



evan bissell
artist researcher
sample works

narratives for equitable
systems and liberatory
processes

EDUCATION

Master of City Planning
UC Berkeley 2016

Master of Public Health
UC Berkeley 2016

BA (Painting and Ethnic Studies)
Wesleyan University 2005

AWARDS

Roselyn Lindheim Award, 2015

Activist in Residence, Arcus Center
for Social Justice, 2015

Arts Research Center Fellow, UC
Berkeley, 2015

Advocacy Fellow, School of Public
Health, UC Berkeley, 2015

Artist in Residence, American
Cultures Engaged Scholarship
Program, UC Berkeley, 2013-14

Artist in Residence, Headlands
Center for the Arts, 2013

EXPERIENCE

Participatory action research

Painting, design, illustration

Arts based research

Facilitation and teaching

Media advocacy and analysis

Qualitative research methods

Writing

Survey design

Data analysis

PURPOSE

I am a cross-sector artist researcher whose goal is to organize narratives for equitable systems and liberatory processes. I work with those most impacted by issues, organizations, academics, researchers, educators, students and artists to coproduce narratives that deepen the reach, relevance and rigor of these collective efforts. Informed by a participatory action research orientation, outcomes are high-quality, uncompromising art and research that engage overarching narratives, contribute to organizing and policy goals, and develop strategies, skills and techniques for social change. Additionally, I aim to contribute to “art trespassing” through cross-sector efforts that make the case for art’s necessity to research and action for social change.

What Cannot Be Taken Away

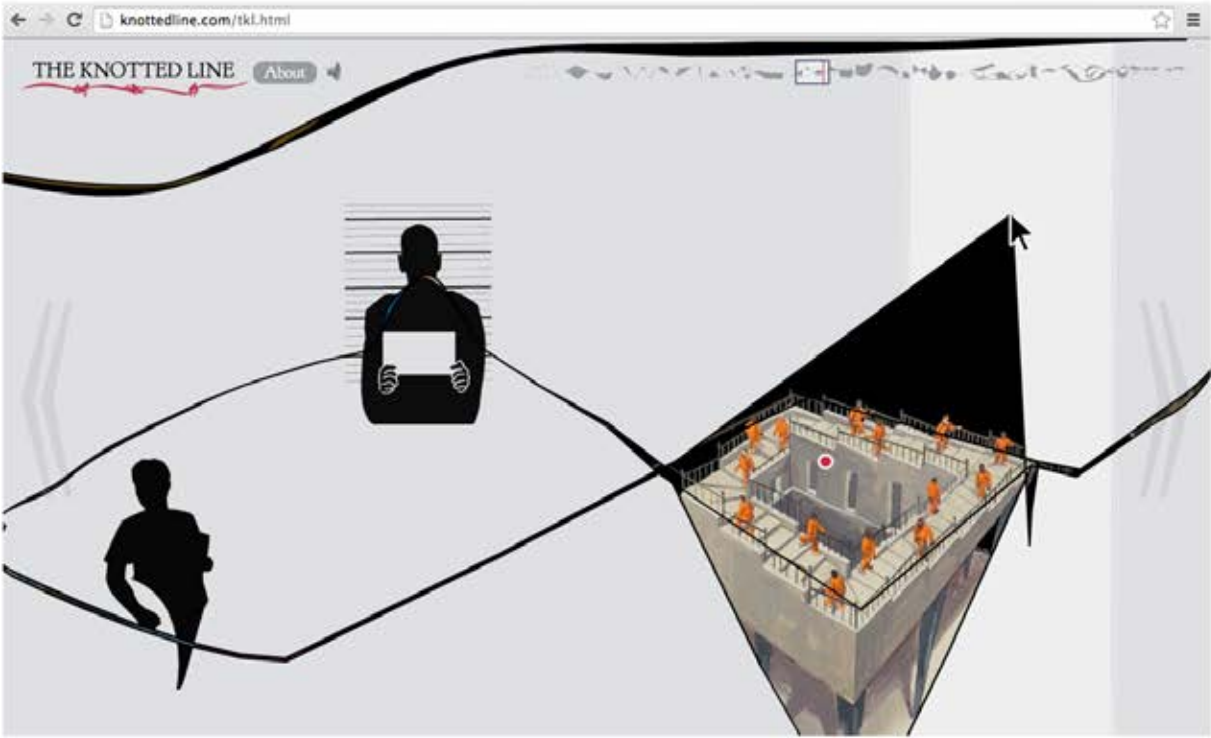
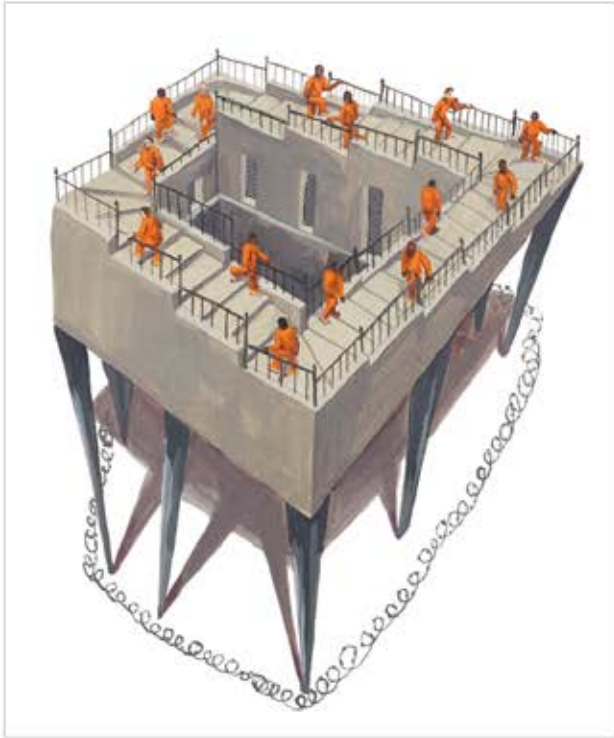
The Families and Prison Project



What Cannot Be Taken Away: Families and Prison Project (2009-10) is an arts-based research project. Over six months, I met separately with incarcerated fathers and young people who have incarcerated parents. I carried written, audio and visual materials back and forth between the two groups in a weekly conversation. The group directed the content of the conversations as we engaged a series of arts based research exercises. We then reviewed all the "data" and each person created a black and white sketch, from which I painted the final works. The project, which is shown as a group of portraits and accompanied by workshops, project archives and extensive historical context, has been exhibited in galleries, colleges, jail, and Alcatraz Island.

Pictured are 3 of 8 portraits: Vontek, Sadie, Ben, each 8' x 5', acrylic on canvas.

The Knotted Line
knottedline.com



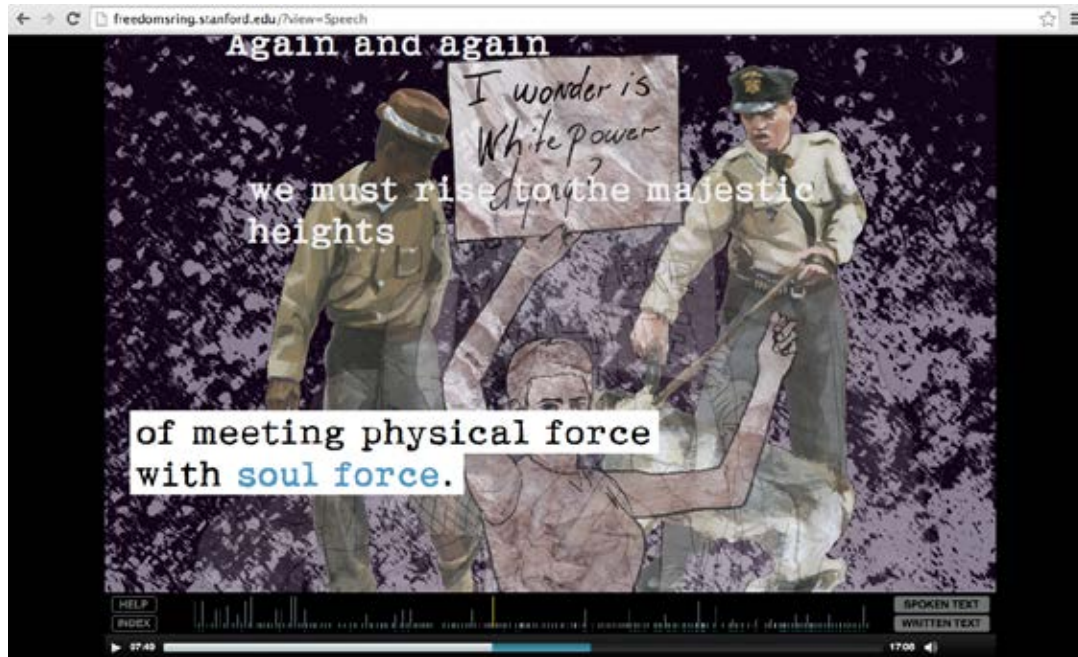
The Knotted Line (knottedline.com) is a tactile laboratory for exploring the transhistorical relationship between freedom and confinement in the U.S. from 1495-2025. The project is built around 50 miniature paintings of historical moments. Each moment of "confinement" is connected to multiple, related moments of self-determination. After the site launch (2012), I worked nationally with educators on an accompanying free curriculum, released in 2014 and currently in use in high schools and colleges across the country. The project was created with the media artist Erik Loyer.

Morris Justice Project



The Morris Justice Project (MJP) is a participatory action research collective of South Bronx residents and academics from the CUNY Graduate Center and John Jay College of Criminal Justice. For four years, MJP has focused on the impacts of aggressive policing in a 42-block area of the Bronx. Over two summers (2014-2015) I worked with MJP to integrate arts based research into their methods. These posters are elements of a research and media strategy we developed to counter the racialized logic of broken windows policing, which aggressively targets "disorder." The posters, other visuals and writings were distributed extensively in the neighborhood and to activist partners throughout New York. In addition we designed a community survey and visual tools for "sidewalk science," which allow for rapid on the street data collection and sharing.

Freedom's Ring
freedoms-ring.org



A screenshot of a website page from freedomsring.stanford.edu/?view=Phrase&id=strong-enough-to-transform-society. The page features a navigation link "Return to the speech" and a main heading "soul force" with the subtitle "Strong enough to transform society?". Below the heading are four columns of content, each with an image and a title:

- A Way of Life**: King's commitment to nonviolence or soul force was in continual evolution. >
- Tactical**: Many in the movement saw nonviolence not as a way of life, but as the best tactic for confronting the totalitarian regime of Jim Crow America. >
- Claiming Citizenship**: The civil rights movement was driven by the actions of thousands of individuals claiming their rights. One of the most important programs of Southern Christian Leadership Conference was the Citizen Education Program. >
- Interconnected Movement**: Though taking different locations, and tactics, the civil rights movement recognized and practiced the interconnectedness of all humanity, including the determination of the oppressed and the oppressor. >

Freedom's Ring is Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, animated and annotated in a format that enables users to compare the written and spoken speech, explore related media, hear the stories of movement activists, and uncover historical context. The project was created with The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute with design and programming by Erik Loyer.

Proposition 47
Media Advocacy Plan



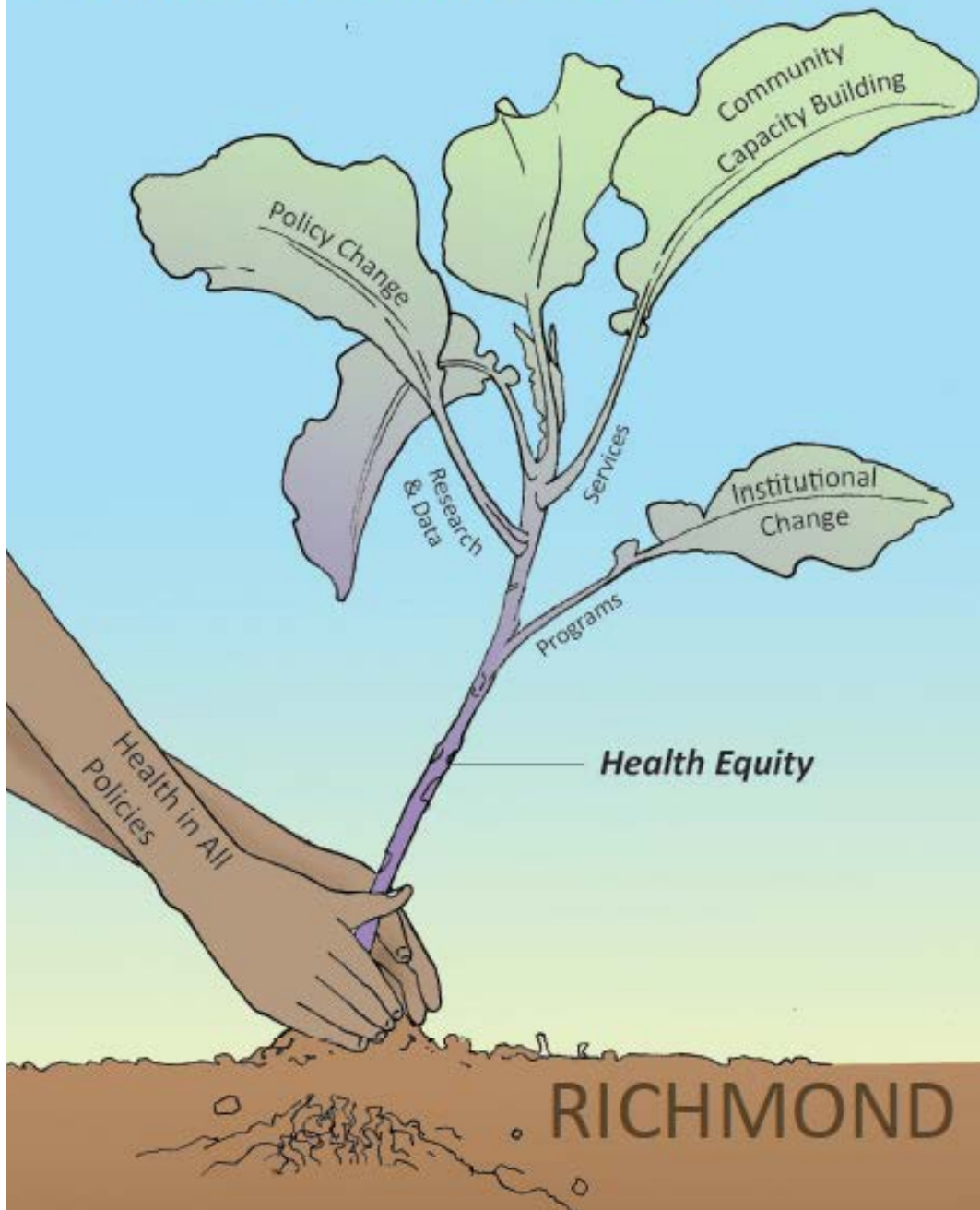
Working with the Ella Baker Center and CURB in 2015, I co-led the development of a media advocacy plan to ensure that savings generated from Prop. 47 go to community-based mental health services, which are both more efficient and humane, not Sheriff run services. In addition to visuals that I created, some of which are pictured here, we completed a media analysis, developed talking points, published op-eds and created narrative frames for the on-going campaign.

Transformative Arts Practice Space Allied Media Conference



For three years (2012-2014) I co-coordinated the Transformative Arts Practice Space at the Allied Media Conference. The space provided hands-on workshops for learning visual arts techniques and panels about the role of art in social justice movements. The Allied Media Conference is an annual conference in Detroit focused on media based organizing, which is defined as any collaborative process that uses media, art, or technology to address the roots of problems and advances holistic solutions towards a more just and creative world. I currently serve on the conference Advisory Board. Pictured here is a printmaking workshop.

GROWING HEALTH EQUITY IN RICHMOND, CA



Health in All Policies Report
City of Richmond

In 2015 I led the development of the first Health in All Policies Report for the City of Richmond. Health in All Policies is a health equity strategy that seeks to integrate a health lens into all levels of city governance. The report was created through over a dozen interviews, review of public records and data, staff emails and city documents. I am currently working with the City of Richmond to design and facilitate health equity trainings for City staff and workshops for community partners to create avenues for further resident input.

False Friends



WORK ≠ INVEST

STRUGGLE ≠ INNOVATE

TRANSFORM > DISRUPT

REPARATIONS ≠ DIVERSITY

ACCOUNTABILITY > RESPONSIBILITY

ARTIST ≠ ENTREPRENEUR

HERE ≠ THERE

False Friends was created for Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Urban Futures think tank. It was accompanied by an essay on the changing arts landscape in San Francisco, Post Bills: Culture and Capital in San Francisco.

CURRENT AND FUTURE PROJECTS

I Stole My Own Body is an interactive web story following three interlocking histories: the legal shape of property, the crises of property provoked by self-determination movements, and the relationship between the value of property and the reproduction of inequality in the United States. The story catalogues nearly 100 intricately rendered historical moments, each accompanied by media and writing. In the afterglow of the financial crisis, at the precipice of continued carbon extraction and caught in the momentum of historic inequality, this deeply researched story offers tangible strategies drawn from histories of radical imagination to create more equitable distributions of property and decommodified forms of place and life.

The Wealth Suite is a series of visual interventions - digital maps, public signs, social media campaigns - that seek to refocus public debate about the wealth divide on communities that enforce low-growth policies, inequitable tax policy and fragmented systems of governance.

We Can Feel the Wind is a mixed methods research project about the relationship of place-based health equity initiatives and displacement in Richmond, California. The research and resulting paper seek to contribute to current efforts to improve place while also ensuring that people can stay in those improved places.