

# WAM

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

**Driven to Discover**<sup>SM</sup>

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**Weisman Art Museum presents *SEEN*, work by incarcerated artists made in collaboration with local artists and activists “on the outside,” to bring to light the experiences and humanity of those living behind bars**

*December 19, 2024, Minneapolis, MN:* This spring, Weisman Art Museum (WAM) will present [SEEN](#), an exhibition created as part of a years-long collaboration with [We Are All Criminals](#) (WAAC), curated by WAAC director and founder, [Emily Baxter](#). The exhibition is on view from February 8 - May 18, 2025. Admission to WAM’s galleries is always free and open to all.

In conjunction with this exhibition, WAM will hold an **Opening Day** on Saturday, February 8, with special programming throughout the afternoon. There will be artist-led activities in the gallery all day, as well as light refreshments for visitors. All opening day activities are free and open to the public.

*SEEN* features currently incarcerated artists in collaboration with artists, activists, and academics in the Twin Cities community. Together they explore issues of incarceration, isolation, healing, and coming home. Representing a range of cultural, personal, and professional backgrounds and diverse forms of artistic expression, people on the “inside” partnered with people on the “outside” based on shared creative curiosities and personal affinities. This exhibition is arranged across two galleries to evoke the experiences of “inside” (carceral) and “outside” (healing and community).

The seven installations in the exhibition stretch the bounds of the museum as a site for community engagement and critical examination of American carceral institutions. Teams worked together to better understand and explore isolation and trauma of the carceral system, and the many ways it causes generational harm.

Guest curator Emily Baxter says, “We are not attempting to erase or ignore the harm done. Nor are we diminishing the humanity of the people who have committed harm, the people behind and beyond bars. They are our friends and family.”

She goes on, “This show helps to celebrate that connection and community, while interrogating the carceral state and aspiring to create a reflective, restorative space for everyone to heal.”



We Are All Criminals (WAAC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to challenging society's perceptions of what it means to be "criminal," fostered the development and presentation of this exhibition and the larger SEEN project over the past six years. The wider SEEN platform serves as a catalyst for conversations about race, class, privilege, and punishment. One in four people in the United States—and one in four in Minnesota—carries a criminal record, yet *four* in four have a criminal history.

Our criminal legal system disparately targets Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, and people experiencing poverty, resulting in higher rates and weights of criminal records. Permanent and public criminal records perpetuate inequities in housing, employment, and education, all of which precludes millions of people from countless opportunities to move on and move up. WAAC uses first-person stories, photography, law, and statistics to humanize and shift the narratives of crime, privilege, policy interpretation and implementation, and redemption.

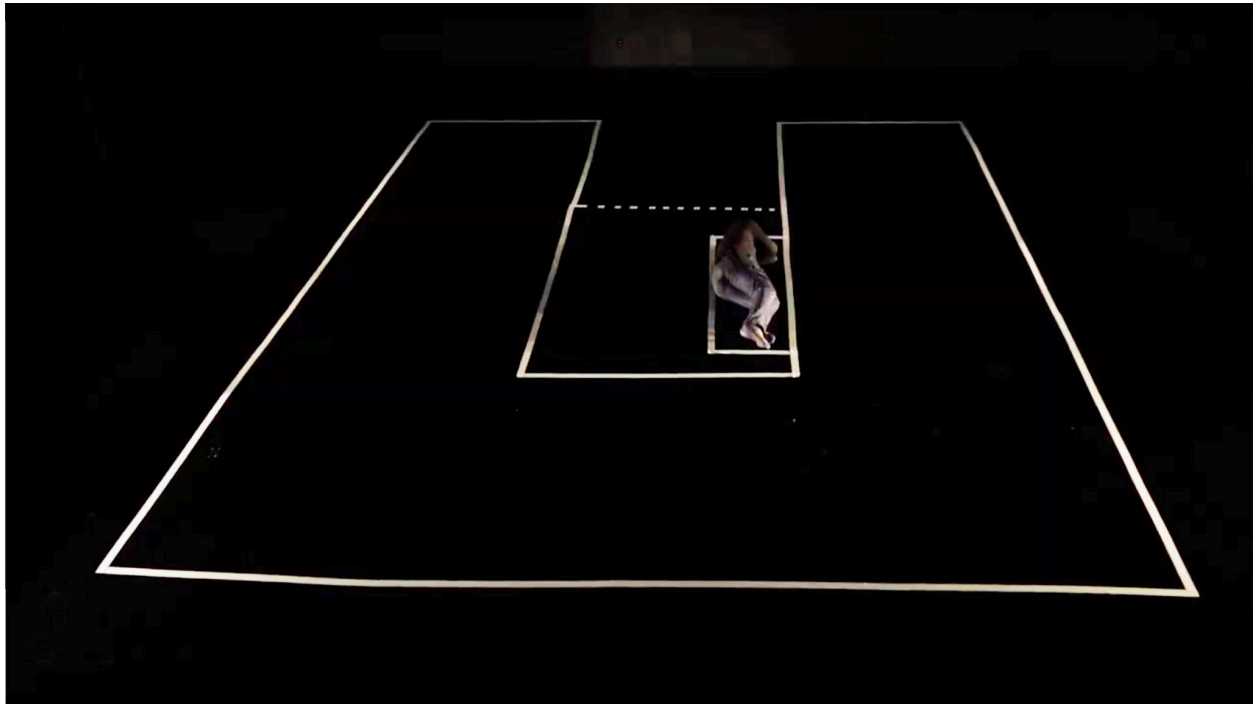


The collaborative exhibition *SEEN* and its related public programs aim to illuminate the effects of mass incarceration by clearing the pathways for people behind bars to have their voices heard, faces seen, and humanity recognized.

Senior Curator Diane Mullin explains: “In a moment of renewed scrutiny of policing and incarceration in the US, WAM presents *SEEN* to offer a thoughtful forum for consideration of the issues of incarceration, isolation, healing, and coming home.”

**Featured artists: B Batchelor and Emily Baxter; Sarith Peou and Carl Flink; Ronald “Bino” Greer II and Diane Willow; Lennell “Fresh” Martin and Erin Sharkey; Von Johnson and D.A. Bullock; Jeffery Young, C Fausto Cabrera, and Korina Barry; and Fong Lee and Kevin Yang.**

This exhibition was curated by **Emily Baxter**—an attorney, activist, photographer, and executive director of **We Are All Criminals**, which is dedicated to amplifying the voices of those most impacted by the criminal justice system.



*SEEN is supported, in part, by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Art Dealers Association of America Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. General operating support is generously provided by Ameriprise Financial and the Art and Martha Kaemmer Fund of HRK Foundation. Special thanks to the KHR McNeely Family Fund, thanks to Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely, for their support of the Weisman’s exhibitions and exhibition-related programming.*

Image credits: (Top) Graphic courtesy of Weisman Art Museum. (Middle) Lennell “Fresh” Martin and Erin Sharkey, *Rootbound* (bin detail), 2024. Mixed-media installation. Photo by Rik Sferra, courtesy of Weisman Art Museum. Fong Lee and Kevin Yang, *While We’re All Still Here* (video still), 2024. Mixed media installation. Courtesy of the artists. (Bottom) Sarith Peou and Carl Flink, *cage(d)* (video still), 2024. Mixed-media installation. Courtesy of the artists and Weisman Art Museum.

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## Exhibition Dates:

**February 8 - May 18, 2025**

### Press Preview

**Tuesday, February 4, 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**Weisman Art Museum | Coffee and pastries will be provided.**

An early look at the exhibition for members of the press with exhibition guest curator Emily Baxter and WAM Senior Curator Diane Mullin. Interview and photo opportunities available. **RSVP by Monday, February 3 by emailing [susannah@umn.edu](mailto:susannah@umn.edu).**

[Press images, captions, and credits are available here >>](#)

### OPENING DAY

**Saturday, February 8, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Free and open to the public

Join us for a day of creativity, connection, and reflection as we celebrate the opening of *SEEN*: Expect artist-led activations in the galleries, a pop-up reading library with exhibition resources, a journaling activity designed to spark personal reflection, and more. Light refreshments will be provided throughout the day.

### Panel Conversation: SEEN

**Wednesday, February 26, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

Free, RSVP requested

This salon-style conversation will explore abolitionist futures rooted in community care, healing, and liberation, examining how art serves as a catalyst for empathy, dialogue, and systemic change. Featured speakers: Louise Waakaa’igan, Chris Fausto Cabrera and Fong Lee, moderated by Erin Sharkey.

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**Also on view this spring at the Weisman:**

[Laughing Matter](#)

**March 1 - July 20, 2025**

*Laughing Matter* explores art within the Weisman's collection that actively creates a response that signals humor—laughs, groans, and the in-between. The artworks shown here focus on five types of humorous devices: irony, satire, pun, comparison, and surprise. Humor is more than just jokes—it's an essential tool for reflection and relief from societal norms. Humor is made relevant through lived experience and culture shared across generations, gender, geography, and many other “g” words. Though, much like frogs, jokes are best left undissected. Historical and cultural context is provided throughout the gallery but it's up to you to decide if any of it is funny.

*This exhibition, in the Edith Carlson Gallery, is curated by 2016-17 Lisa & E. Gerald O'Brien Curatorial Fellow, Laura Moran.*

### **About Weisman Art Museum**

Since its origin in 1934, Weisman Art Museum has been a campus museum for the University of Minnesota. Today, our mission as a university art museum is to create and advance inclusive arts experiences to broaden understanding of ourselves, our communities, and our world. The Weisman is located at 333 East River Road, Minneapolis, on the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus. Gallery admission is always free and open to the public. For more information, visit [www.wam.umn.edu](http://www.wam.umn.edu).

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