

## **ACTIVITY: BARRING FREEDOM -- REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

### 1. HISTORIES AND STRUCTURES

#### **Pause**

What do you already know about the Prison Industrial Complex? Before we define it, take a moment to think about what it may encompass.

#### **Reflect**

How did this definition of the prison industrial complex differ from or align with your expectations? Where can you see the PIC in your own community or in recent U.S. politics?

### 2. CARCERAL VISUALITY

#### **Pause**

Carceral visibility is possibly not a familiar phrase. Take a moment to make an educated guess of what carceral visibility might mean.

#### **Reflect**

Where do you feel particularly visible? Where do you feel invisible? In those situations, how do you feel and who holds power?

#### **Reflect**

Consider your own experiences with the police. How did you feel during those encounters? What role do you think your race may have played in these encounters? What other factors may have contributed?

#### **Reflect**

Do you know where the jails and prisons are in your community? Are they visible or hidden from view? Why do you think that is?

### 3. FROM THE INSIDE OUT

#### **Pause**

What images come to mind for you when you hear the word prisoner? Why do you think that Emile DeWeaver generally avoids the term?

#### **Reflect**

Emile discusses the importance of redistributing power for the system to change. Can you think

of other spaces or scenarios where you would like to see power redistributed? What kind of change might that bring about?

**Reflect**

How do these artworks reflect or challenge your own images of or experiences with the U.S. system of incarceration?

**Pause**

This section discusses three artists who use materials from within the prison to make sculptures. Before reading about their practices and reasons, why do you think they might do that?

**Reflect**

Hank Willis Thomas raises an important question about the ethics of making art about the suffering of others. He ends “Am I worthy? And do I have a choice?” What do you think are the responsibilities of artists (visual artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers, etc.) in regard to stories of oppression and injustice?

#### 4. ABOLITION FUTURES

**Pause**

Before reading, pause a moment to consider what you think it would mean to abolish prisons. What do you think the goals are of the abolition movement?

**Reflect**

How did the definition of abolition given here differ from or align with your expectations? How do you feel about the propositions being made?

**Reflect**

Which of these artworks or approaches speaks to you? Why? How does it encourage you to think about our prison system or our society at large?

**Reflect**

What are the ways you can think of that museums are or have been implicated in systems of oppression and exploitation? How would you imagine museums for an abolitionist future?