

## Who We Are

The mission of the Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP) is to collaborate with incarcerated youth and adults, urban youth, and the formerly incarcerated to strengthen our community through creative expression.

Since 1990 PCAP has facilitated hundreds of workshops in the arts in Michigan high schools, juvenile facilities, and prisons. We have curated 10 major exhibitions of art by Michigan prisoners and developed many other creative projects, working closely with educational and correctional institutions, arts organizations, family members of the incarcerated, and other community members.

### Our process is

guided by *respect* and a spirit of **collaboration** in which vulnerability, risk, and improvisation lead to *discovery*.

We make possible spaces in which the voices and visions of the incarcerated can be expressed.

### We believe that

everyone has the *capacity to create* art **art is necessary** for individual and societal growth, connection, and survival art should be *accessible to all*

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## A Stranger with a Rope...

Prison is like a pool of deep water,  
at first so clear that you can easily see the surface  
and grasp the reaching hands of family and loved ones  
holding you, keeping you from sinking.

But years pass, and grips tire and loosen,  
one by one finally letting go until all are gone,  
and you begin to slowly sink, deeper and deeper,  
into the murky depths that have become your world,

and the light above slowly fades into pieces  
of imperfect memory until, finally, all that remains of hope  
is an unclear vision of a stranger far above somewhere with a rope...  
and the prayer that she will throw it.

—George Hall



We the **unseen** and **unheard** artists have been given wings that will *lift us beyond* these walls

—Maurice Scott



[www.prisonarts.org](http://www.prisonarts.org)

**Workshops** PCAP's collaborative workshops foster creative expression and challenge societal barriers of all kinds. Working in theater, creative writing, art, dance, music, or video, each workshop culminates in a final performance, reading, or exhibit, allowing participants to celebrate their work and present it to a larger audience.

**Annual Exhibition of Art by Michigan Prisoners**

Our annual exhibition has showcased the work of prison artists since 1996, breaking stereotypes and encouraging dialogue between people in prison and those outside. The show now displays over 300 works of art by more than 200 artists from 40 Michigan prisons, inspiring artists and viewers alike. Young artists reveal their talent and vision in an annual exhibition of art by incarcerated youth.



In our **Portfolio Project**, volunteers work one on one with incarcerated youth and adults to produce a professional portfolio of their creative work—including an artist's statement and resume—to present to judges, employers, colleges, possible mentors, family, and friends.

**The Linkage Project** enables formerly incarcerated artists, writers, actors, musicians, and dancers to continue to develop their creative work with the help of arts mentors in the communities to which they return. These partnerships allow artists to develop their skills, professionalize their work, and connect to community resources and venues for public presentation.

**When Can We Talk?** is a collaborative play written and performed by PCAP members and former prisoners. It stems from PCAP's ongoing collective commitment to informing the public about prison and post-prison issues. In a second phase of the project, former prisoners facilitate interactive workshops for educational and community forums. Drawing on the facilitators' own stories and the expressive power of the arts, the workshops generate dialogue about the real social issues surrounding incarceration.

**Speakers Bureau** PCAP members visit schools, faith-based groups, and other community organizations to talk about the many facets of our work.

**Selected Images** clockwise from upper left: Black Top Mourning, *Martin Vargas*; Night Dreams of My Muse, *Maurice Scott*; The Dance, *Sheila Bolden*; When Can We Talk? cast photo, *John Sobezak*; Inside Out, *Western Wayne Players*, still captured from video courtesy of *Victor/Hander productions, Inc.*; background image features *Peyote*, *John Cain*.

**Front Cover:** Untitled, *Maurice Scott*; background image features *The Mind and Imagination of Abdul Haqq, Part III*, *Abdul Haqq*.



**We need your help...** Please consider supporting our work with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth and adults. Without **you**, we cannot **keep this vital work alive.**

**Please return your gift with this form to:**  
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- Yes, I would like to make a \*tax-deductible gift to PCAP in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - \*Minimum \$25 for tax reporting.
  - Enclosed is my check payable to University of Michigan acct. #365489.
  - Charge my gift to:  VISA  Master Card  Discover  AMEX
- Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like someone to contact me about in-kind gift opportunities.
- I am unable to contribute at this time, but would like to be added to the PCAP mailing list.

**Please include the following for all above options:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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