apexart

Life After Death and Elsewhere

an exhibition conceived and organized in collaboration
with prisoners on Death Row in Nashville, Tennessee

Organized by:
Robin Paris and Tom Williams

Opening reception:
Wednesday, September 9: 6-8 pm

On view:
September 10 - October 24, 2015

Featuring work by:
Abu Ali Abdur'Rahman
GDongalay Berry
Ron Cauthern
Gary Cone
Kennath Artez Henderson
Billy Ray Irick
Akil Jahi
Donald Middlebrooks
Harold Wayne Nichols
Derrick Quintero
Declicho Besh ("Ironhawk")
Dennis Suttles

Abu Ali Abdur'Rahman, GDongalay Berry, Ron Cauthern, Gary Cone, John Freeland, Harold Wayne Nichols, Derrick Quintero, and Declicho Besh ("Ironhawk"), *Model for a Monument to the Executed and to Those Who Died Awaiting Execution (for Legislative Plaza in Nashville)*, 2015, Terracotta

Life After Death and Elsewhere will focus on designs by the prisoners for their own memorials, which take various forms such as drawings, photographs, paintings, models, and text-based pieces, or, alternately, they will submit works that address their refusal to memorialize themselves. These projects represent a response to Tennessee's recent efforts to move forward on executions after a hiatus of over five years. A state that has executed only six people since 1960 has recently scheduled over ten executions. As individuals on death row, and imminent victims of that state-sponsored violence, these prisoners are reduced to the "bare life" described so powerfully by philosophers, and their projects are an effort to make this experience and these conditions visible. The prisoners contributing to this exhibition have, during the past few years, participated in a number of unusual partnerships with artists, writers, and educators in Nashville. Through courses, publications, and exhibitions, they have endeavored to address the realities of the death penalty and incarceration, and they have aspired to bring their voices to a public beyond the walls of prison. This exhibition will be the latest contribution to this ongoing effort.

Robin Paris is associate professor and chair of the Department of Photography at Watkins College of Art, Design & Film in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a graduate of The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and the Savannah College of Art and Design, and she has taught at Belmont University and The University of the South, Sewanee. Her work has appeared in exhibitions throughout the country. She has been co-facilitating the art workshop in Unit 2 (the Death Row unit) of the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution since 2013. Her recent work has involved collaborations with its residents.

Tom Williams is assistant professor of art history at Watkins College of Art, Design & Film in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a graduate of Stony Brook University and the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program, and he has taught at the School of Visual Arts, the Museum of Modern Art, New York University, and Vanderbilt University. His writings have appeared in *Art in America*, *Grey Room*, and other publications. He has been co-facilitating the art workshop in Unit 2 (the Death Row unit) of the Riverbend Maximum Security Institution since 2013.

For more information please contact Heather Felty at heather.felty@apexart.org or visit apexart.org/exhibitions/paris-williams.php

apexart's exhibitions and public programs are supported in part by the Affirmation Arts Fund, Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., Lambent Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, and with public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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