

Celebrate the women of Per(Sister) at Newcomb Art Museum's free activities on Saturday

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Syrta Steib-Martin and Dolfinette Martin pose in front of 'Whispers to God, Being Here When Women Need Me to Be Here!' by Carl Joe Williams. They will moderate a panel that's part of Newcomb Art Museum's May 11 activities. (Photo by Ashley Lorraine)

In celebration of Mother's Day weekend and in conjunction with its current exhibition [*Per\(Sister\): Incarcerated Women of Louisiana*](#), [Newcomb Art Museum](#) will host a full day of free activities on Saturday, May 11, designed to engage communities both on and off campus, including a free performance by members of the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra.

Taking inspiration from her temporary installation “An Incarcerated Garden for Moms” (currently located in front of the museum in the Newcomb Pottery Garden dedicated in memory of Judith Henkin), artist jackie sumell will lead museum visitors of all ages in a variety of crafts including a pressed-flower Mother’s Day card, eco-printing activities and edible flowers. Scheduled from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., this fun and multisensory event exploring the healing power of plants is presented in partnership with Speak Easy Farms.

Starting at 12 p.m. inside the museum, “PerSisters” and exhibition collaborators Syrita Steib-Martin and Dolfinette Martin will lead an in-depth gallery tour of the show, discussing their own experiences and the importance of telling women’s stories. Following immediately at 1 p.m., members of the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra will perform a free concert in Freeman Auditorium.

Led by Victor Atkins on the keyboard, the performance by the quintet from the orchestra will feature never-before-performed songs inspired by the personal testimonies of Louisiana's incarcerated women in addition to a selection of music that celebrates motherhood.

The day will culminate at 2 p.m. with a panel discussion made up of formerly incarcerated women whose stories are featured in the exhibition. Moderated by Steib-Martin and Martin, the open conversation will bring the themes presented in *Per(Sister)* to the forefront. The unique and often misrepresented challenges that formerly and currently incarcerated women in Louisiana face, from the root causes of incarceration to the physical and mental burdens of incarceration – including the hardships of mothering while inside – to navigating reentry, will be discussed as the women on the panel stand testament and give voice to a community far too long overlooked.

Each activity, including entrance to the museum, is free and open to the public.