

Newcomb Art Museum's 'Per(Sister)' awarded museum exhibition of the year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities

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Per(Sister): Incarcerated Women of Louisiana was awarded Museum Exhibition of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibition combined artwork, personal narrative, performance and critical analysis to put human names, faces, and stories to the dehumanizing numbers behind Louisiana's female incarceration statistics. (Photo provided by Newcomb Art Museum)

Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane University is pleased to announce it's 2019 exhibition *Per(Sister): Incarcerated Women of Louisiana* was awarded Museum Exhibition of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

“The humanities give us the essential knowledge and skills to engage with the world around us,” said LEH President/Executive Director Miranda Restovic. “We hope that by shining a light on the best of the humanities in Louisiana, it inspires all residents of this great, complicated state to learn more about and engage with our culture and environment.”

The exhibition, which ran from Jan. 19, 2019 through July 6 at Newcomb Art Museum was the result of more than three years of Newcomb Art Museum staff working with scholars, humanists, artists, activists, consultants, non-profit organizations, and individuals directly impacted by Louisiana’s high incarceration rates. The exhibition combined artwork, personal narrative, performance and critical analysis to put human names, faces, and stories to the dehumanizing numbers behind Louisiana’s female incarceration statistics.

Per(Sister): Incarcerated Women of Louisiana was created and developed in equal partnership with Syrita Steib-Martin and Dolfinette Martin with further support provided by Operation Restoration and Women with a Vision.

"The *Per(Sister)* exhibition was more than an art exhibition, it became a civic dialogue platform that featured the heartfelt contributions of more than 100 individuals from their own expertise. From the lived experiences of the formerly incarcerated women to the creative skills of the 30 artists and composers interpreting the women's stories to the community partners providing direction, advice, statistics and more stories to the Tulane faculty from diverse disciplines to Tulane students who designed the interactive components of the exhibition and transcribed all the interviews," said Mónica Ramírez-Montagut, museum director.

Throughout the run of the show, the museum hosted more than 30 free programs relating to *Per(Sister)* including tours; children storytelling activities; film screenings; craft activities; educational workshops; musical and dance performances; a Juneteenth celebration; lectures and panels focused on mass incarceration and the law; formerly incarcerated women as advocates; art as a tool for social change; Louisiana policy; and more.

The exhibition was visited by more than 8,000 visitors during its run uptown and hosted more than 25 schools across Orleans and Jefferson parishes for special educational tours and lessons relating to the show.

“Per(Sister)” became a community storytelling exercise – one created by the community of directly impacted individuals for that community, all with the participation of a new roster of allies. It illuminated the most critical struggle facing Louisiana in a manner that was educational and uplifting, reclaiming empathy and compassion that bonded everyone that visited,” said Ramirez-Montagut.

The exhibition, which ends its current extended run at the Diboll Gallery at the Tulane School of Public Health on Jan. 19, 2020 will enjoy a second run and increased opportunity for impact at The Ford Foundation Gallery in New York City where it will open on March 2, 2020.

The Newcomb Art Museum and the other award winners will be honored on May 7, 2020, at the LEH Bright Lights Awards Dinner in New Orleans.

About the Newcomb Art Museum:

The Newcomb Art Museum of Tulane University, located in Woldenberg Art Center on Tulane University’s uptown campus, builds on the Newcomb College legacy of education, social enterprise, and artistic experience by presenting meaningful, enriching, and transformative original exhibitions of socially-engaged art that engages communities both on and off campus. The museum’s events and programs encourage civic dialogue and community transformation by fostering the creative exchange of ideas and cross-disciplinary collaborations around innovative art and design. More than a museum, Newcomb has become a cultural cornerstone for artistic and social conversation, as well as a place of fellowship among Tulane students and the people of New Orleans.

About Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities:

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational opportunities to all residents of the state. Guided by the vision that everyone can realize their full potential through the humanities, LEH partners with communities, institutions and individuals to provide grant-supported outreach programs, literacy initiatives for all ages, publications, film and radio documentaries, museum exhibitions, public lectures, library projects, 64 Parishes magazine and other diverse public humanities programming. For more information, visit www.leh.org.

