



Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts, *“Untitled (from the Redaction project),”* Detail, 2019. (etching and silkscreen on paper, 22 x 30 inches). Image courtesy Titus Kaphar Studio, Photo by Merik Goma

UC Santa Cruz Institute of the Arts and Sciences (IAS) and the San José Museum of Art are pleased to announce the opening of *Barring Freedom*. This multi-sited exhibition of contemporary art features the works of important U.S. artists whose practices engages the criminal justice system.

***Barring Freedom* will be on view at San José Museum of Art October 23, 2020 through March 21, 2021 and at UC Santa Cruz Mary Porter Sesnon Art Gallery January 12-March 21, 2021.**

*Barring Freedom* brings together works by twenty of the most influential contemporary artists in the United States which challenge the dominant ways people see and understand the complex nexus of policing, surveillance, detention, and imprisonment that makes up the nation’s prison industrial complex. With more than two million incarcerated people, a majority of them black or brown, virtually all of them from poor communities, the prison industrial complex reveals a troubled vision at the heart of the United States. *Barring Freedom* considers the strategies artists use to reveal this unjust and racist worldview as well as the social problems it serves to obscure. And, it highlights the alternatives artists imagine to systemic injustices.



Sanford Biggers, *Bam: For Tamir*, Detail. 2018.  
Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery



Levester Williams, *Tar Ball*, 2014.  
Courtesy of the artist and Darryl Atwell



Chandra McCormick, *Men going to work in the fields of Angola*, 2004



Sonya Clark, *Edifice and Mortar*, 2018

**On October 20, 2020, *Visualizing Abolition*, a conversation between Angela Y. Davis and Gina Dent, will be the first of an online series of speaking events organized with Dr. Dent in conjunction with *Barring Freedom*.**

While *Barring Freedom* was conceptualized before the current crises, first COVID-19, with its ongoing and unequal effects, and then the recent brutal onslaught of police killings of Black people in the United States have brought into sharp relief the horrific consequences of the structural racism in the nation. As the depths of the injustices come into focus, *Barring Freedom* reflects the teachings of noted prison abolitionist Angela Y. Davis (emphasis added):

“When we are told that we simply need better police and better prisons, we counter with what we really need...We need to be able to *reimagine* security, which will involve the abolition of policing and imprisonment as we know them...[and] *reinvent* entire worlds.”

It is with the urgency of the times that the exhibition underscores the importance of artists and creative practitioners in envisioning a world beyond racist policing, biased courts, and overflowing prisons. Dr. Davis has called for a “great feat of the imagination” to realize dreams of freedom and end the injustices of the carceral system. The artists in *Barring Freedom* respond to that call.

*Barring Freedom* is curated by Rachel Nelson and Alexandra Moore.

**Artists: American Artist; Sadie Barnette; Sanford Biggers; Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick; Sonya Clark; Sharon Daniel; Maria Gaspar, Ashley Hunt; Dee Hibbert-Jones; Titus Kaphar and Reginald Dwayne Betts; Deana Lawson; Sherrill Roland; Dread Scott; Jackie Sumell; Hank Willis Thomas; Patrice Renee Washington; Levester Williams.**