

PCAP NEWS

November 2019

The PCAP newsletter aims to keep incarcerated artists, writers, and performers informed of what the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) is doing and how to be involved. If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter, please have them write to us.

A Note from the Interim Director

by **Nora Krinitsky**

Greetings Prison Creative Arts Project participants, artists, and community! The semester is now well underway and the PCAP office is humming with activity. On September 8th, Mary Heinen McPherson, PCAP's Program Coordinator, trained sixty new PCAP facilitators and has conducted special trainings for students in two new music courses. Facilitators have begun their workshops at at least seven facilities and our community workshop will also begin soon. I am particularly excited to see the growth of PCAP's music programming as we continue our choral workshop at Saginaw Correctional Facility and the performances by our Out of the Blue Choir. This month we will also begin our art selection trips as groups of curators, students, staff, and community members visit every correctional facility in the state to view art, speak with artists, and make decisions about the art that will be featured in the *25th Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*. Celebrating the twenty-fifth year of the art show is a true honor and we look forward to marking this special occasion with a keynote address by art show founder Janie Paul. The editorial team for the *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing* has also started their regular meetings and are beginning to read and respond to submissions sent in by all of you. I take particular pride in the fact that the PCAP literary review editorial team responds to every submission it receives with substantive feedback. I don't think there is any other literature review in the world that can claim that! Cozine Welch, the Managing Editor of the literature review, has done a fantastic job leading the editorial team and streamlining its work.

While the beginning of the semester has been an exciting time, we are also in the midst of a period of deep sadness as we mourn the passing of PCAP founder Buzz Alexander. Buzz died in his home in Ann Arbor on September 19, 2019. I was not lucky enough to know Buzz personally, but the outpouring of grief and fond memories shared by those who loved and cared for Buzz has demonstrated what a truly wonderful and inspirational person he was. As I have stepped into my role as Interim Director, I marvel at the creativity, tenacity, selflessness, bravery, and commitment to social justice that Buzz must have possessed in order to imagine the Prison Creative Arts Project and bring it into being. Many of you knew Buzz and I imagine that you are experiencing the difficult emotions of mourning as you learn of his passing. Please know that I and the PCAP staff extend our greatest sympathies to those of you who are processing this loss. This newsletter includes several other remembrances of Buzz, including a tribute written by his wife Janie Paul. I welcome you all to share your memories and thoughts of Buzz with me or other members of the PCAP staff. I will pass any memories or tributes you would like to share on to Buzz's family and loved ones and include them in the growing collection of remembrances that PCAP associates and participants have already shared. Rest assured, the work of PCAP will continue apace in Buzz's absence. Buzz established an incredibly strong organization, curriculum, and mission during the years that he led PCAP, which will continue to provide the foundation for our work going forward. We are privileged to continue his legacy and will continue to work to fulfill his vision of social justice and liberation.

Finally, the U-M Carceral State Project is getting underway this semester as we begin our major research initiative, "Documenting Criminalization and Confinement." We have assembled an incredibly talented group of student and community researchers who are now beginning their work on a wide range of topics, including policing and surveillance, immigration detention, carcerality and visual materials, reentry experiences, the conditions inside prisons and other correctional facilities, and the creative expression of those who have been involved in the criminal justice system. I'm so impressed by the research team we have created—there are now nearly 35 people involved in this project! There will also be important ways for you to be involved going forward. In this newsletter you will find a call for interest in participating in the research of the Carceral State Project. For now, I ask that those of you who are interested send some basic identifying information to the mailing address listed in that call for participation. In the future, we will solicit information, testimonies, interviews, and other writings from anyone who would like to be a part of the project. Those materials will be analyzed and catalogued by our research team and included in a searchable database. They may also be featured in publications, research reports, and policy recommendations written by members of our research team. It would be absolutely impossible to do this important work without the help, input, and expertise of all of you. I hope that you will consider participating in the project.

Buzz Alexander Tribute

by Janie Paul

Buzz Alexander, founder of PCAP, and my husband, died on September 19, 2019 from frontal temporal dementia. He was 80 years old and had been ill for about 6 years. He lost his ability to speak and to understand many things. However, he maintained his dignity and sense of independence and, even sometimes, his sense of humor. Thankfully, he remained at home. At the end, he was at peace and didn't suffer. He was surrounded by family and close friends.



Buzz Alexander, PCAP Founder

Despite this tragedy, something wonderful happened. Danny Valentine, who served 25 years in prison, became Buzz's full-time caregiver. He and Buzz had met through the selection visits for the *Annual Exhibition* and Danny was eager to return the compassion Buzz had shown him. A circle of love beginning with Buzz's tireless work for incarcerated people was completed by Danny's dedication to him.

Buzz was born in 1938 in Wilmette Illinois. He received a B.A. in 1960 from Harvard University; an M.A. in 1962 from Cambridge University; and a Ph.D. in 1967 from Harvard. While an instructor at Harvard, Buzz joined the anti-Vietnam war movement and from then on, was active in movements for peace and social justice. Buzz's field of study was English and American literature.

When Buzz arrived at the University of Michigan in 1971, he taught literature and film classes. Soon he began to teach classes on how artists respond to various social evils as a way to engage students in questions about who we are and our relationship to the world. His first such class, "The Holocaust, Hiroshima, Vietnam, Latin America and the Artist," evolved into a course on the Vietnam war. Later he focused on the ways in which artists responded to the suppression of popular movements in Latin America. Eventually these courses focused on the United States criminal justice system.

Buzz facilitated The Sisters Within Theater group, first at Florence Crane and then at Huron Valley where it is still going strong after almost 30 years, The Poet's corner at JMF and a theater workshop at Western Wayne.

Buzz created four classes about incarceration. In "Prison and the Artist", Buzz and his students analyzed the conventional ideas about incarceration embedded in many Hollywood films that perpetuate stereotypes about prisoners. In other classes, students facilitated weekly arts workshops in prisons, juvenile facilities and Detroit high schools. In 1996, Buzz and I organized the first of the *Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*. Little did we know it would go on for so many years. But Buzz believed in "showing up." This meant showing up for the workshop every week even if it was failing to produce a play, even if people weren't getting along or the teenagers were sullen and angry; it meant driving through a snowstorm to collect art for the annual exhibit; it meant making the exhibit an annual event, even though in the beginning, we were only three or four volunteers doing all the work.

Buzz Alexander Tribute cont.

Buzz had three cornerstones to his philosophy: respect for every individual, belief in their potential, and a process of discovery in the work. Whether in a workshop or in a university class, Buzz brought each person into the light and gave them value. He spent countless hours at home every evening writing extensive responses to his students' weekly journal entries or organizing the scenes for a play. Buzz worked tirelessly, writing grant proposals to pay for the exhibits and often traveled to Lansing to meet with MDOC administrators.

To recuperate, we spent summers in various rural areas, Buzz writing and me painting. Buzz did a lot of hiking and bike riding. He was athletic his whole life and remained very fit until his death. Buzz knew how to pace himself. Every day, whether hard at work, or in the summers, at around 11am he took "his break" which was sitting in a chair and reading a novel with a cup of coffee.

Buzz was a man who rarely compromised his beliefs and who was constantly in action to bring about the changes that he thought were needed in this world. The core of Buzz's life was his connection to all of you and to his university students, who are continuing his legacy. He will live on in our hearts and our work for justice.



Janie Paul and Buzz Alexander

Literary Review

The Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) is accepting submissions of creative writing—fiction, poetry, essays, or memoir) of up to 4,500 words (ten typed pages) for *The Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*. The next pieces selected will appear in Volume 12, appearing in 2020. Writers are notified with individual responses. Submissions will be received at this address throughout the year.

PCAP at LSA Residential College
ATTN: Phil Christman
701 E. University Ave. Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1245

Please submit the following information with your written work:

- Your legal name (so we can communicate with you by mail);
- Your name or pen name as you'd like it to appear in the journal, if that's different than your legal name;
- Your MDOC or BOP ID number;
- Your current address;
- A short paragraph about yourself/your writing that will be published alongside any accepted piece.

Thank you for your outstanding pieces of writing that you have submitted thus far. We strongly encourage you to continue in this creative process and send us any and all of your work.

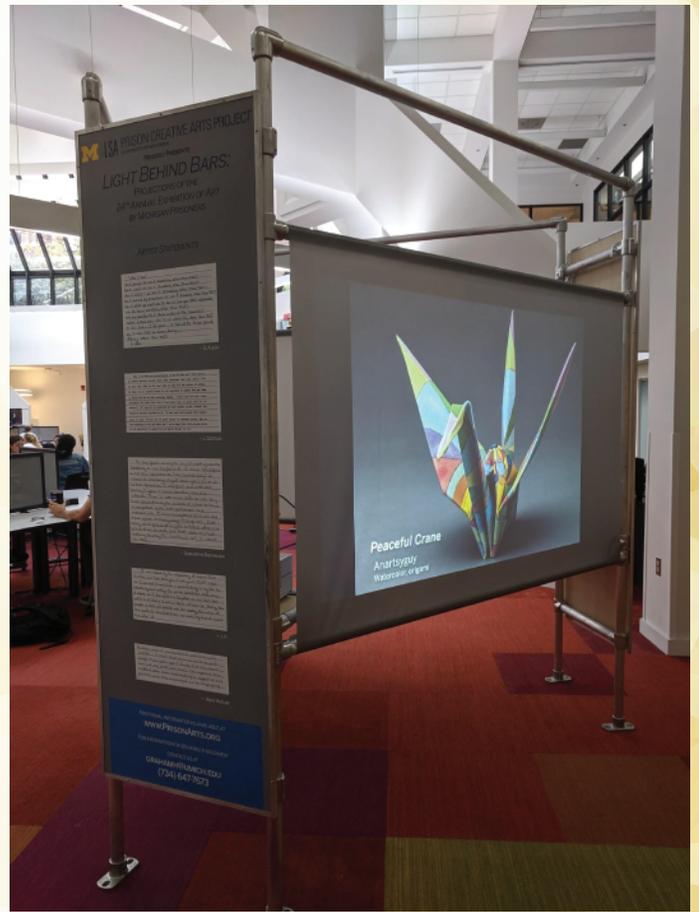
Light Behind Bars: Projections from the 24th Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners

by **Vanessa Mayesky**

Two years ago Graham Hamilton, who leads PCAP's *Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*, came to me with an idea for expanding the audience of the show. "What if we launched a video exhibit? It would be freestanding and portable. We could take it almost anywhere." Graham went on to describe a structure that would hold three video projectors, each showing a slideshow of images from the *Annual Exhibition*. I couldn't quite picture it, but knew Graham had a vision and a plan.

Graham worked with experts in set design and architecture to design and build what we call the "video kiosk." The exhibit is a beautiful and powerful way to bring your art to new audiences. The kiosk made its debut at the University of Michigan (U-M) School of Social Work this September with the exhibit *Light Behind Bars: Projections from the 24th Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*. Photos of all 672 artworks from the *24th Annual Exhibition* were displayed in a busy public space on campus.

Light Behind Bars will be shown at the U-M Art & Architecture Building in October. After test runs on campus, Graham will schedule exhibits in a few locations around the state. If you have ideas for where to display the video kiosk, please write to our office.



Light Behind Bars exhibit at the U-M School of Social Work, September 2019



Graham Hamilton building the video kiosk.

University of Michigan Carceral State Project “Documenting Criminalization and Confinement”

Call for Participation

The University of Michigan Carceral State Project is embarking on a major research initiative entitled “Documenting Criminalization and Confinement.” This initiative is made up of several research teams who will study a wide range of topics, including policing, immigration detention, carcerality and visual materials, reentry and surveillance, the conditions inside prisons and other correctional facilities, and the creative expression of those who have been involved in the criminal justice system.

One of the research teams associated with this project—the Confronting Conditions of Confinement team—will collect narratives on the conditions in Michigan’s prisons and communicate the impact of those conditions on people’s lives: people who have been inside, their families, and their communities. We want to collect testimonials about life inside and give voice to those stories on the outside. We want to put a face to incarceration and break down the barriers between us. Some of the testimonials we collect will become available to the public.

This project is just beginning. If you would like to participate in this research in some capacity, we ask that you send us the following information:

- Your name;
- Your MDOC or BOP number;
- The facilities where you have been incarcerated.;
- The approximate dates you were incarcerated at each facility.;
- Questions or ideas you have about the project (optional).

Please send this information to:

The Michigan Humanities Collaboratory
Attn: Carceral State Project
100 North Hatcher Gallery
Hatcher Graduate Library
913 S. University
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Or to: conditionsofconfinement@umich.edu

Linkage Project

Would you like to stay connected with PCAP after you come home? The Linkage Project offers workshops, cultural field trips, connections to PCAP’s campus community, and the opportunity to build a network with other artists, writers, and performers. If you would like to participate, please write to Vanessa Mayesky when you have a release date or email pcaplinkage@umich.edu after you come home.

Not One Without: A Special Issue on Water

"Thousands have lived without love; not one without water." In the spirit of W.H. Auden's words, this forthcoming special issue of the *Michigan Quarterly Review* will explore urgent, complex, and revelatory writing on water from around the world. "Not One Without: A Special Issue on Water" will explore the paradoxes of water, how at once it gives life and takes it; how it divides us along cruel lines of inequality even as it binds us. Water connects us, and our planet, to our origins and to an indivisible fate.

MICHIGAN QUARTERLY REVIEW

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Not One Without: A Special Issue on Water

Guest Edited by Anna Clark

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MQR is seeking work in all genres that addresses water issues from around the world

Submissions Open Aug 1-Dec 1

Details at www.michiganquarterlyreview.com



We are seeking work that addresses any aspect of water: from the contested oil pipeline beneath the Straits of Mackinac to water shut-offs in Cape Town; from flooding in the Midwest to water scarcity in India and the Sahel; from the role of water in regional and global conflict and migration to the way that storm surges and shifting coastlines are forcing us to rethink the shapes of urban centers.

We are looking for pieces that consider water through the lens of history and of contemporary geopolitics, and are excited to receive submissions

that consider water through mythology, religion, and art history. We welcome a range of genres, including nonfiction, fiction, poetry, drama, translations, and pieces that don't fit into a neat category.

General Submissions for the Print Journal:

Regular submissions for the print journal are accepted from January 15 to April 15, and from August 1 to November 30. Average turnaround time is four to six months. Simultaneous submissions are allowed, but please notify us immediately if the manuscript is accepted elsewhere. Please do not submit previously published work, including work published on a personal website or blog.

Prose submissions: Manuscripts should be double-spaced, right margins not justified; 1,500 words minimum, 5,000 average, 7,000 maximum. All stories accepted for publication will be passed on to a judge as finalists for the \$2000 Lawrence Prize.

Poetry submissions: Please submit in between 3-6 poems in one document, not to exceed a total of 12 pages.

MQR is a paying market.

Submissions for MQR Online:

Submit author interviews, book reviews, craft essays, and general nonfiction related to arts & culture. Essays should not be longer than 3,000 words. If there are photos to accompany your piece, please make a note in your cover letter.

Payment is \$30 per piece.

Please note that we are not currently reading fiction or poetry for this category.

MQR accepts mailed submissions from incarcerated individuals at this address:

Michigan Quarterly Review
0576 Rackham Bldg.
915 E. Washington Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1070

Calendar

Ongoing

Rolling submissions for *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*
Weekly creative arts workshops in prisons in lower Michigan

November

Selection trips to MDOC facilities for *Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*
Changing Moons: Art by Alan Compo exhibit at Detroit Street Filling Station, Ann Arbor

December

PCAP Art Auction, December 7th, 6:30 PM, Michigan League, Ann Arbor
Selection trips to MDOC facilities for *Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*
Changing Moons: Art by Alan Compo exhibit at Detroit Street Filling Station, Ann Arbor

January

Curator final selection of artwork for *Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners*
Changing Moons: Art by Alan Compo exhibit at Detroit Street Filling Station, Ann Arbor

February

Rolling submissions for *Michigan Review of Prisoner Creative Writing*
Annual Exhibition preview exhibit at Detroit Street Filling Station, Ann Arbor

About PCAP

Mission Statement

The Prison Creative Arts Project brings those impacted by the justice system and the University of Michigan community into artistic collaboration for mutual learning and growth.

Contact Us

PCAP at University of Michigan
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701 E. University Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1245
pcapinfo@umich.edu
www.prisonarts.org

PCAP Faculty

Nora Krinitsky, Interim Director
Margaret Burk, Jose Casas, Phil Christman, Joseph Kemper, Ashley Lucas, Sarah Messer, Becca Pickus, Eugene Rogers, Cozine Welch, Jr., Isaac Wingfield

PCAP Staff

El Chen, Graham Hamilton, Mary Heinen, Vanessa Mayesky

PCAP Special Projects Staff

Fernanda Pires, Cozine Welch, Jr.

Annual Exhibition Curators

Janie Paul, Senior Curator
Alyssa Baginski, El Chen, Dominique Cornitcher, Nelly Emlaw, Graham Hamilton, Charlie Michaels, Jason Wright

