Undoing the Carceral State:
a visual protest against injustice

Gallery Guide

Opening reception:
October 11, 2024, 6–9pm

WALLS
TURNED
SIDEWAYS

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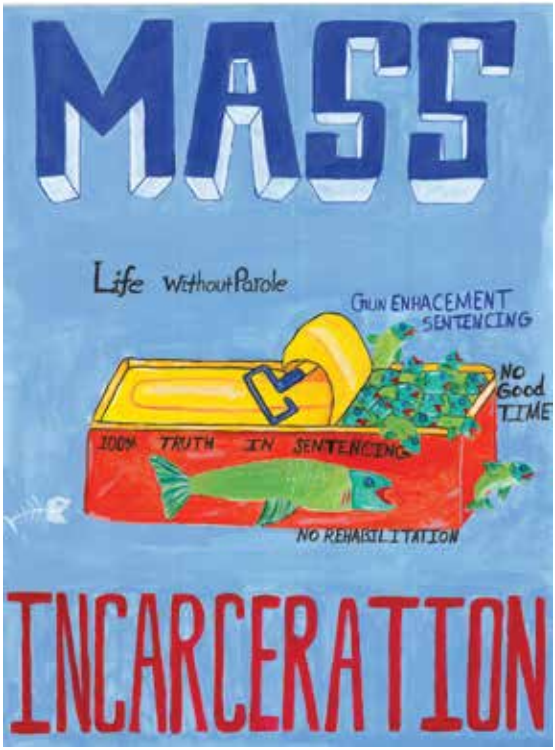
Undoing the Carceral State is an exhibition organized by currently incarcerated artist and scholar, Joseph Dole. As a recipient of an IL Humanities grant, Dole commissioned 14 other incarcerated artists to make new works explaining the contexts and conditions of incarcerations. The artists developed stunning responses that use popular graphics, metaphor and humor to examine the economics of incarceration, how new laws impact their lives, toxic conditions of prisons and the ways that families endure the effects of incarceration.

While the art works depict the deep pain and harm incarceration creates, the act of taking up these issues, making them visible and educating the public about prisons and policing, from inside a prison cell, represents the resistance to being warehoused and disappeared.

If you would like to contact the artists, provide support, or commission a piece of art from them you can contact them either via snail mail (United States Postal Service) at the addresses listed on their pages, or via electronic messaging by setting up an account with GTL Connect Network using the instructions at the end of this guide.



Juan Luna

Mass Incarceration
Acrylic paint

It is to show that there's too many men and women in prison. No one is getting out any time soon.

I am an artist/activist that wants to make a change in the world.

—Juan Luna

Write to the artist:
Juan Luna #R63856
GRAHAM C.C.
12078 Illinois Route 185
Hillsboro, IL 62049

I. B. Peaceful

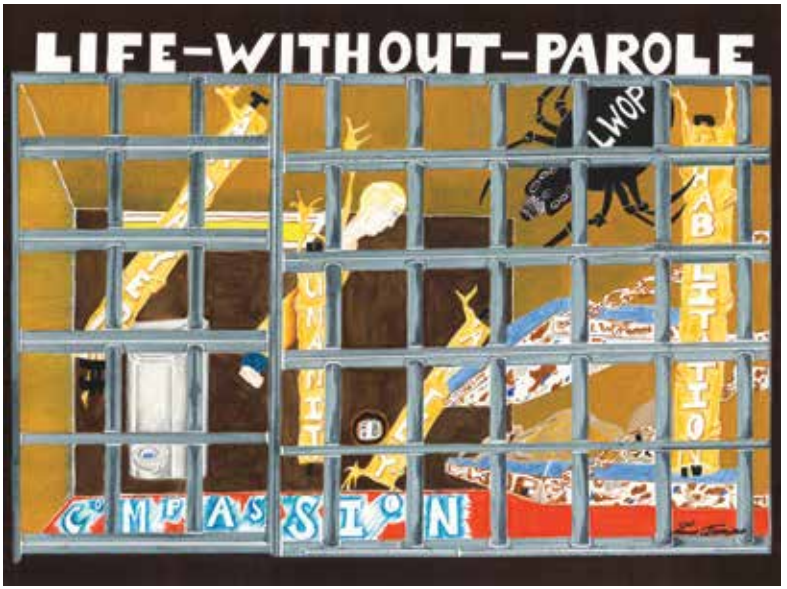
Pritzker's Plantation
Acrylic paint, ink, and paint markers

My concept is of the carceral system being as normal to American society as a carton of milk. I wanted to bring attention to some of the issues that affect us on the inside as well as our families and communities.

I describe myself as an agitator and disruptor.

—I. B. Peaceful

This artist wishes to remain anonymous out of fear of retaliation.



Luis Trevino

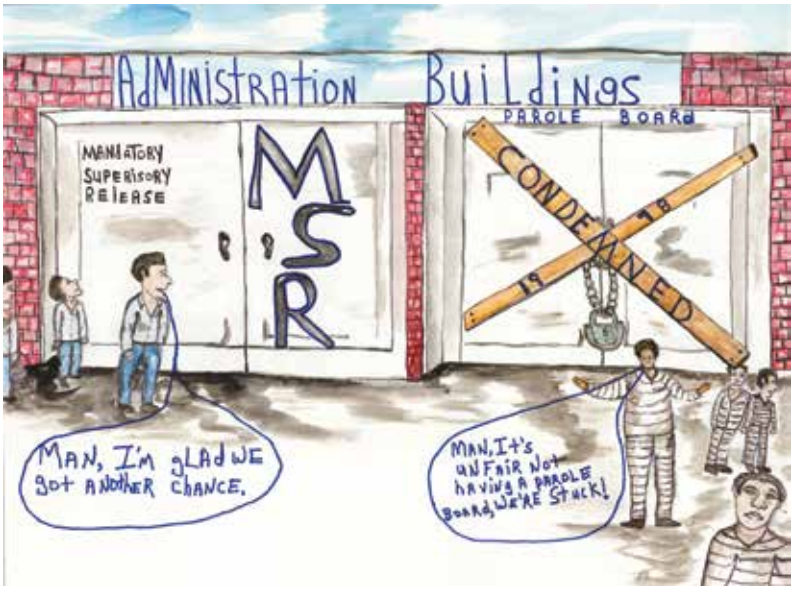
Life-Without-Parole (LWOP)
Paint, marker, and colored pencil

This poster represents the fact that tax-payers waste money to let people rot in prison. It is inhumane because there is no compassion. It disconnects people from their family, thus, there is no incentive for the prisoner to rehabilitate.

I am a fun, outgoing artist that leaves no space untouched on the canvas.

—Luis Trevino

Write to the artist:
Luis Trevino R62319
Menard C.C.
P.O. Box 1000
Menard, IL 62259



William T. Jones

Parole Blues
Watercolor

To bring attention to the fact that there is no parole in Illinois.

I like to paint out the truth in my work.

—William Jones

Write to the artist:
William Jones #A66045
Sheridan C.C.
4017 E. 2603 Road
Sheridan, IL 60551

William T. Jones

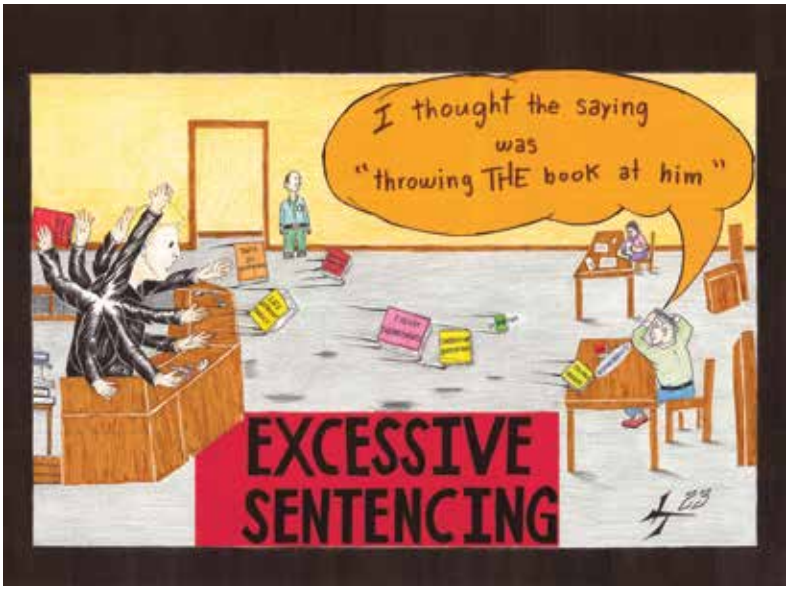
Why Not Me?
Watercolor

If you have money, you can get the best lawyers. Without money, you find yourself with a bad lawyer and you go to jail.

I like to paint out the truth in my work.

—William Jones

Write to the artist:
William Jones #A66045
Sheridan C.C.
4017 E. 2603 Road
Sheridan, IL 60551



Luis Trevino

Excessive Sentencing
Colored pencil and marker

My poster depicts the unfairness of laws the legislature makes to keep people in prison for a long time.

I am a fun, outgoing artist that leaves no space untouched on the canvas.

—Luis Trevino

Write to the artist:
Luis Trevino #R62319
Menard C.C.
P.O. Box 1000
Menard, IL 62259

Ernesto Valle

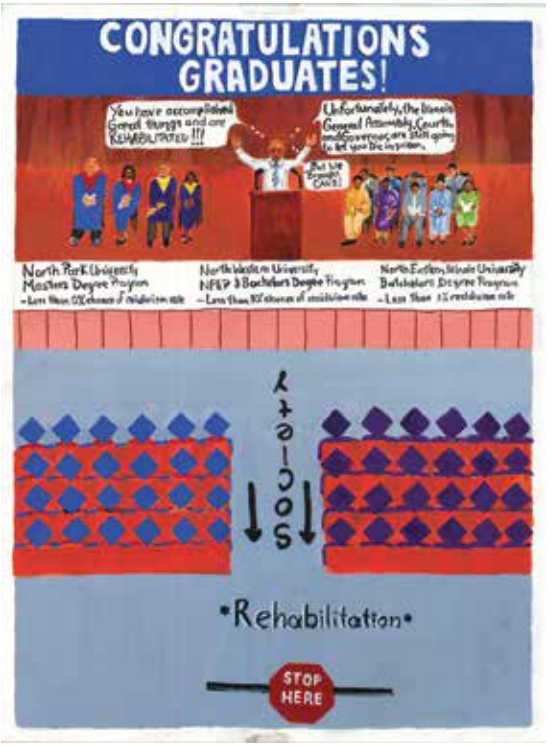
The Strings of Hope
Acrylic paint, and watercolor markers

The Illinois Prisoner Review Board (IPRB) is recommending someone for clemency, but Illinois senators politicized the clemency process to the point that the Governor is no longer granting any.

I am a story-teller with the lines & eyes that you see.

—Ernesto Valle

Write to the artist:
Ernesto Valle # R73523
Big Muddy C.C.
251 N. Illinois Highway 37
Ina, IL 62846



CD Everett – The Artist

Untitled

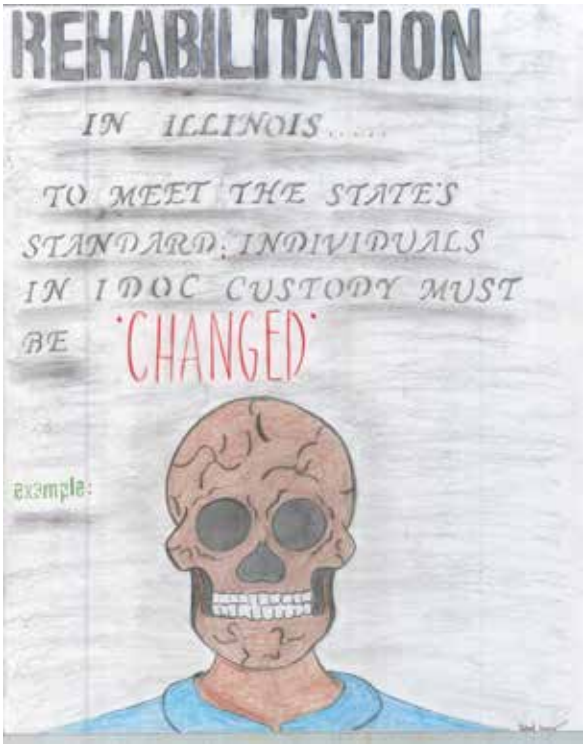
Pencil, watercolor, colored pencil, and marker

This poster points to the courts, legislators, and governors who fail to initiate a system that is beholden to rehabilitation, but will recognize rehabilitation without granting the benefits thereof.

I am a minister of creativity whose mission is to inspire hope.

—CD Everett

Write to the artist:
Christopher Everett #R26159
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834



Robert Curry

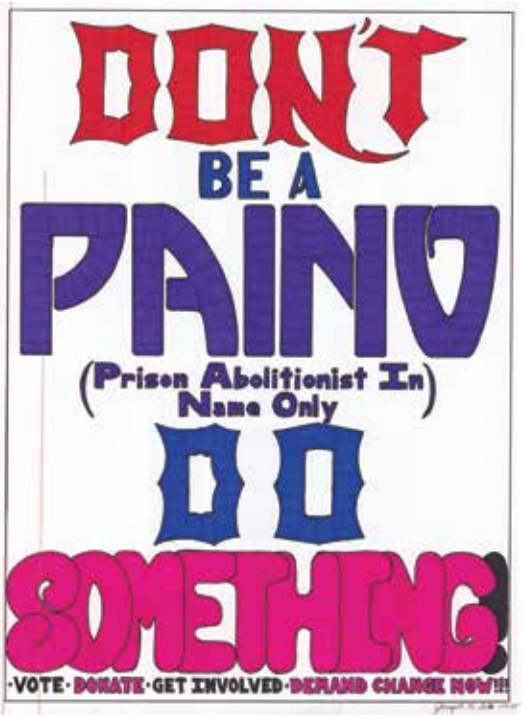
Rehabilitation
Aquamonolith pencils on Canson art board

Because the standard of rehabilitation is unknown to law makers, it makes rehabilitation an impossibility for incarcerated men and women in Illinois (the demand is unrealistic).

I am a student of the imagination.

—Robert Curry

Write to the artist:
Robert Curry #K61254
Hill C.C.
P.O. Box 1700
Galesburg, IL 61402



Joseph R. Dole

Don't Be a PAINO
Sharpie markers

It is currently a fad to say that you are a prison abolitionist. However, most people who say that aren't actually doing even the simplest of things to contribute to that goal. Instead they just theorize what could or should be done to abolish prisons, but won't lift a finger to help reduce the number of people currently dying in prison.

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274

Benny Rios DonJuan

Illinois' Recipe for Sentencing Reform
Colored pencils, markers, and pens

Exposing the ineffectiveness of legislative sentencing reforms.

I am an artist who needs more practice.

—Benny Rios DonJuan

Write to the artist:
DonJuan Rios # R26343
Illinois River C.C.
P.O. Box 999
Canton, IL 61520

Kenneth Key

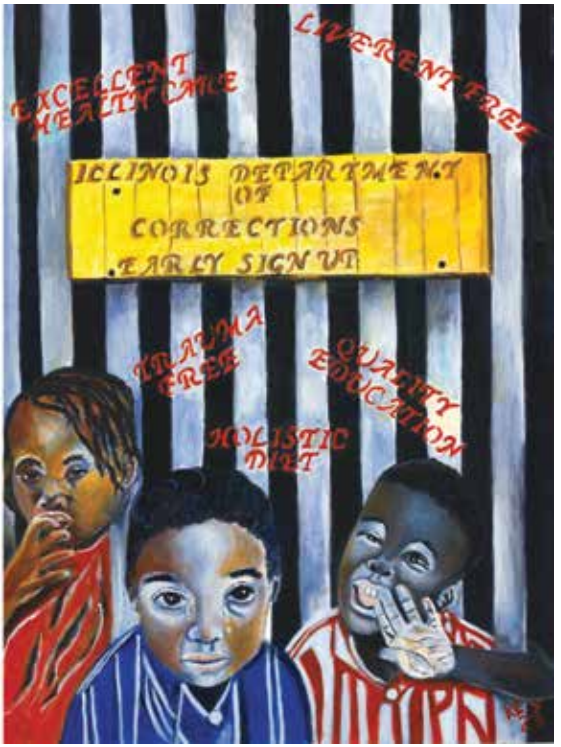
Prelude to the 13th Amendment: Enslavement
Acrylic paint

Prelude to the 13th amendment - enslavement presents elements that promote and ensure enslavement/incarceration of marginalized people - Black, White, and Hispanic.

I am an individual who paints to provoke thought and conversation around mass incarceration.

—Kenneth Key

Write to the artist:
Kenneth Key # A70562
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834



Kenneth Key

Early Sign Up
Acrylic paint on watercolor paper

Early sign up is poking at the Illinois Department of Corrections who has no interest in restoring people in custody, but prefers to incarcerate as many people as they can.

I am an individual who paints to provoke thought and conversation around mass incarceration.

—Kenneth Key

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Kenneth Key # A70562
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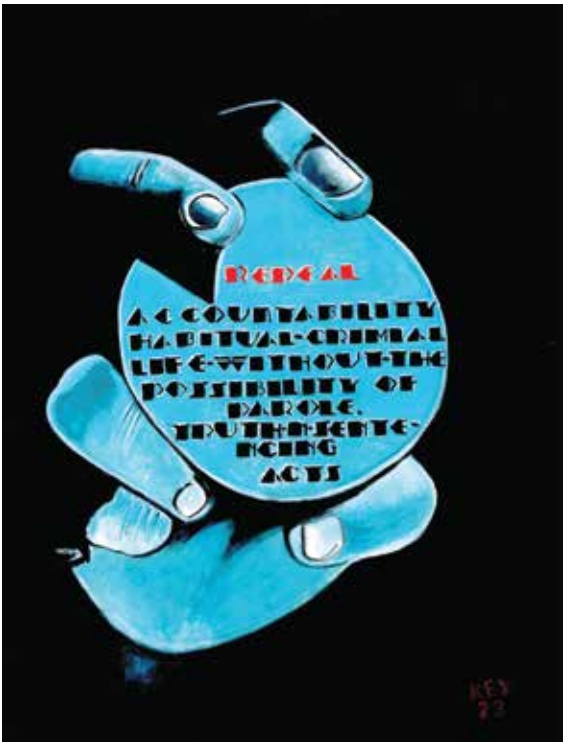
Danville, IL 61834



Kenneth Key

Repeal
Acrylic paint

That all excessive acts such as Accountability, Habitual Criminal Act, should be repealed and acts put in place that focus on restoring individuals to citizenship.

I am an individual who paints to provoke thought and conversation around mass incarceration.

Write to the artist:
Kenneth Key # A70562
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834

Christian Dior Noel

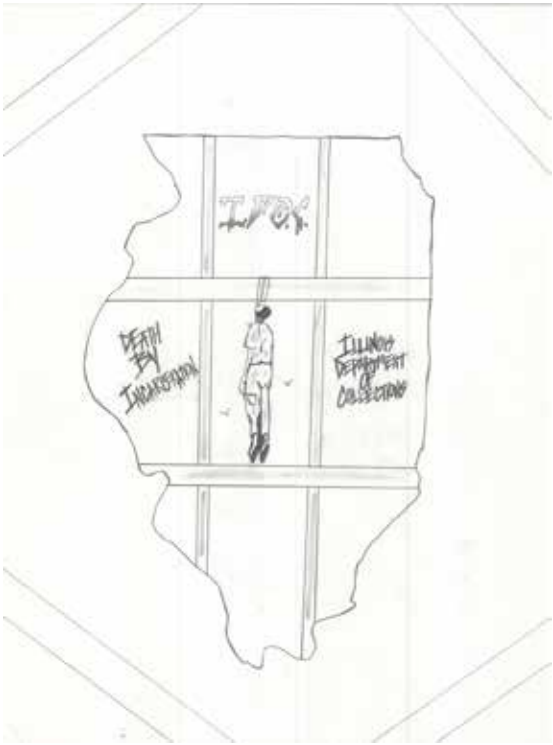
The Bigger Picture
Pencil on watercolor paper

Showing how racism plays a big part in our criminal justice system in Illinois & the U.S.A. & people deny those issues.

I am a very unique, creative & authentic artist.

—Christian Dior Noel

Write to the artist:
Christian Noel #M22718
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834



Christian Dior Noel

Illinois Department of Corrections
Pencil on watercolor paper

This piece explains in a sarcastic way how people are sentenced to die in the I.D.O.C.

I am a very unique and creative artist that pushes the envelope.

—Christian Dior Noel

Write to the artist:
Christian Noel #M22718
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834

Juan Luna

Mr. Crime Fighter
Acrylic paint

The Chicago Police do not care who they arrest. All they want to do is solve a crime. It does not matter if you are innocent.

I am an activist/artist that makes the best of the worst.

—Juan Luna

Write to the artist:
Juan Luna #R63856
GRAHAM C.C.
12078 Illinois Route 185
Hillsboro, IL 62049

Darrell Wayne Fair

Uncle Sam
Acrylic paint and colored markers

This piece uses satire to address government regulation and censorship.

I am a contemporary American artist.

—Darrell Wayne Fair

Write to the artist:
Darrell Fair #B32994
Illinois River C.C.
P.O. Box 999
Canton, IL 61520

Darrell Wayne Fair

Follow the Money
Acrylic paints, colored markers, and pen

This piece uses satire to address unjust criminal justice laws and policy.

I am a contemporary American artist.

—Darrell Wayne Fair

Write to the artist:
Darrell Fair #B32994
Illinois River C.C.
P.O. Box 999
Canton, IL 61520

Ernesto Valle

My Water is Toxic
Acrylic paint on watercolor paper

The water we drink is not safe. And Stateville says it is safe, but still gives warning to staff that it is not safe.

I am a true pain that lights up this world.

—Ernesto Valle

Write to the artist:
Ernesto Valle # R73523
Big Muddy C.C.
251 N. Illinois Highway 37
Ina, IL 62846

Ernesto Valle

The Kitchen Well
Acrylic Paint and colored markers

This is where they cook our food with toxic water that makes us sick and gives us cancer.

I am a real-life cartoon when I do my art.

—Ernesto Valle

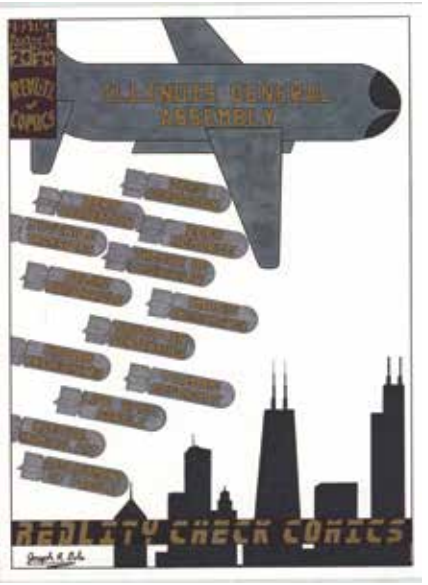
Write to the artist:
Ernesto Valle # R73523
Big Muddy C.C.
251 N. Illinois Highway 37
Ina, IL 62846

Joseph R. Dole

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph R. Dole

Benny Rios
DonJuan



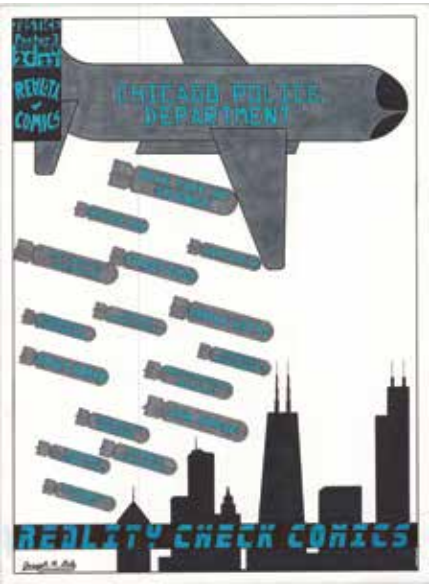
Illinois General Assembly Bomber
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers, and acrylic paint on watercolor paper

While the Illinois General Assembly likes to portray itself as progressive, the reality is that they still refuse to dismantle the system of mass incarceration that they created and which continues to kill thousands of people and destroys families.

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole #K84446
Pinckneyville C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274

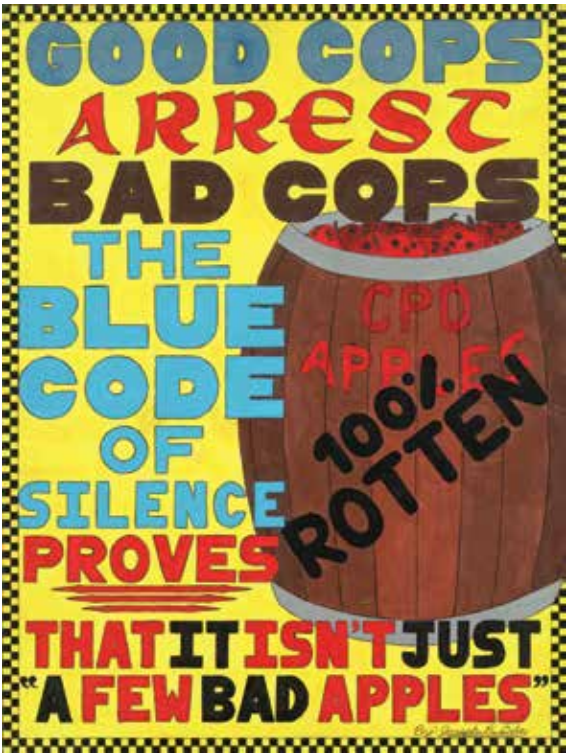
CCSAO Bomber
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers, and acrylic paint on watercolor paper

While the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO) is often portrayed as seeking justice, too often the reality is that they are in the business of ensuring injustice.



CPD Bomber
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers, and acrylic paint on watercolor paper

While the Chicago Police Department (CPD) is often portrayed as working to keep the City of Chicago safe, the reality is that many of their policies, officers, and actions show the opposite is too often true.



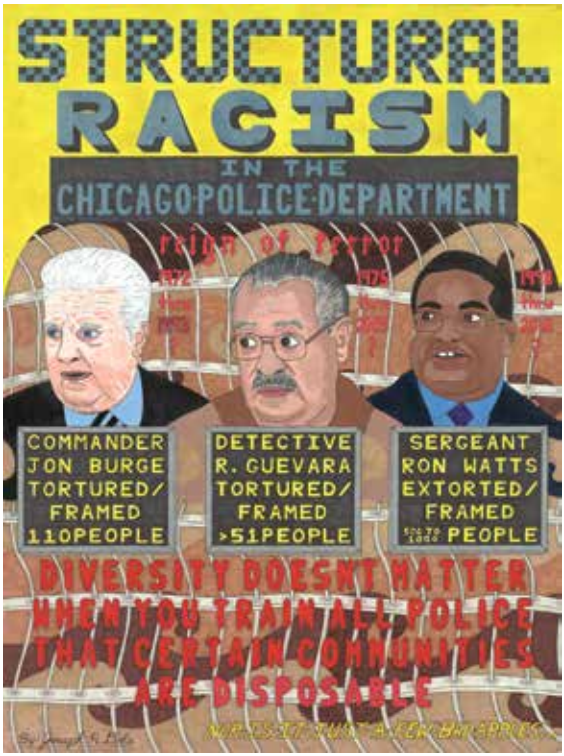
Joseph R. Dole

Bad Apples
Sharpie markers and Chameleon markers

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274



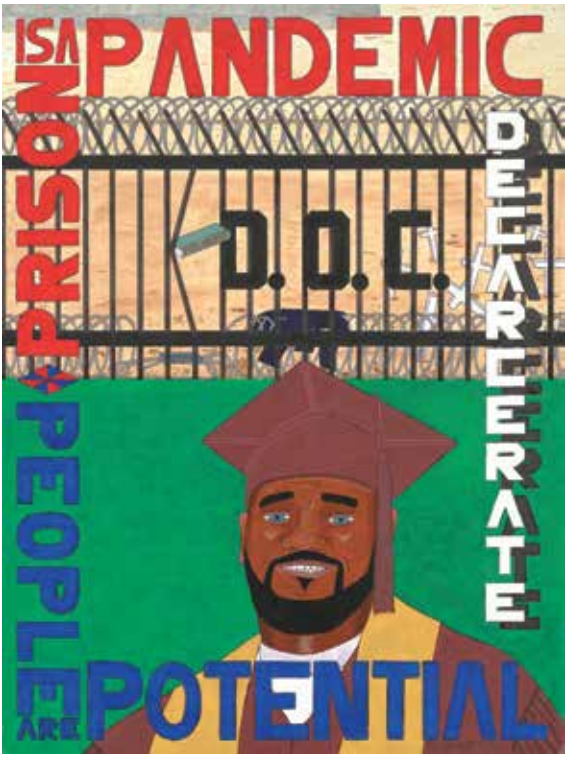
Joseph R. Dole

Structural Racism
Sharpie markers, and Chameleon markers

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274



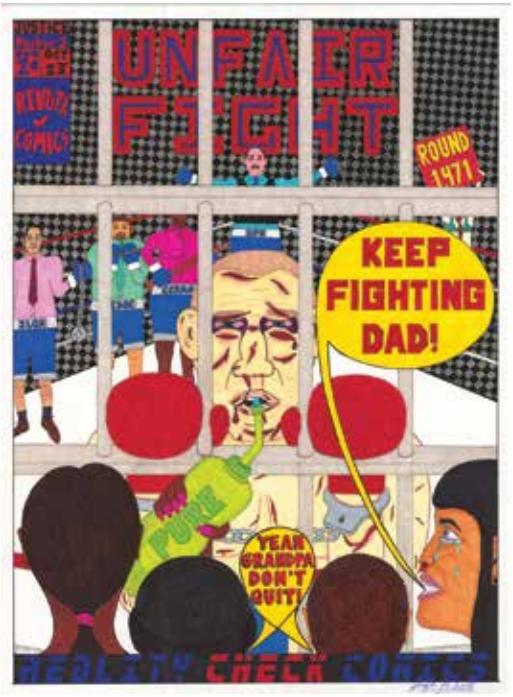
Joseph R. Dole

Prison is a Pandemic
Sharpie markers, and Chameleon markers

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274



Joseph R. Dole

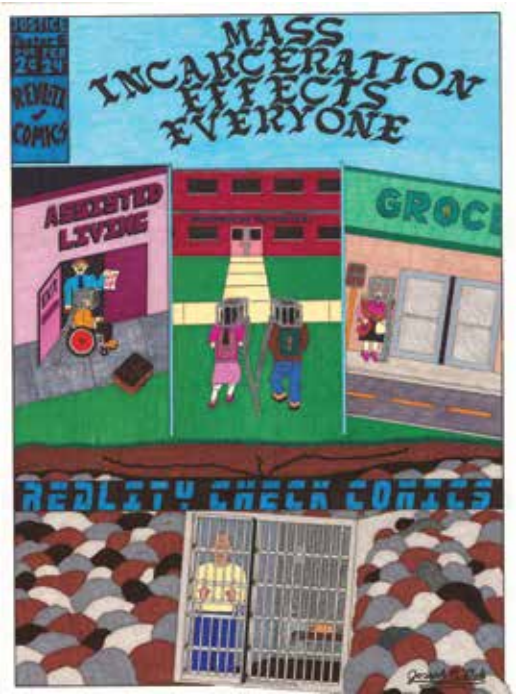
Keep Fighting the Unfair Fight
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers
on watercolor paper

I wanted to depict how criminal legal system actors refuse to fight fair, and how you are fighting the entire State, but if you give up you are giving up on ever being able to be there with your family.

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274



Joseph R. Dole

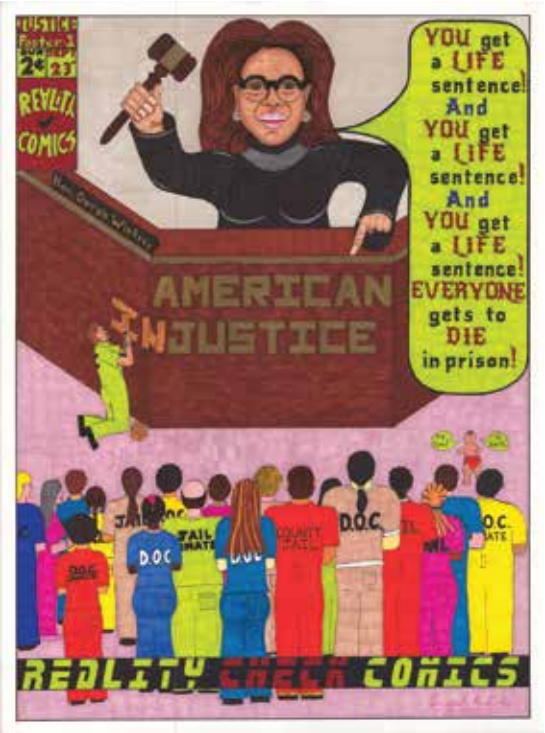
Mass Incarceration Effects Everyone
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers on watercolor paper

I wanted to try to visualize how mass incarceration harms not only the people in prison, but also their loved ones left in society, and therefore society as a whole.

I am an activist artist in the sense that I almost solely produce art as an act of resistance or in support of some cause.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274



Joseph R. Dole

The Media and Mass Incarceration
Sharpie markers, Chameleon markers, on watercolor paper

The Chicago Police do not care who they arrest. All they want to do is solve a crime. It does not matter if you are innocent.

I am an activist/artist that makes the best of the worst.

—Joseph Dole

Write to the artist:
Joseph Dole # K84446
PINCKNEYVILLE C.C.
5835 State Route 154
Pinckneyville, IL 62274

CD Everett

Youth, Who Cares?
Ink, watercolor and colored pencil

Youth are being attacked for their adolescence, sent off to prison without concern for their natural brain maturation. The courts do not care to understand, while the science points the way. Yet prisons are Plan A.

I am a minister of creativity whose mission is to inspire hope.

—CD Everett

Write to the artist:
Christopher Everett R26159
Danville C.C.
3820 East Main Street
Danville, IL 61834

GTL Network

web.connectnetwork.com

If you would like to connect with one of the artists through electronic messaging, follow the instructions below to use GTL Network!

Click on **Create Account** in upper right hand corner. Select **Set up an account**: Fill in your information.

After your account is set up and you enter the system, you'll need to click on **Facility** on the menu on the left and select **Illinois Dept of Corrections.**

Click on **Messaging** (Left hand column menu, under **My service**).

Click on **Add Contact** (second column from the left, bottom of column); then add your friends.

Click on **Buy Credits** (second column from the left, middle, purple box). Buy some credits.

Click on **Compose Message**. Select your recipient from the drop down menu. Type your message. (Copy it using your computer's copy function, so that you don't lose the message in the event that GTL freezes or kicks you out — which happens often.) Then hit **send**. Then click the other box to agree to the policy and send them a credit, if you want. Then click **send** again.

Make sure you get confirmation that it was sent.

Thank you to Shari Stone-Mediatore at Parole IL for directions on using GTL.

THE ARTISTS:

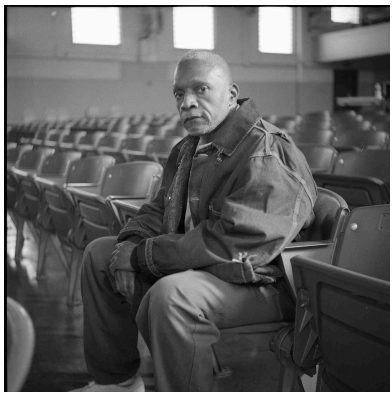
Benny Rios
DonJuan

Ernesto Valle

Joseph Dole

CD Everett

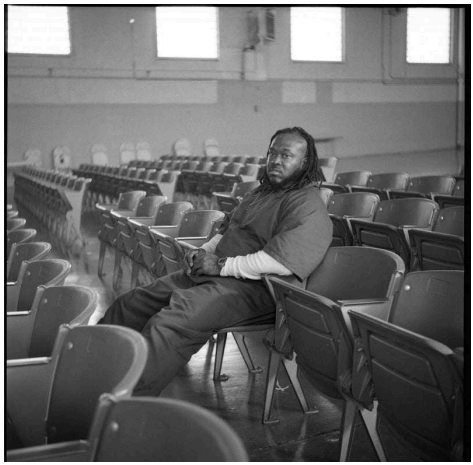
William Jones



Darrell Wayne Fair

Juan Luna

Kenneth Key



Robert Curry

This project is supported by an Envisioning Justice Grant from Illinois Humanties.