The Troubled Teen Industry (TTI) is a multibillion dollar industry claiming to modify the socially undesirable behavior of adolescents. The “delinquent” behavior used to justify TTI placement (ie “promiscuity”, “losing temper”, “sexual confusion”) reflects our country’s legacy of institutionalizing female bodies for subverting traditional gender expectations. Although widespread abuse and death within TTI programs have been reported for decades, the industry remains largely unknown to the public and almost entirely unregulated. It is only recently, through survivor-led action, that the world is starting to pay attention.

The Corrections presents a group of female artists who are TTI survivors-turned-activists. Through painting, digital media, installation, and personal ephemera such as journals and letters, these artists draw upon their first-hand experiences to expose the inner workings of this shadowy industry. Viewed collectively they share overarching themes: community dislocation, identity erasure, and the struggle to reintegrate in normative society after a period of prolonged captivity.

The Corrections confronts our centuries-old legacy of weaponizing social constructions of abnormality to hold female bodies captive and “correct” their behavior. Viewers are faced with uncomfortable truths about society’s ongoing use of surveillance, confinement, and forced removal. The exhibition is a form of activism, empowering survivors to resist the institutions designed to silence them. It is also a celebration of their resiliency and dedication to fight this carceral system.

The Corrections was selected through apexart’s Open Call. For more information and images visit https://apexart.org/fein.php or contact ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org.

Sam Fein is a Boston-based artist, educator, and community organizer. Her work explores social frameworks of power, asking us to reconsider who “deserves” removal from civil society. She has completed artist residencies at MASS MoCA, an Access to Power fellowship, and was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar to the Philippines.

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#TheCorrections