisons, jails, and detention centers reveal a troubled vision at the heart of the United States. Our goal for *Barring Freedom* is to forge a new path to end these profound injustices and galvanize broad public concern to address the broken promise of freedom and justice for all in the United States.”

“While *Barring Freedom* was conceptualized before the current crises, the unequal and ongoing effects of COVID-19 and the heightened public awareness of police killings of Black people in this country have brought into sharp relief the consequences of structural racism,” said Lauren Schell Dickens, senior curator at San José Museum of Art. “Artists are crucial to imagining our way out of these crises. Working in ways both poetic and visceral, the artists in *Barring Freedom* show that our current systems of oppression are neither natural nor inevitable, and in doing so, open up space for envisioning a future beyond mass incarceration.”

As Angela Y. Davis cautions, reflecting on the current situation of mass incarceration and policing, “Dangerous limits have been placed on the very possibility of imagining alternatives.” It is with the urgency of the times that the exhibition underscores the importance of artists and creative practitioners in envisioning a world beyond the problems of policing and overflowing prisons that currently bar people from freedom in the United States.

Visualizing Abolition Schedule

All events are from 4–5:30pm PDT/PST unless otherwise noted.

Registration is required. Visit: ias.ucsc.edu/visualizingabolition

October 15, 2020, 5–6pm PDT
Third Thursdays: Abolition 101
Gina Dent

October 20, 2020
Visualizing Abolition
Angela Y. Davis and Gina Dent

October 27, 2020
Images, Memory, and Justice
Bryan Stevenson

November 17, 2020
Visuality and Carceral Formations
Nicole Fleetwood, Herman Gray, Nicholas Mirzoeff

November 30, 2020, 4pm–12am PST
In collaboration with McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, an online screening of
Isaac Julien's *Lessons of the Hour*

December 1, 2020, 12–1:30pm PST
Abolition Then and Now
Isaac Julien and Robin D.G. Kelley

January 19, 2021
Prisons, Histories, and Erasures
Joanne Barker, Maria Gaspar, and Kelly Lytle Hernández

January 26, 2021
Prisons and Poetics
Reginald Dwayne Betts

February 2, 2021
Surveillance and Cinematics
American Artist, Simone Browne, Ruha Benjamin

February 9, 2021
Material and Memory
Sanford Biggers and Leigh Raiford

February 23, 2021
Abolitionist Feminisms
Beth Richie, Erica Meiners, and Sonya Clark

April 20, 2021
(Re)Enacting Revolution
Dread Scott and Erin Gray

May 4, 2021
Documenting Justice
Film screening and Q&A curated by Dee Hibbert-Jones and Nomi Talisman

May 11, 2021
Futures
Sora Han, adrienne maree brown, Savannah Shange

Support

Barring Freedom is supported by the SJMA Exhibitions Fund, with contributions from Glenda and Gary Dorchak and Rita and Kent Norton.

Programs at the San José Museum of Art are made possible by generous support from the Museum's Board of Trustees, a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José, the Lipman Family Foundation, Yvonne and Mike Nevens, Facebook Art Department, the Richard A. Karp Charitable Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Adobe, Yellow Chair Foundation, the SJMA Director's Council and Council of 100, the San José Museum of Art Endowment Fund established by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and The William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

About UC Santa Cruz Institute of the Arts and Sciences

The Institute of the Arts and Sciences is an interdisciplinary exhibition and event forum in the Arts Division of the University of California, Santa Cruz. The IAS's mission is to harness the creative power of the arts and the sciences to explore big questions and critical issues of our time. It contributes to the cultural life of UC Santa Cruz and features the work of nationally renowned artists and groundbreaking scientists and scholars. The IAS offers a range of public programs, sponsors residencies, and curates and organizes an ambitious exhibition program.

About San José Museum of Art

SJMA is located at 110 South Market Street in downtown San José, California near the Plaza de César Chavez. The Museum is temporarily closed, following the Santa Clara County orders to Shelter in Place due to COVID-19. SJMA continues to offer programming online and has expanded digital content by creating a Museum From Home page, found here: sjmusart.org/museum-from-home. Updated weekly, the section features behind-the-scene explorations of exhibitions, art-making videos, educator lesson plans, a Curators' Dashboard, and more. SJMA is planning to reopen October 30, 2020, however, given the fluctuating City and County guidelines due to Covid-19, please visit SanJoseMuseumofArt.org. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors, and free to members, college students, youth and children ages 17 and under, and schoolteachers (with valid ID). For more information, call 408.271.6840 or visit SanJoseMuseumofArt.org.

About John Jay School of Criminal Justice

The Anya and Andrew Shiva Gallery is the primary fine art gallery at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, a senior college of the City University of New York in Midtown Manhattan, New York City. The program features a variety of media and concepts, but is heavily focused on social issues and the humanities. Opened in 2013, the gallery is 4,050 square feet and is located on the ground floor of John Jay's 620,000-square foot building that sits on 11th Avenue and 59th Street in New York City, a four block walk from Central Park. The building was designed by Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill.

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