WALLS TURNED SIDEWAYS

ARTISTS CONFRONT THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

AUTHORED AND EDITED BY RISA PULEO

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston

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FOR TRACY

CONTENTS

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD
Bill Arning
CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM HOUSTON

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD
Gean Moreno and Natalia Zuluaga
[NAME] PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION
OPENING THE DOOR
Risa Puleo

GROUND

Risa Puleo
CAPTURE 000

Shoshana Magnet
FLATTENING THE BODY:BIOMETRICS AND THE REDUCTION OF IDENTITY 000

Che Gossett
BLACKNESS, ANIMALITY, AND THE UNSOVEREIGN 000

Isamu Noguchi
I BECOME A NISEI 000

Risa Puleo
DISPLAY 000

Otabenga Jones & Associates
CLASS IS IN SESSION WITH LENOX AVE'S FAVORITE STREET PHILOSOPHER, OTABENGA JONES ESQ.
*excerpt of unpublished 1992 interview for *Ebony* Magazine 000

Risa Puleo, EVALUATE 000

R. D. Laing, Howie Harp, Judy Clark, Michel Foucault
ROUNDTABLE ON PRISONS AND PSYCHIATRY 000

Risa Puleo
CLASSIFY 000

Robert S. Nelson
THE MAP OF ART HISTORY (excerpt) 000

Shawn Michelle Smith
THE MUG SHOT: A BRIEF HISTORY 000

Ben Jones
THE BLACK PANTHER AS AFRICAN CAT:
MONDO WE LANGA AND CRIMINAL BLACKNESS 000

Theodore Kerr
FROM TACTIC TO DEMAND:
HIV VISIBILITY WITHIN A CULTURE OF CRIMINALIZATION 000

Risa Puleo
EXTRACT 000

Cameron Rowland
91020000 000

K. Tsianina Lomawaima
CHILOCCO INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL:
THE PRISON-TO-PRISON PIPELINE 000

Jared Sexton
CAPTIVITY BY TURNS: A COMMENT ON THE WORK OF ASHLEY HUNT 000

Ashley Hunt
PRISON MAPS: WHAT IS THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX?, 2003 000

Risa Puleo
STORE 000

Andy Campbell
THE SCHEMATICS OF CONTROL: ROBERT MORRIS'S
PHILADELPHIA *LABYRINTH* AND *IN THE REALM OF THE CARCERAL* 000

Stephen F. Eisenman
THE SPACE OF THE SELF: ROBERT MORRIS'S
IN THE REALM OF THE CARCERAL 000

Robert Morris
SELECTIONS FROM *IN THE REALM OF THE CARCERAL*, 1978 000

FIGURE

Risa Puleo
INTRODUCTION 000

Risa Puleo
PROFILE 000

Unique Holland
FROM TARGET TO TESTIMONY: REFLECTIONS ON *THE OAKLAND PROJECTS*
000

Risa Puleo
ARREST 000

Chaédria LaBouvier
DEFACEMENT, 1983 000

Elizabeth Alexander
"CAN YOU BE BLACK AND LOOK AT THIS?"
READING THE RODNEY KING VIDEO(S) 000

Shaun Leonardo
THE EULOGY, 2017 000

David Joselit
MATERIAL WITNESS: VISUAL EVIDENCE
AND THE CASE OF ERIC GARNER 000

Rebecca Zorach
THE TIME OF TORTURE AND THE TIME OF REPARATION. 000

Mary Patten for Chicago Torture Justice Memorials
FROM THE SPECULATIVE TO THE LIVING:
CHICAGO TORTURE JUSTICE MEMORIALS. 000

Risa Puleo
PROCESS 000

Sam Gould/Beyond Repair
SGT. KROLL GOES TO THE OFFICE, 2016 000

Risa Puleo
INCARCERATE 000

Nicole Fleetwood
PUBLIC INTIMACY: DEANA LAWSON'S
MOHAWK CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SERIES 000

Jimmy Santiago Baca
"SIXTEEN" 000

Risa Puleo,
EXIT. 000

Roger Lancaster,
A BRIEF HISTORY OF SEX PANIC 000

Anthony Papa,
MIKE KELLEY PAVED MY WAY TO FREEDOM 000

BRIDGES

Risa Puleo
BRIDGES. 000

Sarah Ross and Erica R. Meiners
"AND WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU CONCERNS US HERE":
IMAGININGS FOR A (NEW) PRISON ARTS MOVEMENT. 000

Rashad Shabazz
"WALLS TURNED SIDEWAYS ARE BRIDGES": CARCERAL SCRIPTS
AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE PRISON SPACE 000

Gean Moreno
ABOLITION FORMATS AND INCOMPLIANCE AESTHETICS 000

Melanie Crean, Shaun Leonardo, Sable Elyse Smith
MIRROR/ECHO/TILT CURRICULUM 000

Chicago Torture Justice Memorials
REPARATIONS WON: A CASE STUDY IN POLICE TORTURE, RACISM,
AND THE MOVEMENT FOR JUSTICE IN CHICAGO (curriculum excerpt). 000

Evan Bissell and Ora Wise
THE KNOTTED LINE CURRICULUM. 000

Laurie Jo Reynolds and Stephen F. Eisenman
TAMMS IS TORTURE: THE CAMPAIGN TO CLOSE
AN ILLINOIS SUPERMAX PRISON 000

Daniel Tucker and Rosten Woo
WROL IRL, 2018 000

CONTRIBUTORS 000

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST 000

PERMISSIONS AND IMAGE CREDITS. 000

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 000

INSTITUTIONAL CREDITS 000

Risa Puleo

EXTRACT

The catalogue for Corcraft's Attica Series of metal desks features variants of three main products: a desk with a single filing cabinet and an option for a secretarial extension, a desk with two filing cabinets, and a credenza formed by filling the knee space under the writing top of the two-cabinet desk with an additional two columns of cabinets. Each option is offered in one of 14 institutional colors such as putty, moss, and thruway blue, with the choice of a walnut or oak laminate top. As New York State's "#1 preferred source" for office and classroom furnishings,[1] "by law, Corcraft can only sell to government agencies (including other states) at the state and local levels, schools and universities, courts and police departments, and certain nonprofit organizations."[2] The desk that Artists Space purchased from Corcraft as a component of Cameron Rowland's exhibition *91020000* is of the single-filing-cabinet style, with a secretarial extension on its left side in black and a walnut laminate top. The title, 91020000, is the customer number that was assigned to Artists Space upon registering with Corcraft; the organization's nonprofit status allowed it to purchase from the company.

Because Corcraft is the manufacturing division of the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, all of its products are made by the state's incarcerated population. Each of the 14 prisons in New York is responsible for producing a specific set of items based on its equipment capacities. The men incarcerated at Coxsackie Correctional Facility in Greene County are charged with the making of prisoner uniforms, while prescription eyeglasses are produced at Wallkill Correctional Facility in Ulster County. The Corcraft catalogue itself was produced at the Correctional Industries Print Shop at Elmira Correctional Facility. At Attica, inmates make desks, filing cabinets, and storage lockers.[3] Corcraft sells these products for prices well under the market rate. Although the revenue often offsets the costs of the programs in which the products are made, the state and the purchasers of the goods are the primary beneficiaries, not the incarcerated men performing the labor. According to Rowland's companion essay for *9102000*, reprinted in this section, prison workers are currently paid between $0.16 and $1.25 an hour, based on a graded scale of their skill set.

In 1970, incarcerated workers at Attica were paid between $0.20 and $1 for each hour of work.[4] That August, a year before the incarcerated men of Attica would overtake their

[1] "Pricing & Specification Guide," Corcraft, accessed March 23, 2018, https://www.corcraft.org/wcsstore/AdvancedB2BDirect/pdf/2013_Price_Guide.pdf.

[2] Cameron Rowland, "91020000," Artists Space, http://artistsspace.org/exhibitions/cameron-rowland, also reprinted in this book.

[3] "An Inside Look at Corcraft: DOCCS Division of Industries," NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, February 4, 2014, www.doccs.ny.gov/doccsnews/2014/Corcraft_Updated.pdf.

[4] All information about the Attica Prison Riot included here comes from Mariame Kaba, *Attica Prison Uprising 101: A Short Primer* (Chicago: Project NIA, 2011), https://niastories.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/attica_primerfinal.pdf. The primer reconstructs a timeline of events before, during, and after the riot; compiles quotations from formerly incarcerated men at Attica who experienced the riot; and includes a copy of the Attica Liberation Movement's manifesto. Project NIA is a Chicago-based organization that promotes participatory, community-based restorative justice in order to reduce the number of local youth who are arrested and incarcerated.

Cameron Rowland, *Attica Series Desk*, 2016
Steel, powder coating, laminated particleboard, distributed by Corcraft
60 x 71 ½ x 28 ¾ inches (152.40 x 181.61 x 73.03 cm), Rental at cost

The Attica Series Desk is manufactured by prisoners in Attica Correctional Facility. Prisoners seized control of the D-Yard in Attica from September 9th to 13th 1971. Following the inmates' immediate demands for amnesty, the first in their list of practical proposals was to extend the enforcement of "the New York State minimum wage law to prison industries." Inmates working in New York State prisons are currently paid $0.10 to $1.14 an hour. Inmates in Attica produce furniture for government offices throughout the state. This component of government administration depends on inmate labor.

Rental at cost: Artworks indicated as "Rental at cost" are not sold. Each of these artworks may be rented for 5 years for the total cost of the Corcraft products that constitute it.

Courtesy the artist and ESSEX STREET, New York

guards and the prison for four days, a petition and strike demanding higher wages and lower commissary fees resulted in a two-week lockdown of cell block B. On August 21, 1971, incarcerated activist George Jackson was murdered at San Quentin State Prison in California, mobilizing prisoners across the country to protest. On the heels of several peaceful demonstrations against low wages and substandard health services at Attica, 700 prisoners there—one third of the incarcerated population of 2,243—silently protested by fasting in honor of Jackson on August 22. On September 2, a "Manifesto of Demands" written by the Attica Liberation Faction was presented to State Commissioner of Corrections Russell G. Oswald.[5] Among the 27 demands listed, the fifth insists that forced labor is not mandated in prisoners' sentences, and as such prison labor, paid in pennies per hour, is an exploitation designed to bolster the state's correctional industry. Though not explicitly stated, the manifesto implies that such expansion follows the imperial model of a slave-based economy, as it would be impossible without the virtually free labor of

[5] The Attica Liberation Faction was founded by Frank Lott, Donald Noble, Carl Jones-EL, Herbert X. Blyden, and Peter Butler in May and June of 1971.

prisoners.[6] On the list of "Twenty-Eight Points" issued on September 11, 1971, two days after the riots had begun, this demand was modified to recommend that all inmates be paid New York State's minimum wage for their work, a request that went hand in hand with another to "modernize the inmate education system."[7]

The Attica Prison Riot ended with tear gas and open fire launched by New York State Troopers and National Guardsmen from helicopters over the prison yards on the orders of Governor Nelson Rockefeller, resulting in 39 deaths that day and 43 in total. Oswald agreed to all 28 demands presented in negotiations. On the 45th anniversary of the riot, *The New York Times* evaluated the extent to which they had been enacted. It found that the promise to pay inmates New York State's minimum hourly wage for work had been broken soon after the event by Oswald, who reportedly said "the only way the state could afford to pay inmates the minimum wage would be to charge them room and board."[8] In fact, many jails and some prisons do charge inmates for the cost of their incarceration. This is a debt that many cannot repay, since incarceration is coupled with removal from the paid workforce, and labor within the prison is substantially undervalued.

In addition to material objects, various modes and stages of transaction are important to Cameron Rowland's work. At his request, Artists Space also purchased other prisoner-produced items, such as wooden courtroom benches built by prisoners in Green Haven Correctional Facility. The resulting work, titled *New York State Unified Court System*, demonstrates how, in Rowland's words, "the court reproduces itself materially through the labor of those it sentences." Moving objects through the preexisting channels of New York State's bureaucratic system, the artist highlights the exit the Attica desk makes from one institution, the prison, and its entry into the nonprofit economy, in this case via an art institution. Indeed, Rowland's practice makes apparent how these worlds are not separate. Schools, museums, and other nonprofit entities throughout the state are furnished with items produced by prisoner labor at a severely discounted rate. Instead of offering these works for sale, Rowland offers them for rent for a period of five years for the exact cost of the Corcraft products. *Attica Series Desk* and *New York State Unified Court System* are, at the time of the publication of this text, being rented by The Museum of Modern Art in New York. Rowland changes the commodity value of the desk as an object of use to the cultural value of an object that is a work of art. The treatment of this object as property becomes prohibited. More directly, Rowland's *Attica Series Desk* materializes forced labor practices that have existed within carceral settings since the 19th century.

[6] "Prisoners at Attica and other New York prisons cannot be compelled to work as these prisons were built for the purpose of housing prisoners and there is no mention as to the prisoners being required to work on prison jobs in order to remain in the mainline population and/or be considered for release. Many prisoners believe their labor power is being exploited in order for the state to increase its economic power and to continue to expand its correctional industries (which are million-dollar complexes), yet do not develop working skills acceptable for employment in the outside society, and which do not pay the prisoners more than an average of forty cents a day. Most prisoners never make more than fifty cents a day. Prisoners who refuse to work for the outrageous scale, or who strike, are punished and segregated without the access to the privileges shared by those who work; this is class legislation, class division, and creates hostilities within the prison." Kaba, *Attica Prison Uprising 101*, 14.

[7] Kaba, *Attica Prison Uprising 101*, 29.

[8] Michael Winerip, Tom Robbins, and Michael Schwirtz, "Revisiting Attica Shows How New York State Failed to Fulfill Promises," *New York Times*, August 25, 2016, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/26/nyregion/revisiting-attica-shows-how-new-york-state-failed-to-fulfill-promises.html.

When prison education grants at federal and state levels were eliminated in the 1990s, New York's correctional agency replaced academic services with work programs.[9] This shift echoed a larger social trend of moving away from liberal-arts education toward skill-based vocational training.

Each method of rehabilitation—education or work—is undergirded by a different ideology of antirecidivism. The former model emphasizes learning and study as the methods by which prisoners can take responsibility for their crimes and be deterred from engaging in crime in the future, while simultaneously preparing them to enter the job market after exiting the system. This logic reveals how academic institutions like schools and universities are also disciplinary ones, underscored by multiple definitions of the word "discipline," including punishment, a field of knowledge, and mental fortitude.[10] K. Tsianina Lomawaima's contribution to this section emphasizes the violence of educational models of discipline when the crime they aim to reform is the practice of one's culture. Lomawaima adopts storytelling as an indigenous mode of teaching and learning that has been negated by the academic methods of white U.S.-American institutions. She tells her father's stories of his experiences at the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School in Kansas. Chilocco was one of hundreds of off-reservation boarding schools in operation across the United States from the 1870s through the 1980s, with the goal of assimilating Native American children into white U.S.-American culture. Given the disciplinary nature of these schools and the high number of Native children who are funnelled into the prison system as adults, Lomawaima foregoes the more common term of the school-to-prison pipeline to aptly title her essay "Chilocco Indian Boarding School: The Prison-to-Prison Pipeline."

Work training, on other hand, focuses on engaging the prisoner's body, usually in the repetition of factory labor, with a rhetoric of idleness underpinning its logic.[11] Public perceptions that prisoners are getting a "free ride" and that idleness is a criminal's natural state figure incarcerated people as unproductive, or even anti-productive, members of society.[12] Such projections echo the vagrancy laws passed in the period immediately following the Emancipation Proclamation, which were used to target newly freed slaves who were unable to secure jobs and to punish them by forcing them into labor on chain gangs. Diagnoses of "work-shyness" resulted in over 20,000 sterilizations in California during a period governed by the philosophy of eugenics in the United States.[13] Blunt

[9] In the 1990s, then President Bill Clinton banned federal education grants for inmates. This was followed by cuts to state-funded education programs in New York. Winerip, Robbins, and Schwirtz, "Revisiting Attica."

[10] Though my text goes in a different direction, Foucault elaborated on the way educational institutions are already disciplinary ones: "We have here a sketch of an institution of the 'mutual' type in which three procedures are integrated into a single mechanism: teaching proper, the acquisition of knowledge by the very practice of the pedagogical activity and a reciprocal, hierarchized observation. A relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency." Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 176.

[11] Corcraft's promotional materials relate four benefits of prison work programs: "reducing the cost to the taxpayer to maintain inmates in prison," "eliminating idleness, a leading cause in prison problems," "teaching work habits and marketable skills," and "preparing for employability with outcomes to reduce recidivism." "Inside Look at Corcraft," NYS Department of Corrections.

[12] See Jared Sexton's essay on Ashley Hunt, "Captivity, By Turns," reprinted in this book and discussed later in this section.

[13] Hogarth illustrated qualities of "work-shyness," a companion of idleness, at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in London in his series *Industry and Idleness* (1747).

Research Group found the case files in the archive of the former Eugenics Records Office, “an American organization that helped to shape the international eugenics movement through activities carried out in these reformatories.” The group composed “poetic assemblages” from phrases taken from the case files of teenagers incarcerated in California’s youth prisons between 1910 and 1925 for crimes of “incorrigibility.”[14]

When job training becomes the site of education, the value of a prisoner’s labor is reconceptualized as the price of room and board, justifying their obscenely low wages and transforming their sentence into indentured servitude to the state.[15] Cameron Rowland goes into greater detail about the links between contemporary prisoner labor, vagrancy laws, and the historical conditions of slavery in his essay “91020000.” Examining the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, Rowland finds that both slavery and involuntary servitude were reserved as possible punishments for crimes, which “aligned the status of the ex-slave and the pre-criminal.”

In their essay “Disablement, Prison, and Historical Segregation,” Jean Stewart and Marta Russell analyze the entanglements between physical and mental disabilities and the social disablement institutions designed to immobilize those it contains. Arguing that the prison and care industries deem disabled people of surplus or no value to capitalism, they show how the prison system earns money by incarcerating the disabled. Overcrowding prisons is a way to extract value from their bodies because the disabled thought to be “are worth more to the Gross Domestic Product when occupying institutional ‘beds’ than they are in their own homes.” Additionally, Russell and Stewart contend that the existence of dangerous working conditions within prisons “manufactures disability.”[16] Works by Jonas N.T. Becker, Andrea Fraser, Ashley Hunt as interpreted by Jared Sexton, and collaborators Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick, all included in this section, offer additional examples of how the prison system is designed to extract value from inmates it has disabled.

For nearly forty years, husband-and-wife team Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick have photographed the cultures of Louisiana. Their images place the iconic—Mardi Gras parades and pleasure clubs of New Orleans—alongside the private, including river baptisms in rural Louisiana and tributes to civilians who died saving others during Hurricane Katrina. Other photographs feature longshoremen and those who work along the Mississippi River or in the sugar cane and sweet potato fields that are cultivated on the river’s banks. Such images reveal an interest in the contemporary economies of land-based work that carry the state’s history of slavery into the present. Calhoun and McCormick’s series *Slavery: The Prison Industrial Complex* (1980–ongoing) pictures inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in order to bring invisible aspects of the state’s labor force into focus.

[14] Blunt Research Group, *The Work-Shy* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2016), 3.

[15] In a 1992 article in *The New York Times*, Thomas A. Coughlin III, then commissioner of the state’s Department of Correctional Services, said, “I’ve been troubled for years by the public perception that inmates sit around all day watching TV or pumping iron while the average guy is trying hard to make ends meet. We fully intend to change the perception of inmates getting a free ride. We have a basic responsibility to teach inmates how to read and write. Just as important, inmates have the responsibility to help support the cost of their incarceration.” Ronald Sullivan, “In New York, State Prisoners Work or Else,” *New York Times*, January 27, 1992, https://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/27/nyregion/in-new-york-state-prisoners-work-or-else.html.

[16] Jean Stewart and Martha Rusell, “Disablement, Prison, and Historical Segregation,” *Monthly Review*, July 1, 2001, https://monthlyreview.org/2001/07/01/disablement-prison-and-historical-segregation/.

Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick
Men going to work in the fields of Angola, 2004

The Louisiana State Penitentiary is built on a set of six plantations located west of the Mississippi and north of Baton Rouge in East Feliciana Parish. James R. Franklin established one of those plantations on 18,000 acres of land between 1835 and 1838 and named it “Angola,” because the majority of the slaves held captive there were from Reino de Angola, the then Portuguese colony on the west coast of Africa that would retain the latter part of its name when it achieved independence in 1975, after four hundred years of colonial rule.[17] In 1851, when Franklin’s son Isaac died, Angola housed over six hundred slaves. The reason for such a large number: it was “a slave-breeding plantation.”[18] In addition to maintaining Franklin’s crop and cattle assets, Angola was sustained by the forcible breeding of slaves, who were sold to other plantations across the southern United States as their own reproducible commodity. When the state purchased the land in 1901 to convert it into the Louisiana State Penitentiary, it retained the moniker “Angola.” The population incarcerated there today is 76 percent black men from Louisiana, 71 percent of whom are serving life sentences. Their days are spent maintaining the vast fields, picking cotton, vegetables, and sugar cane by hand, without the aid of machinery.

Calhoun and McCormick’s photographs make the argument that Angola the penitentiary still functions as Angola the plantation, with prisoners taking the place of slaves. Their 1980 photograph *Who’s that man on that horse, I don’t know his name, but they call him Boss*

[17] Ned and Constance Sublette tell the history of the plantation and James R. Franklin in *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2016).

[18] Sublette, *The American Slave Coast*, 378.

Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick, *Ditch Digging*, 1980

foregrounds a white prison guard on horseback with a rifle overlooking a group of black prisoners working in the field. With the exception of the contemporary uniform of the "Boss," the scene could have taken place in 1850 as easily as in 1980. The photograph of the scene, however, could not. Because the medium was still in development and not popularly accessible until after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, the photographic record of slavery in the United States and elsewhere in the Americas is thin.[19] Applying art historian Krista Thompson's argument from her essay "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies," Calhoun and McCormick's images are "ruptures in space and time and the ever-presentness of the past that are intrinsic to the memory of slavery and to the formation of the African diaspora more generally."[20] By picturing the racial disparity of mass incarceration in Louisiana as emblematic of prisons across the country, McCormick and Calhoun open a temporal portal that allows them to create photographs of slavery, the "ever-present" past that undergirds the present. McCormick and Calhoun's contemporary images act as proxies in the absence of historical ones.

[19] Harvey Young considers a set of daguerreotypes depicting seven slaves in Columbia, South Carolina, in 1850 to be some of the few photographs of slavery. His essay "Still Standing: Daguerreotypes, Photography, and the Black Body" is worth noting for the way in which he connects the medium-specificity of the daguerreotype, which requires a sitter to be still for upwards of three minutes in order to be captured by the photographic process, and the stillness necessary while being shipped across the Atlantic as cargo. Harvey Young, chap.2 in *Embodying Black Experience: Stillness, Critical Memory, and the Black Body* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 26–75.

[20] Krista Thompson, "The Evidence of Things Not Photographed: Slavery and Historical Memory in the British West Indies," *Representations* 113, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 40, http://doi.org/10.1525/rep.2011.113.1.39.

Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick, *Who's that man on that horse, I don't know his name, but they call him Boss*, 1980

In his essay "Captivity, By Turns: A Comment on the Work of Ashley Hunt," reprinted in this section, Jared Sexton asks, "What happens to a history that is not past? . . . What is produced, what is left over, when the slave loses her value as labor?" The title of Hunt's video, *I Won't Drown on that Levee and You Ain't Gonna Break My Back* (2006), which is about the evacuation of Louisiana prisoners during Hurricane Katrina, comes from Lonnie Johnson's 1928 "Broken Levee Blues," a song about the 1927 Mississippi River flood that displaced more people over a greater terrain than Katrina. Like prisoners during Katrina, the black population of the Mississippi River region was not prioritized for evacuation during the flood. Afterwards, both groups were forced, either at gunpoint or through the terms of their sentences, to clean up the sewage and waste released by the overflow of water. What Hunt's video makes apparent to Sexton is how the body and person of the black prisoner are surplus to the labor extracted from them. Hunt's video is one part of the ongoing *Corrections Documentary Project*, which is composed of dozens of videos, two diagrams, a website, and a study guide that examine the entanglement between politics and economics that has resulted in the privatization of prisons over the last fifty years.

In addition to extracting labor from inmates and figuring their persons and bodies as surplus, the prison-industrial complex continues to wrest value from decommissioned coal mining sites by transforming them into prisons. Many of those presently incarcerated in Appalachia are former miners or family members of miners impacted by the decline

of the coal industry in the region.[21] Jonas N.T. Becker's coal print *Belcher Mountain* (2018), from the series *Better or Equal Use*, pictures the Federal Correctional Institution in McDowell, West Virginia (FCI McDowell), the prison that stands in place of a mountain removed through the mining process.[22]

Becker's photographic practice is heavily research based and involves exploring the artist's home region of Appalachia. Under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 and its newest offshoots, the RECLAIM Act and the Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program, former coal mines are positioned for development, with an aim "to turn old pollution liabilities into business opportunities" in states in which coal mining played an important role in the economy.[23] According to promotional materials for the bipartisan RECLAIM Act, put forth by congressional representatives from Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, "abandoned underground and surface mines across the country have been leveraged to create thousands of jobs in agriculture, recreation, tourism, renewable energy production, retail, and beyond."[24] Mining sites have been reclaimed for golf courses, ATV recreational parks, wineries, business complexes, and, of course, prisons and other types of correctional facilities. Coal mines in Appalachia that were created through the process of mountaintop removal—which involves accessing the subterranean substance by removing the peak of a mountain or hill to drill down from above, instead of under or through, as in traditional mining—possess many features that aid in the function of a prison. Both remote and out of site, they are difficult to access. They are also often toxic, as the unusable residue from the coal extraction process is left behind. In other words, these sites are known to be hazardous, and building prisons on them allows industry to profit while avoiding the costly expense of rehabilitating them.[25]

The expendability of prisoners' lives in support of the net gains of corporations builds upon the ways in which the labor of coal miners has historically been exploited in rural U.S-America. Coal fueled U.S-American industrialization after the Civil War, yet from the 19th century to the 1950s, when it replaced by other forms of fuel, miners were paid in credit that they could only use in company stores, instead of cash. The worker, like the land, was integrated into a self-contained system that took the form of indentured servitude, with no possibility of exit. The decline of coal mining, the economic backbone

[21] Some of the most effective work of activists and social organizations in the region combines environmental and labor concerns with issues surrounding the use of mass incarceration and prison building as strategies of economic development.

[22] The phrase "better or equal use" is based on a clause in the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, section 515, C. 3 (A): "after consultation with the appropriate land use planning agencies, if any, the proposed postmining land use is deemed to constitute an equal or better economic or public use of the affected land, as compared with premining use." Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, 30 U.S.C. § 1265, https://www.osmre.gov/lrg/docs/SMCRA.pdf.

[23] Those states are Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, and Virginia. "What is the POWER+ Plan?" POWER+ for the People, Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, accessed April 13, 2018, http://www.powerplusplan.org/whatispowerplus/.

[24] "RECLAIM Act," POWER+ for the People, accessed April 13, 2018, http://www.powerplusplan.org/reclaim-act/.

[25] Kelsey D. Russell, "Cruel and Unusual Construction: The Eighth Amendment as a Limit on Building Prisons on Toxic Waste Sites," *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 165, no. 3 (February 2017): 741–83, http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/penn_law_review/vol165/iss3/5.

Jonas N.T. Becker, *Belcher Mountain* from the *Better or Equal Use* series, 2018

of Appalachia and other rural regions, has been compounded by an opioid crisis wrought by the introduction of drugs that are funded by the same companies. In this way, prison development in the region literalizes the economic entrapment coal miners have faced for over two centuries.

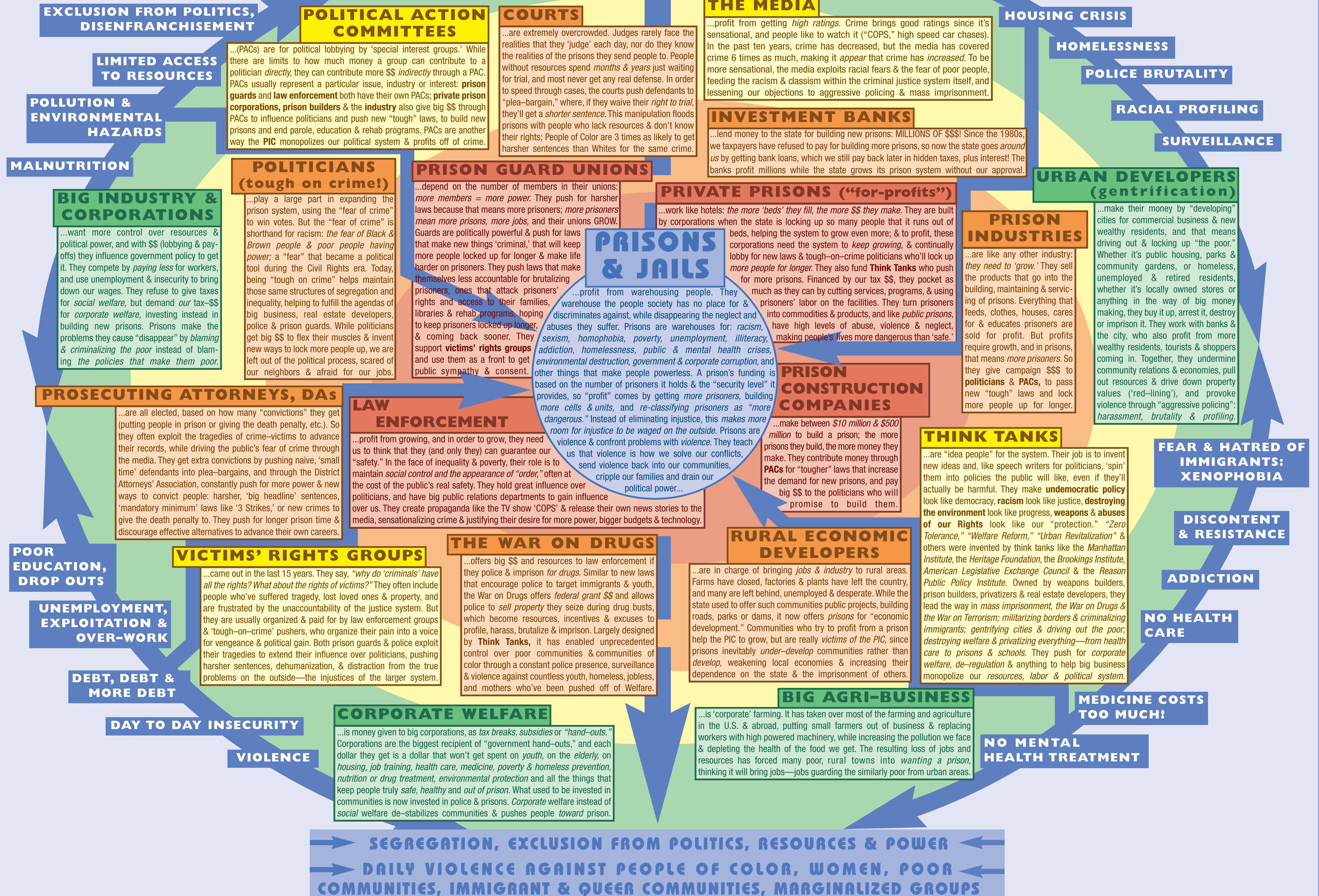
To create the photograph *Belcher Mountain*, Becker adapted a picture of FCI McDowell used in the promotional materials of the company that designed it. The aesthetics of this and other similar advertisements recall U.S.-American landscape painting and photography, with the prison framed by majestic mountains or an expanse of desert that sets a dramatic scene for the building. Features that have conventionally signalled unspoiled nature read in this context as the desolation and isolation of the area. Whether done in a sublime, pastoral, or picturesque mode, 19th-century landscape painting imbued the U.S.-American landscape with national ideology. U.S.-American land was constructed as a virginal wilderness, a new Eden that would provide its citizens with a bounty in everlasting supply. This idea has supported the extraction of resources such as coal, timber, iron, gold, quartz, and now uranium from the land. Mined silver, copper, and carbon have also played a role in the history of photography, as materials embedded into a gelatin-based surface to impart a lustrous glow to prints. In the 19th- and early-20th-century United States, carbon printing processes were primarily used for landscape photographs, which were often scenes that either extolled industrialization or else encouraged the preservation of the natural environment. To create *Belcher Mountain*, Becker replaced carbon with coal to overlay her landscape image with the material extracted from the land itself. In doing so, Becker implicates photography in the process by which the earth and workers have historically been exploited by the coal industry and are presently exploited by the prison industry that has replaced it.

THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

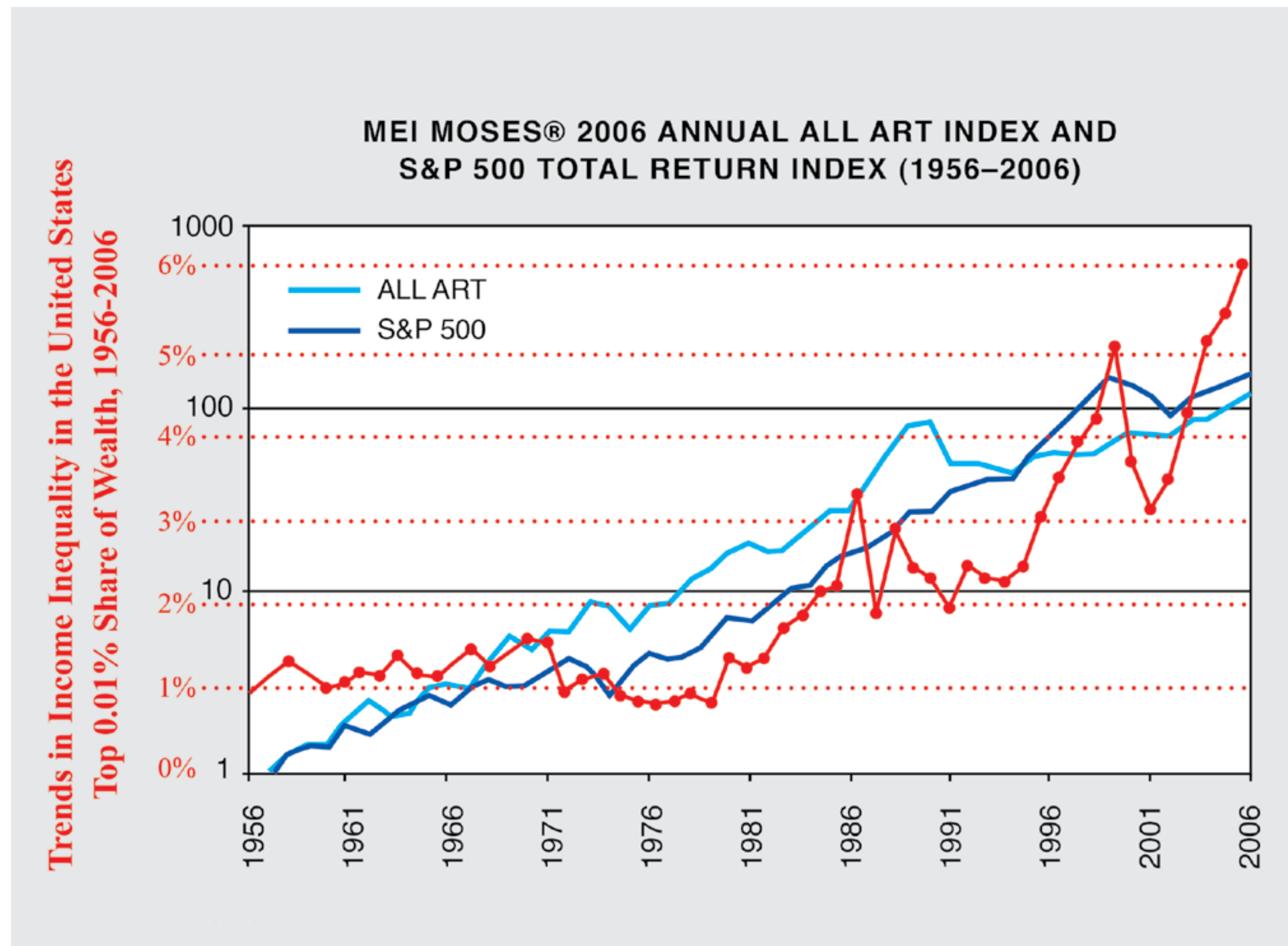
The PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (the PIC) is the interaction of all the interests who help expand the prison system, some *intentionally*, some *coincidentally*, but all for reasons *other than our safety and justice.* Most of them influence prison growth for reasons of their own *profit:* some profit in terms of cash–$$, others in terms of political power, control of resources & property, or good TV ratings. Some profit from the business of imprisonment, others from having people out of their way, “criminalized” and locked up. It's a system where *profit* is more important than *people;* where people are *split* along the lines of *race, gender & culture* so that their labor, resources & power can be exploited & monopolized, and prisons make invisible the damage done along the way. Is it a conspiracy? It doesn't have to be—as this chart shows, each group's own interests are set up to GROW...

INFLUENCES ON PRISON GROWTH
(Key to chart)

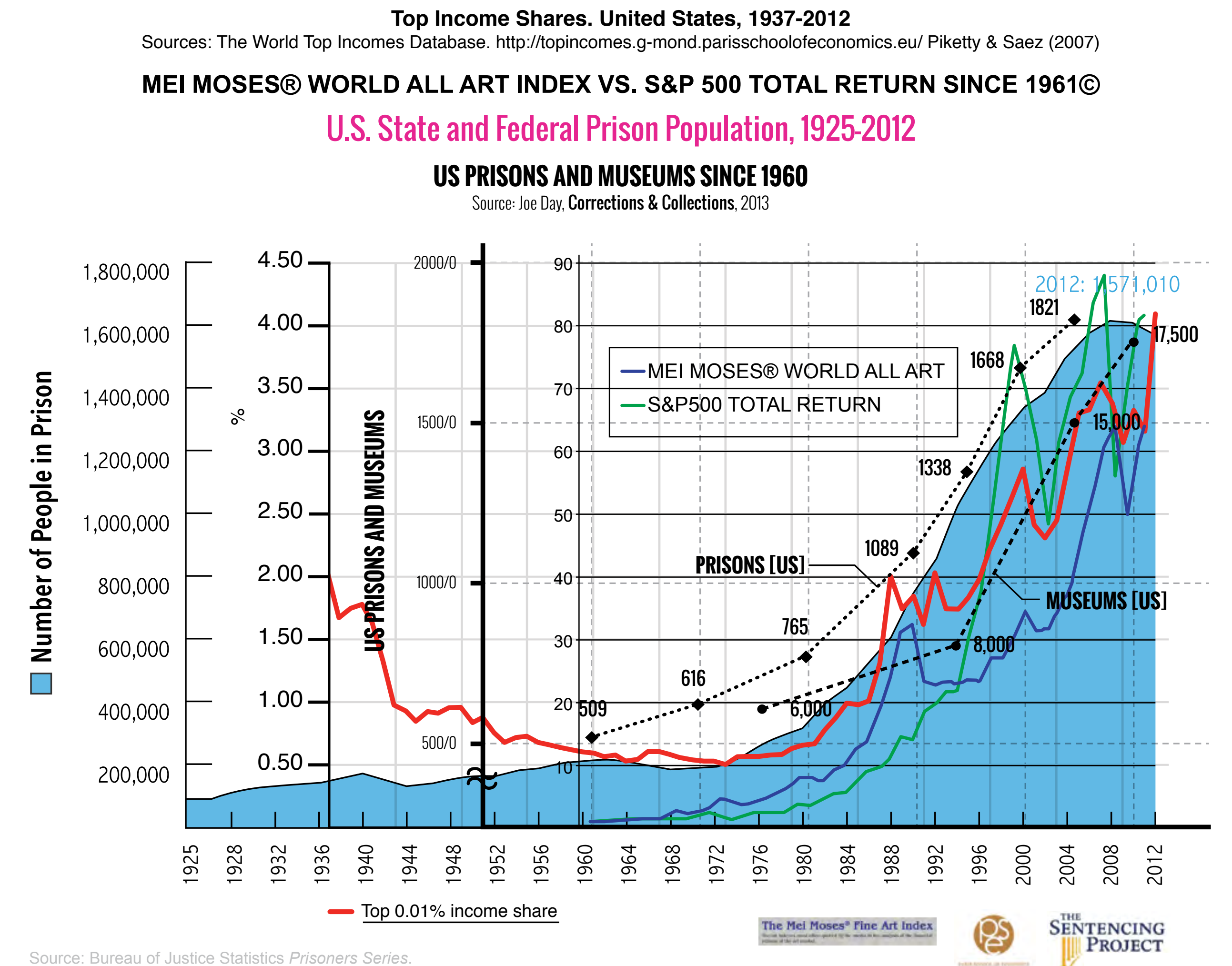
- PRIMARY INFLUENCES: The police & prison system itself; those who profit directly from locking up more people, building new prisons & getting new jobs.
- SECONDARY INFLUENCES: One step removed from prisons, supplying them with prisoners, services & goods. They profit indirectly by locking up more people.
- IDEOLOGICAL INFLUENCES: Influence how we think about different groups of people, crime, poverty & prisons; they use "crime" as a tool to divide, to blame, & to justify inequalities.
- ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES: Create the environment of inequality & violence that push people toward prison; they exploit, destroy and rob communities of progress and development.
- PROBLEMS CAUSED BY INEQUALITY: the results of powerlessness, social control & the ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES on communities; 'prisons on the outside', problems that go untreated or get criminalized & fed into prisons.



Ashley Hunt, Prison Maps: *What is the Prison Industrial Complex?*, 2003



Andrea Fraser, *Index*, 2011



Andrea Fraser, *Index II*, 2014

Andrea Fraser further cements the connection between the mechanisms of art and those of the prison with *Index* (2011) and *Index II* (2014), both of which continue work begun in *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk*, as discussed in the introduction to this publication. *Index* is a graph originally published anonymously in the summer 2011 issue of *Artforum*. As the artist explains in her text "L'1%, C'est Moi," the market responds to the increased wealth of the rich, caused by the redistribution of assets into the pockets of fewer people, by raising the price of art."[26] The effects of this disparity are revealed in *Index II*, another graph that shows the 700 percent increase in museums and prisons built in the United States since 1980. The logic connecting the two is that museums are made to accommodate the growing number of artworks bought, while prisons are erected to manage the growing number of prisoners punished for poverty-related crimes. As Fraser has stated, "Museums increasingly are warehouses of wealth, capturing surplus in the form of artworks that are no longer financially productive. Prisons are institutions that warehouse surplus labor and populations that have been economically excluded from the labor market."[27] As the work of Fraser, as well as that of Cameron Rowland, Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick, Jonas N.T. Becker, and Ashley Hunt and Jared Sexton, proves, the prison is a site of unpaid labor that supports a greater market economy. The concluding section of this chapter considers how the prison is also a site for storing the inmate's body, which, like their personhood, is surplus to the process of value extraction.

[26] Andrea Fraser, "L'1%, C'est Moi," *Texte zur Kunst*, September 2011, 114–17.

[27] Charlotte Burns, "Andrea Fraser: The Artist Turning the Whitney into a Prison," *The Guardian*, February 24, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/feb/24/andrea-fraser-artist-turning-whitney-museum-prison.