



Contact: Andy Hart
Hartford Public Library
860-695-6282
ahart@hplct.org

Library to Host Series of Events Examining America's Mass Incarceration Crisis

(HARTFORD, CT: March 13, 2019) Between 1980 and 2015, the number of prisoners in American jails rose from approximately 500,000 to 2,200,000, [as reported by the NAACP](#). Equally disturbing are statistics that show African-Americans and Hispanics are jailed at rates far exceeding those of whites.

How did we get here? What does it say about the current state of our society? And what can we do about it? Hartford Public Library will examine America's multi-faceted incarceration crisis through drama, dance, conversation and the visual arts this March and April.

Exhibit: 40 Years of the CPA Prison Arts Program

March 15 – April 28 (Opening Reception: March 15)

ArtWalk, Downtown Library, 3rd Floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford

For four decades, Community Partners in Action (CPA) has been using the therapeutic nature of art to improve the lives of incarcerated persons in Connecticut through its Prison Arts Program. To celebrate the program's 40th anniversary, CPA has created an exhibit of drawings, paintings, sculpture, photographs, documents and artifacts drawn from its permanent collection. The exhibition illustrates both the history of the program as well as the high level of art that has been produced. (CPA will host a fundraiser on the ArtWalk on Thursday, April 25. Go to <https://cpa-ct.org/celebrate/> to register.)

National Exhibit: States of Incarceration

Now – April 18 (Opening Reception: March 28)

Atrium, Downtown Library, Ground Floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford

Hartford Public Library, in partnership with the University of Connecticut, will host "States of Incarceration," a traveling national exhibition created by the Humanities Action Lab at The New School in New York City. This interactive and compelling exhibit examines a wide range of topics related to incarceration in the United States from 17 different states. Connecticut's component deals

with the first state penitentiary in the United States, Newgate Prison in Granby, and examines the questions raised by turning a former prison into a tourist site. Other topics in the exhibition include “How does architecture shape punishment” (Texas); “Are prisons for punishment or rehabilitation?” (Massachusetts); and “How do profits shape punishment?” (Arizona).

Community Conversation: *Encounters: States of Incarceration*

Saturday, April 6, 10 am – 1 pm

Hartford History Center, Downtown Library, 3rd Floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford

Encounters is an ongoing series of informed and informal community conversations on critical issues facing our society. In April, the dialogue will focus on incarceration in America in both historical and contemporary contexts, and to what extent is America’s correctional system a reflection of our own values and fears. The series is a partnership between the Hartford History Center at the Hartford Public Library, The Amistad Center for Art & Cultures, the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, the Old State House, and the UConn Humanities Institute.

Performance: *Finding Stillness* by Judy Dworin Performance Project

Tuesday, April 9, 6 – 7:30 pm

ArtWalk, Downtown Library, 3rd Floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford

The ArtWalk Book Club will host a performance of excerpts from “Finding Stillness,” the latest work from the Judy Dworin Performance Project. “Finding Stillness” consists of short dance pieces created by inmates and former inmates at York Women’s Prison in Niantic. A discussion about some of the issues dealt with in the performances will follow.

Open Rehearsal: *Conviction*

Thursday, April 25, 6 – 7:30 pm

Albany Library, 1250 Albany Avenue, Hartford

Play Reading and Talk Back: *Conviction*

Saturday, April 27, 2 – 5 pm

Center for Contemporary Culture, Downtown Library, 1st Floor, 500 Main Street, Hartford

Conviction is a thought-provoking look at the real-life case of James Tillman, formerly of Hartford, who spent over 18 years in prison for a brutal crime he didn’t commit. In 2006, Tillman was exonerated based on DNA evidence. He was freed in 2007. The play, written by Alan Kramer and directed by Kimberly West-Herzog, examines the issues raised by the case through interactions between Tillman and himself at different stages in his life.

ABOUT HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Now celebrating its 125th year, Hartford Public Library remains at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience in the 21st Century. With seven locations throughout the city, the library provides education, intellectual enrichment and cultural development for thousands of children, youth and adults every year. Hartford Public Library has also gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance and youth leadership training. Please visit www.hplct.org.