

# Creative Arts Therapy during COVID-19



# Richard Rojas

# Rikers Island/2020





Jamal Clay

# Riker's Conflict – Boredom

*By Rick Leyva and Hector Gomez*

*Characters: Joe and Hector*

*Place: The Dayroom*

**Joe:** I woke up its 4:30 in the morning breakfast time

**Hector:** The words of chow echo through the house as sounds of foot steps tremble towards the dayroom

**Joe:** This will be 30 minutes of time that I won't have to think about filling up - trying to find something to do

**Hector:** Another moment to get through the day as I ponder what we have for breakfast oh great cereal, jelly, butter and bread

**Joe:** It will be another 8 hours till we have another structured meal time so I will try to grab a couple more Zzzs

**Hector:** So I grabbed more Zzzs, I look forward to my next dream for me its movie time

**Joe:** The sound of the others wakes me up and so does the thought of what now?

**Hector:** Another chapter another prayer another day lost in time

**Joe:** Its lunch time more structure for me to cling to

**Hector:** Institutionalized indoctrinated to the system this way of being – what a life





This group mandala was created as an 'instruct the instructor' directive. While individuals were unable to physically handle materials at the beginning of the pandemic, the LCAT took very specific direction from each participant regarding what color paper square to use and exactly where to glue it down. The process was an exercise in patience, communication skills interpersonal skills, frustration tolerance, commitment and attention to detail unlike any other project attempted as a group.

**Women in Intensive Treatment Unit with Merrill Cox, LCAT/Instructor  
also including Tiffany Brown, Annika Cansino**





### **"The Cure"**

Our mandala kept our focus on how we could be living: having patience, organization, cooperation and unity. It helped us not think about being in jail.

Sometimes it felt frustrating and stifling not to be able to touch the materials but in the end it felt that our hard work was worth the effort. During the time of completing the project it brought a sense of love, warmth, caring, and joy, that we were able to work on it together and consistently 2-3 times a week, even when COVID was high and people were isolated. The more we worked on it, as it came to a close, our fears about COVID also lessened.

**Women in Mental Observation Unit with Merrill Cox and Rajesh Mehra, LCAT /  
Instructors, also including Melissa Parsons, Latrisha Moore**





I love the way I painted on the sheet and all those colors of the flags of today's world as it is now. I was happy and joyful when I painted it and its moments of the good world as the future comes.

**Vincent L. Lopez**

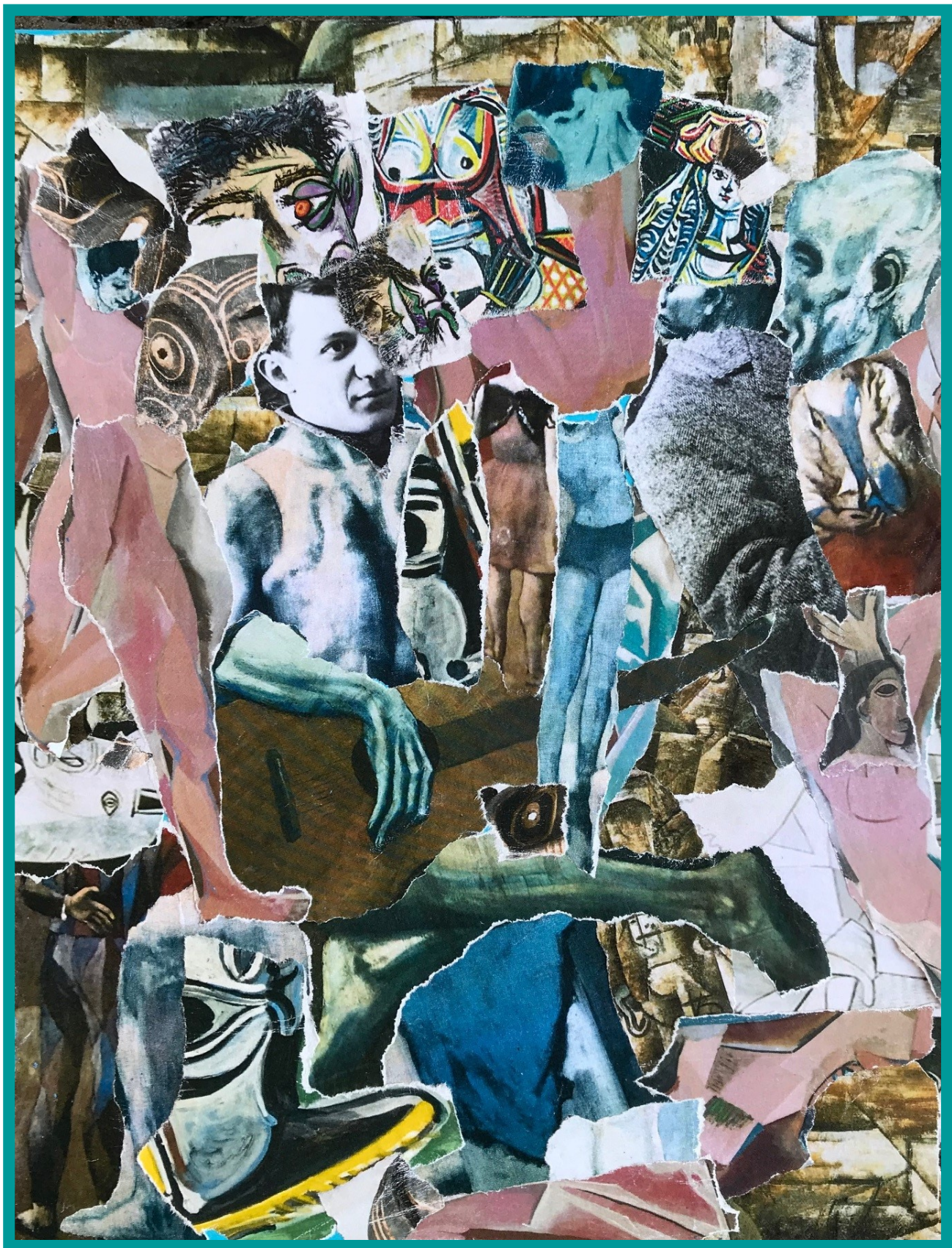


Have a Merry Christmas says the Lord our God to me. Near 2020 after 59 times of being arrested, from age 18-41. (Gothic) God blessed me with Artwork. My name is Nancy. Merry Christmas  
Enjoy the signs of art from God.

**Nancy R.**







Richard Rojas



## A New York State of Mind

During these troubling times, let's continue to do our part and that's keeping each other safe. Most importantly, securing our babies, our children, for they are the future. Let's keep our elderly safe because without them...we would not have made it this far. This is a time to fight with Supreme intelligence. Not with hurt and pain by being overly authoritative and challenging. We stand as one. We compromise and understand these are the principles that collectively makes us New York strong. Have pride in your city. Be proud of our first responders, especially our nurses and doctors, for they are the beating heart of New York City. We're giants, responsible for the masses. We do not crumple under pressure.

Because as a whole, when it comes to us New Yorkers...that's not even a thing. This just a friendly reminder. And this is coming from some one that hasn't made the best of choices in life. But even I know when to be a team player. In times like this...we work with each other. Not because we have to, not because we want to or because we need to. No, we work with each other because it's a New York State of Mind! Our unspoken oath and loyalty, that's naturally embedded in our hearts. It's our natural togetherness which becomes our duty to each other. Mainly in disasters and pandemics such as this one. It's our love for existence...love for our city...New York. Simply put, out of pure love, we work together. Just thought I'd remind y'all...from a New York State of Mind. WEAR A MASK!

Purely,

**Marcus Vance**





## Drama Therapy Mask Project

*Masks are made to recreate the family, including the mothers, fathers, siblings and selves. Psychodynamic interactions with the masks, and patient insights, are recorded by the Licensed Creative Arts Therapist during the mask making process.*

*Play sessions with the mask enable enrolling as different family members to retell the family story.*

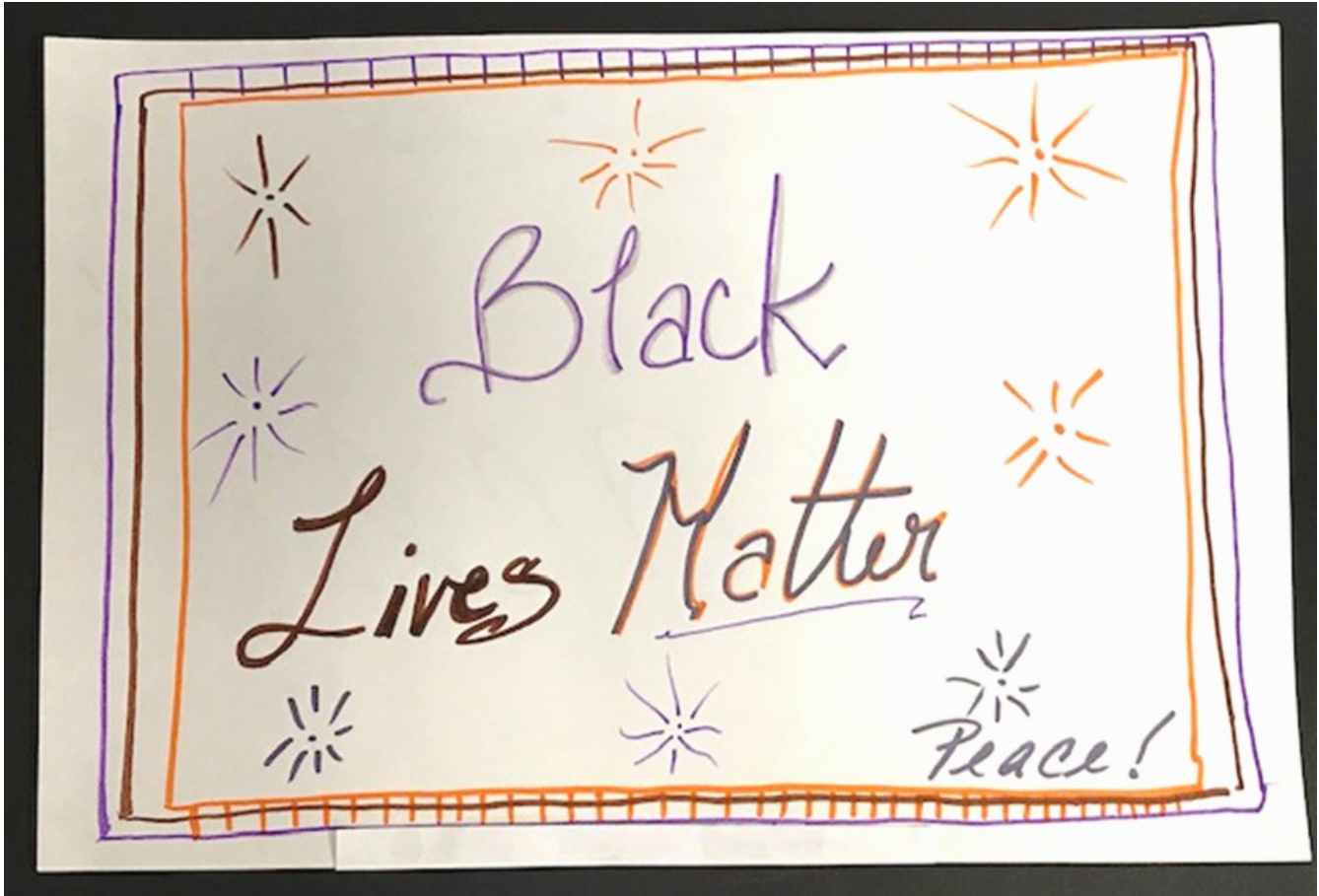
“It’s me—re-acquainting with my family I lost long ago. The years spent being raised by these individuals some were of great love, care, and joy while others were beyond the horrific realm of understanding. Being separated for so many years and now all parties of my family being deceased except I, has allowed me to heal, grow, in ways not yet fully understood but yet I’m still finding ways to accept life’s trials and tribulations that are caused by the onset of how I was raised when I was young by these individuals. The masks themselves each individual tells a story of once what was and now I see them as who I feel they really are to this day. The demon father who is now the devil, to the gifted mother whose beauty helped her prevail through the most horrendous love and marriage a woman should have to endure. My sister in her angelic spontaneous, energetic strength and strong will was the stronghold that kept us alive. My mask tells a story of being totally disconnected and having multiple planes and realities seen unseen and yet to be foretold. Land masses, is how I see myself in my celestial form. When you’re able to jump from one realm of existence to the next through astral projection, and see I that now my life is more grounded.”

You allowed me to see him as the devil that he is and now I am in control I’ve forgiven him and doing this project has brought me the greatest joy – this is one of the greatest gifts I’ve ever received.

May everyone feel at least partial what I have endured, through living and knowing these individuals. May God bless and have mercy on their souls. Thanks be to God.”

**Victor Flood**





This was a great program for me. I learned something. As an artist, art is number one for me.

**Dwayne S.**



## ***Does My Life Matter***

Understanding 4 Crime  
Ask me about justice  
My speech would be a whole lot  
Ask them about love  
They would know none  
The life I live is based on culture  
Why is it me who have to suffer  
2 of us is just enough  
If I have 2 die 4 my rights then I must  
It's hard to figure it all  
But the more I wait the more we fall  
Should I even accept pride  
Days with tears between my eyes  
I care 4 the days I'm scare  
Because that's the days we moan n share.

**Prince J Edwards**

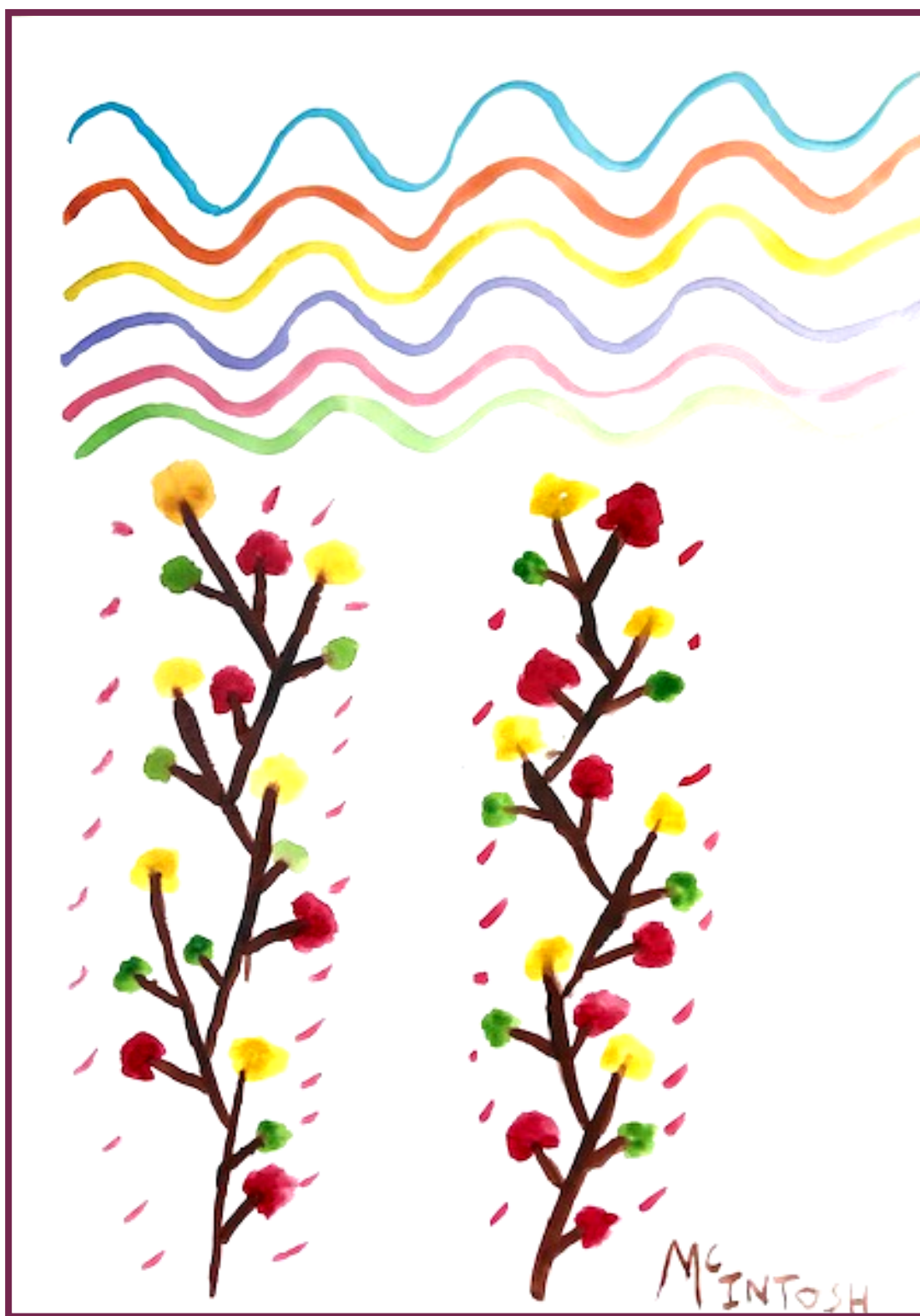




Daniel Jusufov

Charles Matthews





Peace is bliss. Count on the days you reminisce Stay in  
love as a flower.

**E. M.**



*Prompt: “A burning bush without God is just a fire” What is burning inside of you?*

I was listening to a poem today--& a burning bush without God is just  
a fire —

Who could put it out??

Without some tires/

The fire truck? What about the ice man? What about the rain man?

I've been through pain man,

Taking me on a brave plan,

Threw lockz & chainz man,

I ain't set the bushes on fire like

A slave man full of rage—

but through time & age you could learn a lot-

But with a mind of change you burn the clock

Use your mind, and when locked up behind

bars, learn to use da time

What's a lion to a sheep

I've been in places where men

Die in their sleep

What's in the bushes,

It's time to eat

I'm like a bear when I feel the heat

Meaning I just need a bear hug—

**Yusef Sparks**



This was a great event and very informative. Art is very important to me

**Todd Lyons**

**Derek Alleyne**





# *Anxiety*

I'm Anxiety. I'm always worried and concerned. My friends are fear and sadness and depression likes to hang around. I'm always tensed. Sometimes I can't think straight. Too much runs through my mind. I feel hopeless. My anxiety is bad especially since I'm locked up. I don't know what to do. Anxiety. My favorite color is gray. I like the rain. Anxiety makes me feel less of a man. I can't make progress with this anxiety. I get jittery. My legs shake, my boy sadness looks at me with Depression and wonders where I'm going 'cause I always end up at the same spot. You know where to find me in a dark hall, creeping. My enemies are happiness and patience. I have no patience. I'm trying to learn when anxiety kicks in, I start to eat a lot. I can't concentrate. I need help but I'm afraid to ask 4 it. This anxiety sometimes makes me not wanna exist. Put it short, anxiety's a BITCH, OMG!

**Daniel Seda**



Does anybody care about us in here?

**Ojas LaRoche**





These pictures are about my goals and all my stuff. I got the car, my girl, I got a house, kids, a dog.

**John Doe**





This painting was made in collaboration. We had worked on a small drawing in group together, and Christian said why don't we make a large version of what he had made? We walked around a table, adding our marks, mixing colors, and making decisions on where to place the paint.

**Christian Espinol, Alexi B. (LCAT/facilitator)**

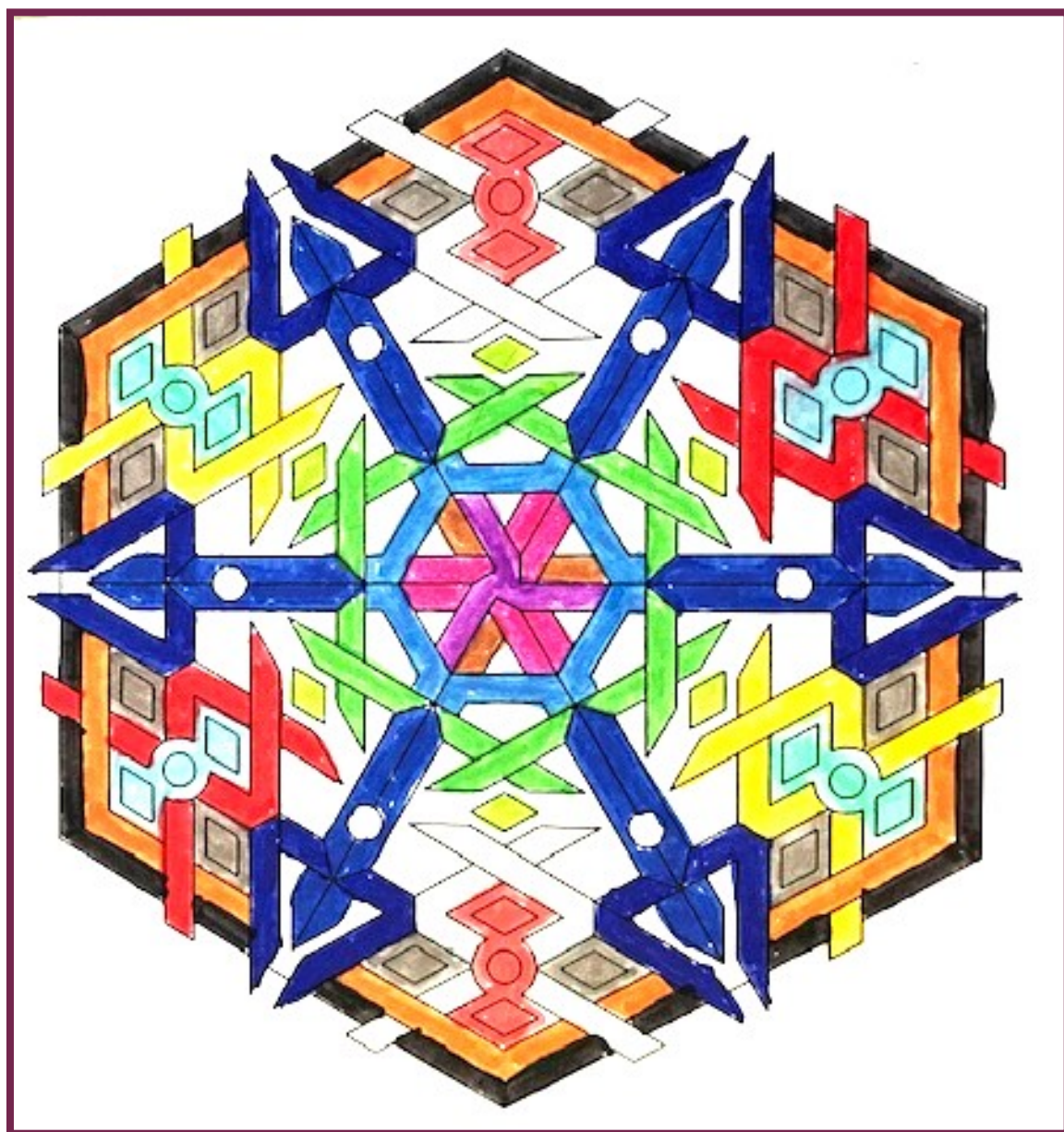






My artwork represents imagination, creativity, power and passion for abstract art. It reflects the world by giving a touch of peace

**Jefferson Arboleda**



John Skeene





The spirits of all forms of evil are done today Oct. 28, 2020. After my sister died from protecting me and gave her life for my salvation. We are champions, before, during and after. Destroyed all her enemy's today. Done.

**Nancy R.**

## *Each of Us Has a Name*

Each of us has a name  
Given that everyone is human  
We all bleed the same.  
Each of us has a name  
Chosen  
Each of us has a name  
On earth like any living things.  
Each of us has a name  
So we can love each other the same.  
Each of us has a name  
Like my mother's birth to life  
Each of us has a name  
So we can entertain  
Each of us has a name  
Looking for someone to blame...

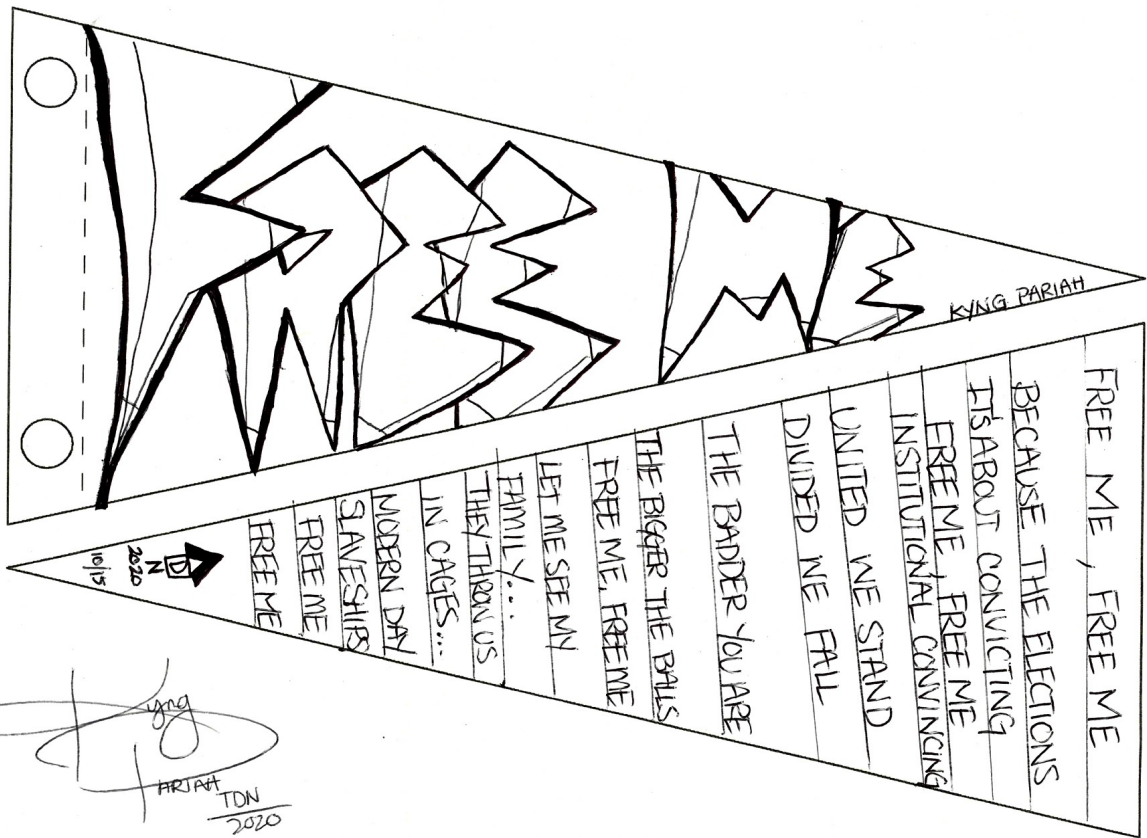
**Luis Rodriguez, John Daves, Christopher Cruz**



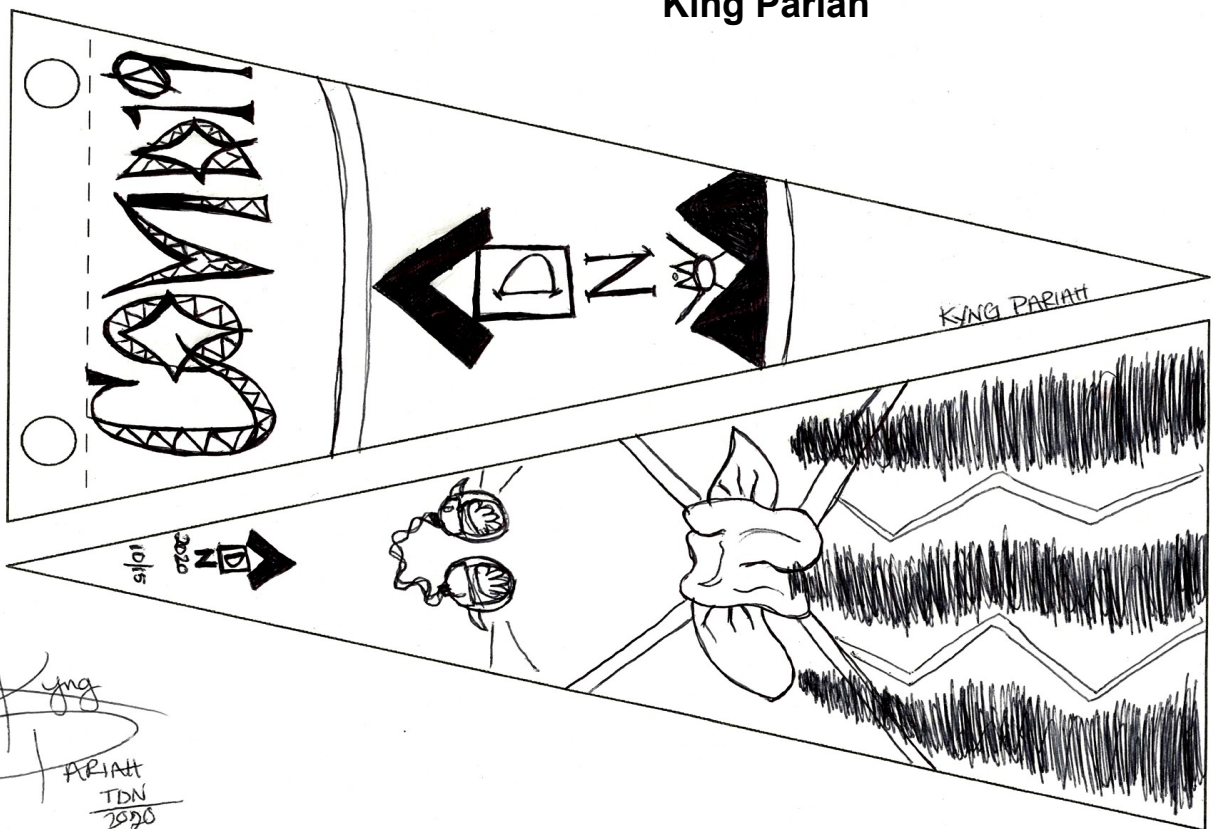


COVID-19 Killer!!!

**Michael Hernandez**



King Pariah







**Christian Espinal**

## **FIRST**

Read my Brother  
With the aim of learning  
Create your mind  
Like a God. Read!  
Your learning today is most important  
The pen is your protection  
Now you know what's first and foremost.

**Melvin Bailey**



This group mandala was created as an “instruct the instructor” directive. While individuals were unable to physically handle materials at this time during the pandemic, the LCAT took very specific direction from each participant in exactly how to mix each paint color, what spot their unique color should go into, and if it should have a pattern.

The process was an exercise in patience, communication skills, interpersonal skills, frustration tolerance, commitment, and attention to detail unlike any other project attempted as a group. The women expressed fascination, excitement, pride, and surprise that they could create something so detailed and personal without ever touching materials.

**Women in Mental Observation Unit w/Merrill Cox, LCAT/Instructor**



## **No Matter What**

I still got rights  
They tell me  
That the Constitution  
Will help me  
But the laws got blinders  
You feel me? You feel me?  
No matter what.

No matter my age, or color, race or sex,  
Or religion, national origin, sexual orientation,  
Disability, criminal charges, marital status,  
Or citizenship, no matter what,  
I still have rights  
They tell me.

**Melvin Bailey**

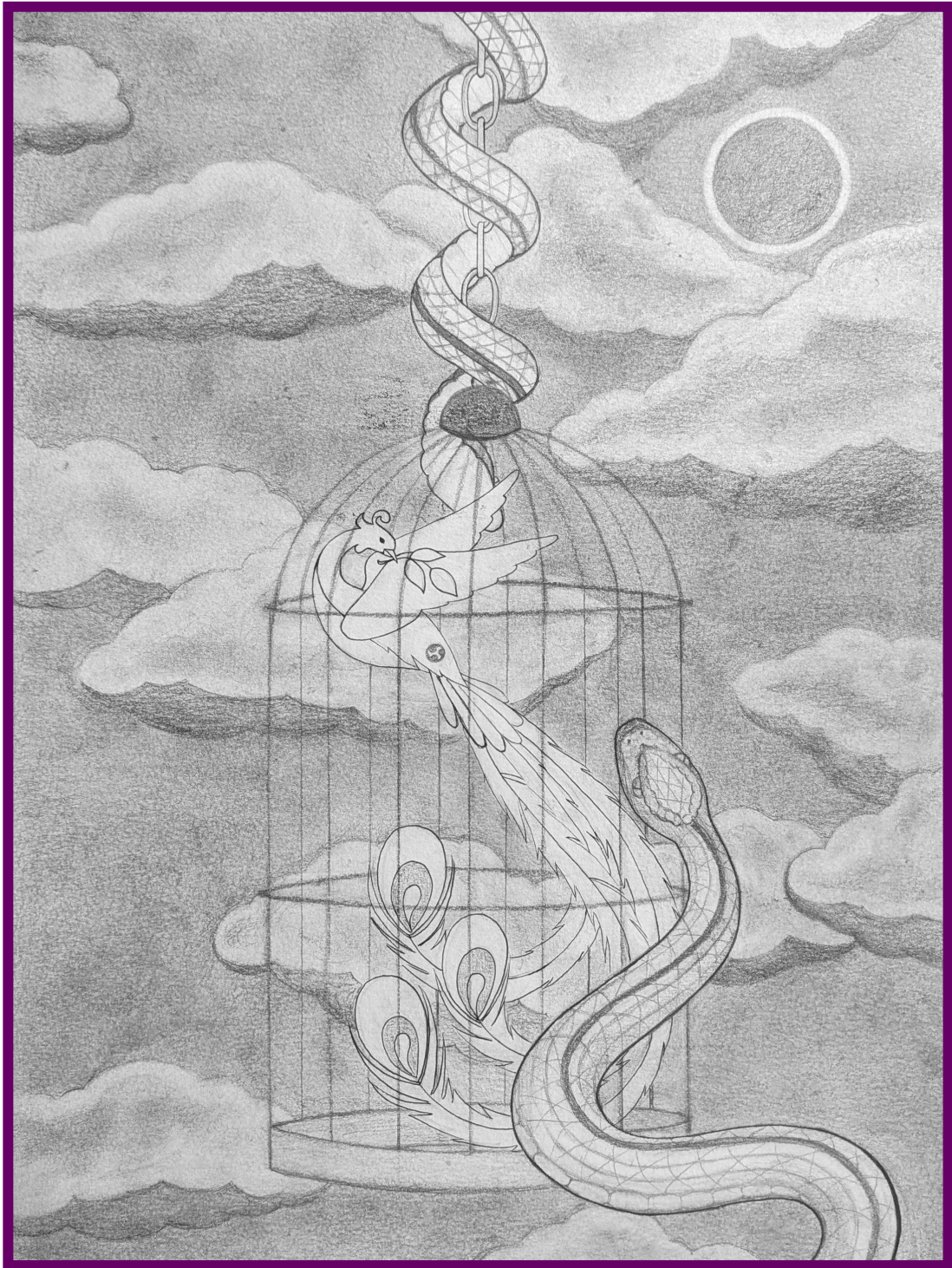
## **Take The Test**

Take charge and take the test  
Is fast and free with confidence  
The COVID 19 test and the HIV test, yes

Out break, out break in Wuhan China  
A disease called the coronavirus  
Is a respiratory illness  
That can spread from persons to cause COVID  
Stay strong and stay safe yo

**Melvin Bailey**





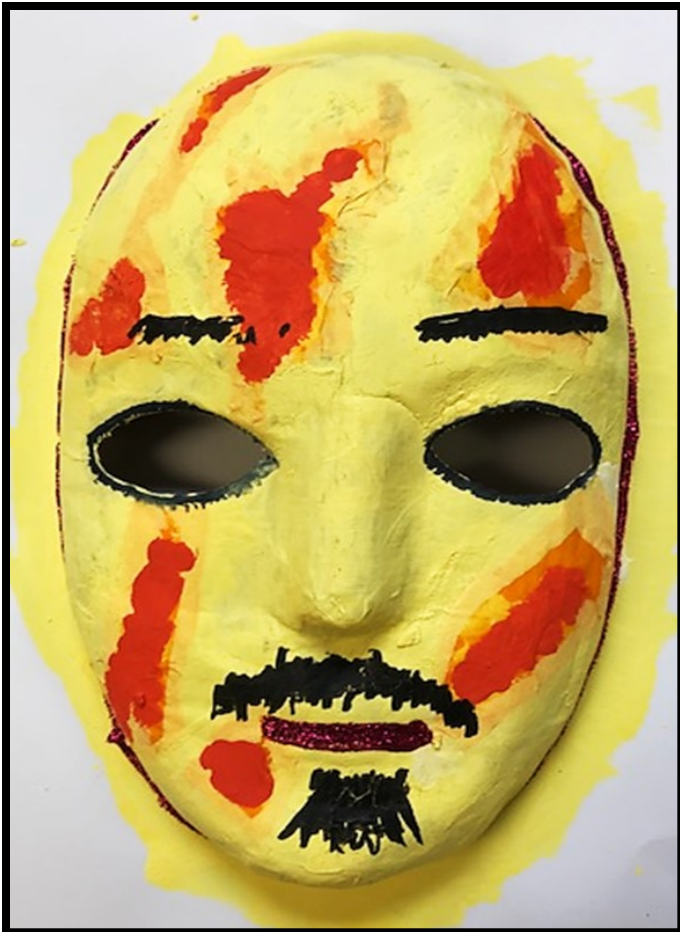
**Marsha Asuka**

## *The Jail Bird*

I wake up in a cage  
A prisoner of conscience  
Is this safe keeping?  
Or am I facing consequences?  
Did the stars fall?  
Are the clouds up in flames?  
Do I have a possessor?  
Who is my master but the creator of all?  
Maybe they disliked my song?  
I hope I don't stay for long.  
What did I do wrong?  
I just do not belong  
Where corruption is strong  
If I cannot fly  
I am not home  
I am a fragment of the sky  
A bird of paradise

**Marsha Asuka**





Asm Sharfuddin



Adrian Topping



Sara Pacheco



*Prompt: “A burning bush without God is just a fire” What is burning inside of you?*

Rage is burning inside of these four corners. Desire to get out of this prison, metaphysical and literal exploding content, demise without reason. Freedom is without treason, rebellion causing friction, lost in a failed structure of a system.

**Marco Santiago**

*Prompt: We never talked or we talked over breakfast because...*

We talked over breakfast because life is so fine  
and we got to talk to understand how to stay behind the line  
cuz we can't cross it  
cops come, you got the weapon you better toss it,  
cuz you don't want to get in trouble  
especially if you are a man of colour.  
Black lives matters  
All life matters  
Better behave  
Before they take you out of your mañana.

**Luis Rodriguez**



Oumar Konate





Holiday project created by CHS staff, DOC staff and patients on NIC/PACE, facilitated by **Danielle Weiss, LCAT**

**This Collection  
was made possible by**

**Creative Arts Therapy Program team**



**Correctional Health Services**



**And by all the willing and creative artists who offered their work, time and trust towards this project during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our dedicated patients wanted to be expressive and creative during an extremely difficult time, and showed support towards each other, sharing their innermost feelings and observations with you. They have expressed that this creative process was healing and provided them with hope and the understanding that they and their work are important.**