

Art-Show Season with UrbanMission Community

Partners: Beyond the Blue

Rev. Nora Jacob, Restorative Justice Director

UrbanMission Community Partners

NBA Incubate Partner

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The onset of autumn/winter means 2018's final big season of art shows and alternative gift fairs for [UrbanMission Community Partners' InsideOut Art](#) program. This fall marks the third year we are exhibiting creative work by artists who currently or previously have experienced incarceration.

Some people want us to call it "prison art" - but we prefer to

think of it as expressions of the impact of harm, healing, and hope felt by currently or formerly imprisoned men and women. Too often, "prison art" strengthens stereotypes of violence, addiction, and oppression.

UrbanMission Community Partners' [InsideOut Art](#) metrics for 2018 note that we...

- Held eight major art shows and exhibits - in churches and more formal art gallery spaces - as well as two alternative gift fairs, engaging more than 750 guests;
- Shared work by almost 100 currently incarcerated artists from three state prisons, as well as by half a dozen previously incarcerated artists;
- Began a supportive new partnership with artists from the Pilgrim Place retirement community in Claremont; and
- Added a northern California *InsideOut Art* venue with new partners at Lafayette Christian Church (DOC).

But we are so much more than our metrics. *InsideOut Art* shares pieces of individual hearts. Some of the artists we represent call this **"beyond the blue."** (Medium blue is California's standard prison clothing color for most of those who are incarcerated.)

Beyond the blue ... beyond each painting, drawing, or even piece of jewelry ... is a person's story. One incarcerated artist seeks to find joy again after the death of his young child. One draws a picture of a dog he enjoys thinking about. Another does beadwork as a form of "living amends" and prayer. A formerly incarcerated artist shares her experience of the unexpected gesture of forgiveness offered by her victim.

And we - those who look at the images and hear the stories - we find ourselves going beyond the stigma of prison, beyond the punitive impulse that often follows "bad person vs. good person" thinking. We find ourselves in sacred conversation about what it is to be human, to be a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. And to offer love and healing opportunities with the certainty that we are loved and transformed by the One who created us.



Untitled [Dog] by Renshaw Edward



Sriracha Bottles



Speeding by Gonzalez Ezequiel

The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at nbacares.org/incubate