

RESONANCE: Art from Oregon's Prisons

Exhibit: January 3 - February 4, 2022
Closing Reception: Thursday, February 3 at 6pm
EMU: Adell McMillan Gallery

RESONANCE: Art from Oregon's Prisons

[Resonance](#) is a creative exhibition of the visual artwork created by over 15 artists who are incarcerated in prisons across the state of Oregon. In recognition of the remarkable talents of these artists, the University of Oregon Prison Education Program and the EMU Center for Student Involvement Visual Arts Team have worked in conjunction to exhibit their work to the outside world.

Each piece has a survey linked in blue. Please take a moment and give feedback to our artists inside. We will be creating a post-show brochure for our inside artists including photos of the exhibit and feedback from the community to send inside once the exhibit is done. Please feel free to share with your community as we would appreciate as much feedback on the art as possible.

[Resonance will be on display in the EMU Adell McMillan Gallery January 3rd-February 4th with a closing reception on February 3rd. All are welcome.](#)



[Livin on the Edge by Tim](#)

Every year, there are severe droughts in parts of Africa, this picture is of an elephant I like to call Bull, a big tough animal. Bull lasted the drought out right and when the rains came he ran to claim his spot of water.

Chains of My Soul by Miguel

After many years in prison, you become filled with bitterness and sadness. I felt like I had nothing to give, finally I found meaning in my life. Which is something prison can't take away -- which is peace and love.





[Crazy Cost of College by Sang](#)

The intention in creating this piece, "Crazy Cost of College" is to challenge the stereotypes about who the people in prison are, what they look like, their educational level, socioeconomic status and their contribution to society. The fact is, anyone can make a mistake in judgement that results in their incarceration. It is an injustice and even ridiculous to mark somebody for the rest of their life and judge people on their worst behavior. We all have much more to offer than our worst mistake.

The Sentinel by Brian

Artwork provides the escape I need to the hopeless drone of existence in prison. The colorful content of my work compensates for the 6 years of meaningless isolation I served in 24 hour lockdown. I'm a whore for images and don't care where they come from because I've never been on the internet and have no access to material to draw. I use the medium of colored pencil but have also done Intarsia, which is art rendered from wood (colors & grains).





[La Bailarina by Jeffery](#)

I am fascinated by the beauty and pageantry of these incredible dancers and the passion of their dance. This is the first in a series of works that will focus on various styles of Latin dance.

CAGE # ∞



Civil Death

by Francisco

See next slide for statement

Civil Death by Francisco

Being incarcerated puts us outside the consideration of society. To the outside world we who are in prison are at times presumed dead, so the skull face is not about how I see myself but how others may see me or don't. However, the hands of flesh defiantly declare "I Am Alive" to remind the viewer that this person matters and is not dead.

The writing in the background is about the effects of warehousing people. With so many resources devoted to prison beds and not enough to programs such as education, people will earn an "ACTTD" or Associates of Criminal Thinking Transfer Degree. They will transfer this degree to the streets, as 98% of all prisoners will be released. Many people come to prison because they lack empathy and so they dehumanize their neighbor. Yet for many, while in prison, these same value shortfalls will be reinforced if no real opportunities for change are provided. They will learn Dehumanization 101, Education is a Privilege 102, No Empathy 103, and so on. This is the education that prisoners receive as a result of mass incarceration. People are locked up in cages with very few rights or ways to better themselves. I believe that our society has to ask itself, "How is this system of revenge making our society any better?" There are better ways.

"Civil Death" is also about the stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination that incarcerated people face even when they are released and have paid for their crimes. In many states, ex-felons are not allowed to participate as citizens. Denying civil rights is a system that further degrades instead of creating good citizenship and inclusiveness. Disenfranchisement does not promote rehabilitation and says that one cannot be a full part of the community.

The cage number with the infinity sign represents the millions of people incarcerated and the future millions if nothing changes in our current system.



Old Man Blu by Les

Inspired by the natural aging of an old timer in time.



Deep Love by
Francisco O.

My first airbrush
project, I
believe I will
improve
gradually.



Autumn Leaves by Les



[Wild Horses by Ron](#)

Ron has done leather art and crafts for the past three decades.



Karenin by Cannon

In Anna Karenina, the character Karenin is an uncompromising one, strong, sharp, and direct. A man of firm convictions, direct colors and unyielding planes, that personality is what made this piece. Life made him hard, but also made him stoic and loyal.





[Save the Girls by Brian](#)

I studied art history at Penn State while incarcerated and attended eight other colleges including U of O and Lewis and Clark.

I've completed over 300 pieces of art over a twelve year period which were colored pencil reproductions of other artists. Only about 5% of these were original because I have very little creative capacity and limited access to images. Half of my work was of the masters: Picasso, Gauguin, van Gogh, Hiroshige, Matisse, Chagall, etc. The other half were of Native Americans and modern reproductions.

The achievement of replicating colorful art, while tuning out to beautiful music, allowed me to find the peace of mind and self-esteem I lacked while serving time. There's nothing worse than wasting time, and that's why it's used to punish the undesirable "others" in society. Art allows one to escape the drudgery of isolation and find hope in humanity through self-forgetfulness.

Face Never Lies by Eric



[Best Catch by Kevin](#)

See next slide for
statement



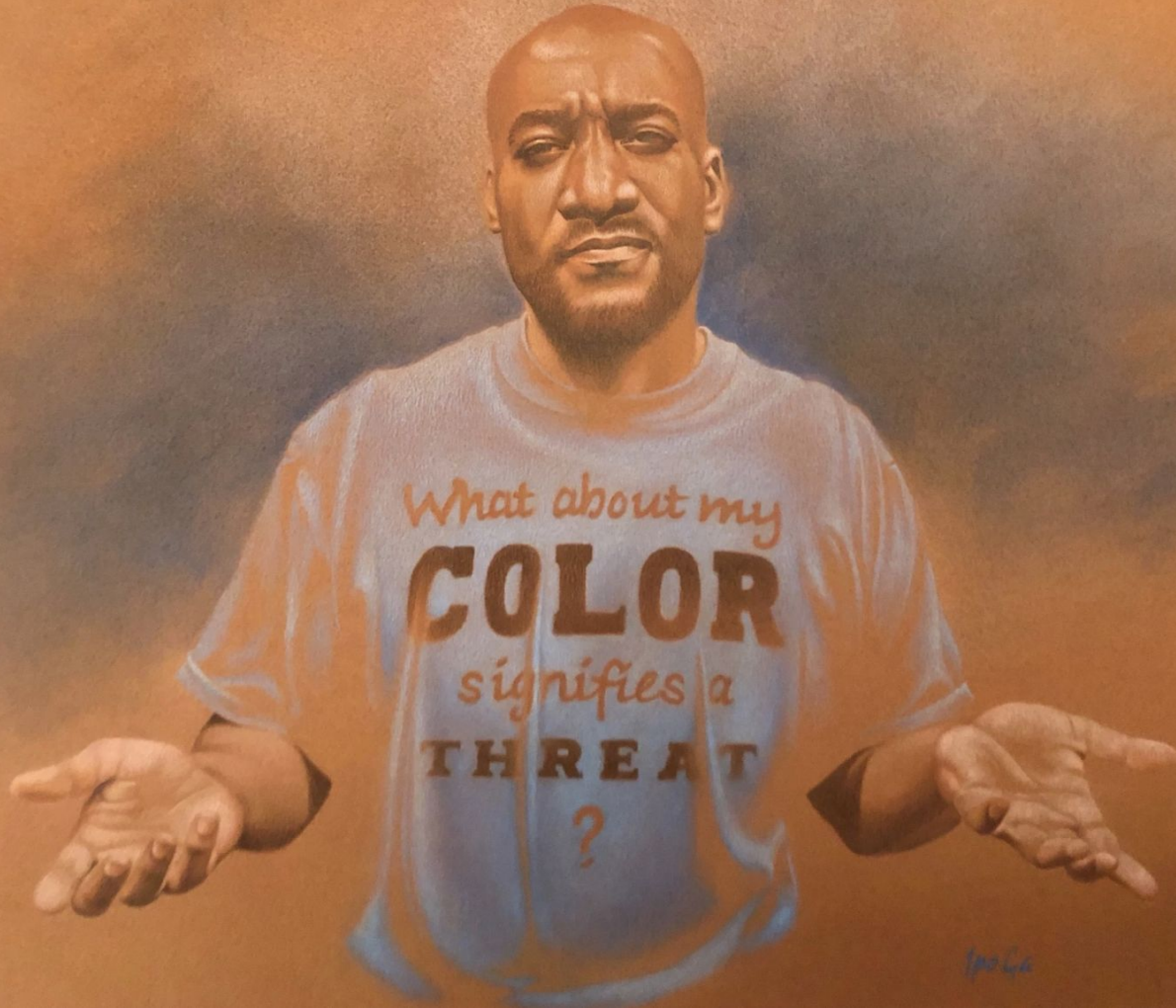
Best Catch by Kevin

Original artwork inspired by the sense of movement and expectation that comes from long patience. Enjoy the warmth and texture that wood grants. This is an intarsia from all natural undyed wood - 204 pieces of twelve types of wood. The grizzly body is walnut, wenge nose, bass wood teeth, purple heart lips, and eye made from rose wood, bass wood, and ebony. Water is maple. Chinook is oak and walnut with satinwood and ebony eye. Background is Poplar trees, blue pine stones, and maple sky. Framed in Myrtle wood.

While I am mostly a self-taught artist (one art class 30 years ago where I disagreed with the instructor), I find myself drawn to a sense of movement through texture and enjoy working with different mediums to find that feeling. In the beginning I reproduced what I saw but today I draw and compose what feels right. I consider art to be a shared creative experience and find the most joy helping others find their own spark.



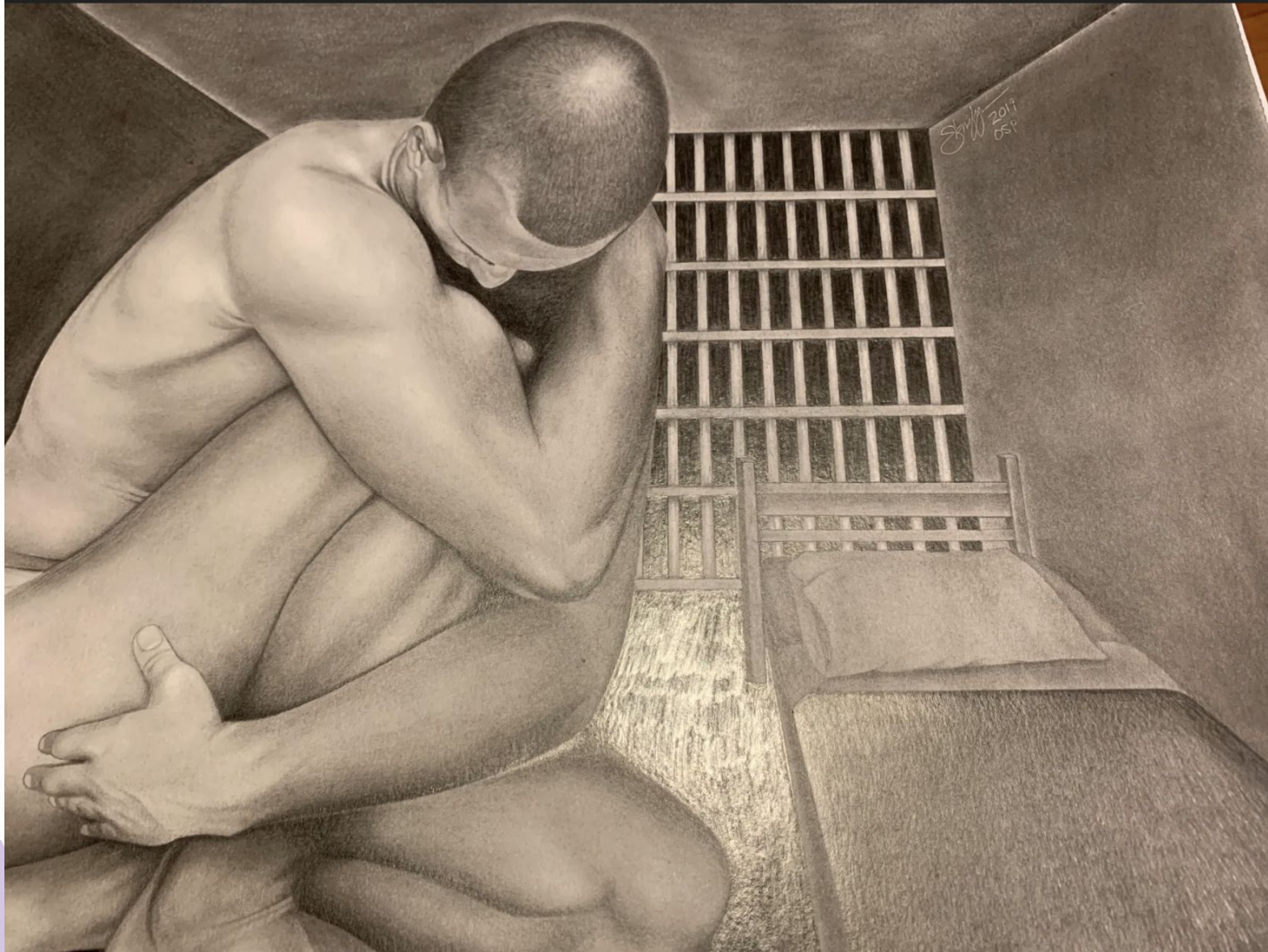
[Color Threat by Jeffery](#)



I am disturbed and saddened by the recent rise in racial tension in the U.S.A. I don't understand why, in the melting pot that is the United States, people of color are regarded with so much fear and suspicion. It doesn't feel like our country is moving toward anything that resembles "greatness." I'm using this gift God has given me to speak against the injustice of racial profiling and hoping that this piece will inspire a healthy open dialogue.

One's Own Prison by Sang

The joys from creating art came early on in my life. Besides a few basic art classes in middle school and high school, I am mostly self-taught. My development came by studying art books, imitating great artistic works and constantly sharpening my skills. I enjoy the challenges of being an artist. By patiently striving to overcome challenges, I seek to find success both in art and in life. I am interested in the human form, faces and figures. Emotions, expressions, experiences are elements used when designing my work. In order to truly move forward as an artist, I must persevere. To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.





[Reaching by Kevin](#)

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[Tranquility](#)
[by Les](#)

Inspired by the love of
nature.

[Blue Mountain by Amaro](#)



[Out in the County](#)
[by Darren](#)

Art work influenced by western lifestyle in Southern Oregon. I am self taught and have drawn about 450 pieces in the last 9 or so years of incarceration; all graphite and colored pencil.



[Cap of Cthulu by Cannon](#)

Cthulu is an elder god who dwells in the heart of madness. He feeds on dreams and leaves people lost broken husks in his wake. 'Nuff said. BUT...the point of this piece was always meant to be an interactive engagement behavior piece. So I wanted every person who sees it to put it on and take a "photo-bomb-selfie" with it. Because then, we all can say to the "Devourer of Dreams" that "even when you dominate me, and take sustenance from my dreams, I'm still going to be happy, I'm still going to smile and still have a hope for the future." Perhaps then maybe we can manifest that for real.



Hanging Floral Basket by Cannon

A few years ago my friend wrote a proposal for an "in-cell plant program." Just a little essay to care for plants to have in our windows. Because studies have shown that any connection to nature calms people and the act of nurturing, even caring for a plant can teach people about compassion and humanity. The institution said no to the program, but afterward I said, "If you won't let us have a plant in a pop bottle, I'm gonna make something out of even less. I took this flat piece of nothing and made a whole bunch of hanging plants maybe even a flower basket out of it." Something thrown out as garbage turned into something pretty. Like a hanging flower basket, so there!





[Movin' Cattle by Darren](#)

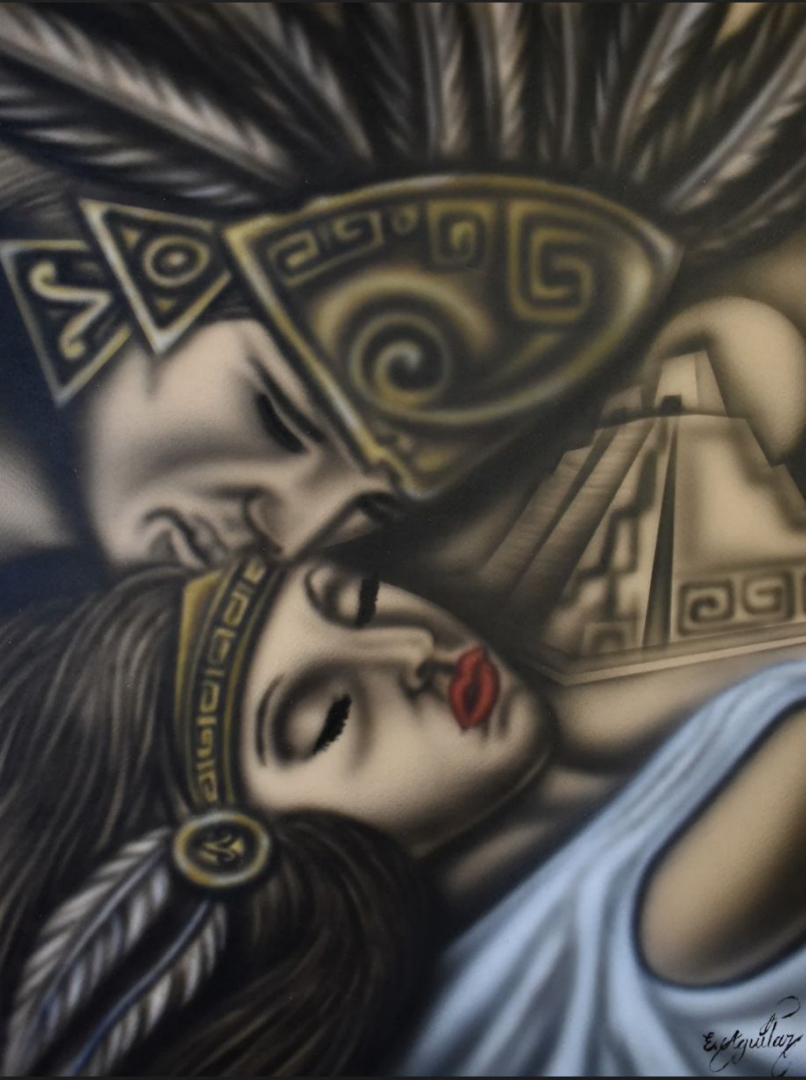
Cards by Gilbert



[Rodeo Revenge 1 and 2 by Tallook Jones](#)



[Soul of Warrior by Eric](#)



A Mother's Love by Francisco

See next slide for statement.



A Mother's Love by Francisco

I started "A Mother's Love" as a class project. The professor, Anne Margratten, showed us some art where the artist took "The Burlington House" cartoon "Virgin and Child" with St. Anne and John the Baptist by Leonardo de Vinci, and staying with the same design, she incorporated her family's portraits into the figures. This artist inspired me.



Around this time my mother had told me that my incarceration felt to her like she was a prisoner in her description of her pain. Wanting to do some conceptual art, this gave me my initial idea for doing a piece that described my mother's pain, which would evolve to also reflect what it feels like to be incarcerated. At the same time I was taking other classes on criminal justice and incarceration through the U of O. Some of my influential authors were Angela Davis, Victor Frankel, Nelson Mandela and others.

I then found a painting called "Charity" by William Adolphe Bouguereau, which was completed in 1859, and it showed this mother, who could be the mother of Jesus and who was represented in poverty with her children amid these buildings that represent power, wealth and structure. This is what poverty looked like for Bouguereau in 1859. "A Mother's Love" is what poverty looks like today for me, an artist inspired by Bouguereau's painting. As I developed the drawing, I thought of my single mom and how my friends came from single mom families and how we were all poor. I thought of the single moms who are minorities, and thought about the systems that work to pull those children away from their mothers and how these mothers try to hold on to their children.

There are systems that go into poor, often minority, neighborhoods and count the children to predict future prison construction. I thought about how some are disproportionately incarcerated. I thought about the school-to-prison pipeline, the road from slavery to the prison system to maintain slave labor. I thought about the enterprise of prisons and the 13th amendment that supports this enterprise. The chains between the mother and children represent the burden of incarceration on the whole family. They are locked together in a cell physically or emotionally.

The number on the boy's chest is Victor Frankel's concentration camp number. I put it there because I feel that some of the same ideologies that he faced are in our system. The baby has prison stripes and a hospital band that reads slave number 11 because his prison bed is already being calculated. The boy has the Department of Corrections enterprises ball and chain, since once he is in the prison system he is a slave with monetary value. In many ways this was a very hard piece to create because I had to face my reality of being one in a system of mass incarceration, living in a country that has 25% of all prisoners in the world

The Heavens Declare the Glory of God

by Francisco

“Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,’ even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as day, for darkness is as light with you.” (Psalm 139:7-12)

Jesus said, “I was in prison and you came to me.” If Jesus is even in the prisons, then what does that say about us prisoners?

This piece is representative of my faith in the Way of Jesus Christ. For me when I look at the sky, nature, or see the wonders of the universe, it leaves me in awe at His creation. I see His glory in these things. My faith has been a very large part of my life, my restoration, my healing, and my strength. It has also been a guiding force when it comes to my art as I usually like to paint the things of creation. In this self-portrait I am giving glory to God under the stars of heaven, even though I am being watched by the armed guard in the tower. The walls confine me in and keep others out; however, those walls cannot restrain my spirit and my soul somehow transcends my temporary reality.

God fills all things. He even fills my heart. God is everywhere, even in prison.

