

## The Thinkers

Posted on November 19, 2015 by passthepen



"To be removed from the world of interaction can deplete our humanness in so many deeply scarring ways. The only cure, the only solution, is love; love creates hope." – Tim Muise

"Love Destroys Razor Wire" is a collaborative project through prison walls to coordinate visits between incarcerated people and people on the outside. Select prisoners are invited to participate because they have had few or no visits from the outside otherwise. According to research by the Prison Policy Initiative, less than 1/3 of State prisoners receive visits. Visits are documented by in-prison photographs when available and personal reflections.

Sarvenaz Asiedu – an intermodal artist and expressive therapist and Timothy Muise- an incarcerated prisoners' rights activist, have been collaborating on various projects since 2013. "Love Destroys Razor Wire" was conceived by Asiedu and Muise to show isolated prisoners that they are NOT forgotten, to expand the awareness of visitors, and to REhumanize public perception towards incarcerated peoples .

The first "Love Destroys Razor Wire" process took place October of 2015.



Muise reached out to men serving life sentences at the State Prison in Shirley, Massachusetts. On the other side of the wall, Asiedu, engaged the public through social media and word of mouth.

Asiedu met with visitors collectively before driving to the prison, inviting them to acknowledge fears and call forth intentions through words, drawings and meditation.

Muise supported prisoners before, during and after the visits as well. He explained that there was no institutional involvement, no pressure, and no expectations except to be present.

After "Sally", a retired dentist, met "Muhammed", incarcerated since 1972, she reflected "Had no idea what to expect. Imagined tension, high, but trapped, emotions. Surprise: ease and comfort, slid right into conversation sharing what was important in our spiritual lives! Very amazing! I will be back."

From behind the wall, "Muhammed" spoke to Tim as they walked back to their cells after being strip searched; "Muhammed" thought for so many years that "no one cared about prisoners on the outside". Meeting "Sally" changed his mind: "People DO care!"

"Beyond the thin veil of so-called prison rehabilitation exists a pervasive polarizing and dehumanizing culture, which I have witnessed as an educator and counselor within the system. For this reason, my work as an artist demands that I work co-creatively with incarcerated people, independent of Correctional institutions. 'Love Destroys Razor Wire' is a humbling, brave and powerful project that reminds everyone it touches that all of our lives have value."-Asiedu

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# love destroys razor wire

## Reflections by Visitors

Posted on November 19, 2015 by passthepen  
Betsy Disharoon

First visit: Had no idea what to expect. Imagined tension, high, but trapped, emotions. Surprise: ease and comfort, slid right into conversation sharing what was important in our spiritual lives! Very amazing! I will be back.

Otessa Moshfegh

My visit with Shawn Fisher at MCI Shirley was a unique experience for me. The security procedure I went through simply to be in the same room with Shawn gave me a glimpse of one way prison strips people of their humanity; people become numbers, bodies occupying space. Seeing that first hand really moved me, especially in meeting Shawn who is a true individual if ever there was one. Shawn was one of the most present and positive people I've ever met, kind and innocent, open, engaging. He hadn't had a visitor in many years. We talked about a variety of subjects, from hilarious to heartbreaking. I shared a bit about myself, but mostly I wanted to listen. I felt remarkably happy talking to Shawn. I believe this feeling rose out of an experience of the goodness in people, the everyday sweetness of the human spirit, and the power of human connection. I look forward to getting to know Shawn better. He recently sent me a packet of his writings. I am honored that he wants to share his story with me. I really admire him.

Shuca Mo

It was an unforgettable event—a liberating experience. Take a day off and expand your consciousness by meeting another being who resides in a different world.

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# Pass the Pen Project

Pass the Pen is a ongoing process-oriented collaborative creative writing project designed to encourage solidarity and empowerment among incarcerated individuals through writing.

## Gallery



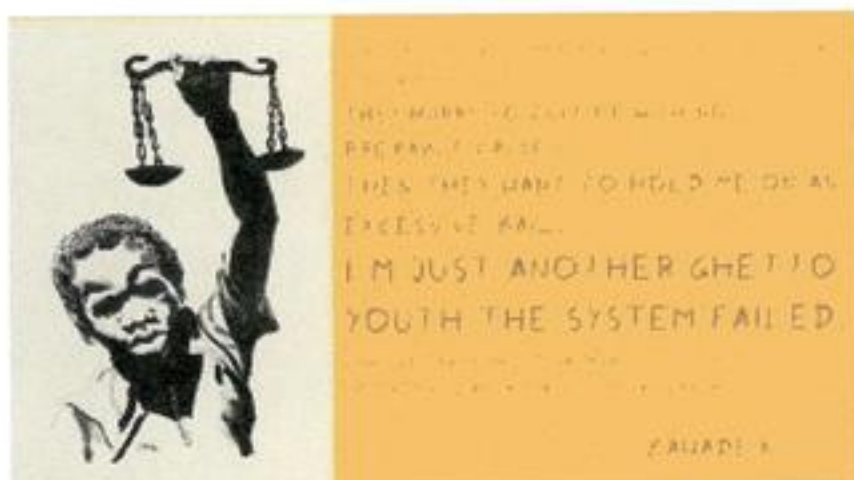
(<https://passthepenproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/franky.jpg>)

MCI Framingham



(<https://passthepenproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/ken-s.jpg>)

MCI Shirley



(<https://passthepenproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/zawade.jpg>)

MCI Norfolk