

35+ Prisons in Québec
Sheena Hoszko

Forest City Gallery

35+ Prisons in Québec is a sculptural artwork based on site visits to all federal and provincial prisons in Québec, from 2016 to 2017. The project understands prison as a system of power relations that extend far beyond concrete block walls, and in turn, the work asks “outsiders” to position themselves within this dynamic. *35+ Prisons in Québec* locates prisons in relation to the role played by the Catholic Church in building the province’s first carceral institutions, many of which remain today.

At each institution, a 9" x 12" piece of paper was placed as close as possible to the front gate on the ground in the parking lot and then rubbed with conté, charcoal, or crayon. All 35+ drawings have been photo-transferred and etched with acid onto copper plates, which lie in two long rows along the floor of the gallery: one plate for each site visited. A stained glass window, featuring an upside-down fleur-de-lis and maple leaf, illuminates the room in amber light. As well, a large poster hangs on the wall, listing all the prison sites and the distance between each institution and Forest City Gallery itself.

Despite the fact that half of the prisons in the province are situated in suburbs and city centres, the location of prisons remains hidden from our everyday public knowledge. This is due to the ongoing invisibilization of those on the inside and those who are most in conflict with the law: Indigenous people, people of colour, people living with mental illness, and people living in poverty.

Sites near gas stations, sites surrounded by tall corn fields, sites next to Percé Rock and lines of RV homes, sites next to highways that lead to hydro dams and copper mines, a site next to a church and a grocery store that bustles on Sundays.

Sheena Hoszko is a sculptor, anti-prison organizer, and settler living and working in Tio'tia:ke (Montréal), in Kanien'kehá:ka territory. Her art practice examines the power dynamics of geographic and architectural sites, and is informed by her family's experiences with incarceration and the military. She studied at the Emily Carr University of Art + Design and obtained an MFA from Concordia University, where she received SSHRC funding for her research on feminism and post-minimalism. Selected solo exhibitions include Centre Clark and La Centrale (Montreal), A Space (Toronto), Artspace (Peterborough), The New Gallery (Calgary), with upcoming projects at the Blackwood Gallery (Mississauga). She is also an avid sci-fi fan, and is currently in residence at Atelier Circulaire (Montreal).

Thank you to The Canada Council for the Arts, Atelier Circulaire, Centre du Vitrail, Forest City Gallery Board and Staff, Termite, Eveline Lupien, Giselle Dias, Ed, Michelle, Skye, Nasrin, Emma, Nadege, Mark, Jeffrey, Carol, Manu, Pasc, and Sav.

According to Alter Justice, a Québec-based nonprofit, the number of people on the inside in Québec in 2015–2016 was 5,178.¹ Furthermore, they state that in 2007–2008, Indigenous people made up 4.3 percent of the Québec prison population, when they represent 1.2 percent of the population total for the same period.² On the federal level, data from 2016 shows that of the 14,624 inmates across the country, 3,723 are Indigenous people—25 percent of the prison population.³ The numbers, drawn from the same 2015 Correctional Auditor’s report, also outline the growing number of black people incarcerated by CSC. In the last 10 years, there has been a 70 percent increase in those held on the inside.⁴

1. “Statistiques: La population carcérale.” Alter Justice. July 07, 2016. Accessed March 12, 2017. <http://www.alterjustice.org/dossiers/statistiques/detention-preventive.html>.

2. “Statistiques: profil des personnes incarcérées.” Alter Justice. July 27, 2015. Accessed March 12, 2017. http://www.alterjustice.org/dossiers/statistiques/profil_personnes_incarceres.html.

3. Sapers, Howard. The 2015–16 Annual Report of the Office of the Correctional Investigator, Government of Canada. Issue brief. October 31, 2016.

4. McIntyre, Catherine. “Canada Has a Black Incarceration Problem That Human Rights Advocates Say Isn’t Being Addressed.” Torontoist. April 21, 2016. Accessed March 26, 2017. <http://torontoist.com/2016/04/african-canadian-prison-population/>.

5. Laplante, Jacques. *Prison et ordre social au Québec*. Ottawa: Les Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 1989: 44.

6. “Life in Prison: Building Prisons.” See More of the Virtual Museum of Canada. 2009. <http://www.culturepop.qc.ca/prison/en/building-prisons.php>. Accessed March 26, 2017. <http://torontoist.com/2016/04/african-canadian-prison-population/>.

7. Laplante, *Prison et ordre social au Québec*, 59.

Buildings in Québec created to act as spaces of confinement were built by Jesuit missionaries between 1716 and 1726 in the settlements of Ville-Marie, Québec City, and Trois-Rivières, and consisted of an interrogation room, housing for the “gaoler,” and two to four cells.⁵ The official institutes labelled as prisons were later built in the same cities between 1805–1811.⁶ As more institutions were built under English control, and despite an earlier push towards prison “reform” via labour, the prisons remained places where “indocile” people were grouped together as a result of being “slaves punished by their masters, the children of criminals with nowhere to go, vagabonds of all sorts.”⁷

New Carlisle / Notes
Cops Cops Cops
Prison shares a building with the Sûreté du Québec
Radio broadcasts New Brunswick news
An almost art deco façade, the entire parking lot dug up
I park in the lawyer's office lot across the street
GRAVEL
It's a Palais de justice
Construction workers outside
Stained glass in the windows, squares, modernist —
flowers hang from baskets on the light posts
FLOWERS hang from baskets on the light posts
Gravel pits, backhoes
Two hours later after some stops, Gespe'gewa'gi
Mi'gmaq Nation

Critical Resistance seeks to build an international movement to end the Prison Industrial Complex by challenging the belief that caging and controlling people makes us safe. We believe that basic necessities such as food, shelter, and freedom are what really make our communities secure. As such, our work is part of global struggles against inequality and powerlessness. The success of the movement requires that it reflect communities most affected by the PIC. Because we seek to abolish the PIC, we cannot support any work that extends its life or scope.

The Prison Industrial Complex:

The prison industrial complex (PIC) is a term we use to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social and political problems.

Through its reach and impact, the PIC helps and maintains the authority of people who get their power through racial, economic and other privileges. There are many ways this power is collected and maintained through the PIC, including creating mass media images that keep alive stereotypes of people of color, poor people, queer people, immigrants, youth, and other oppressed communities as criminal, delinquent, or deviant. This power is also maintained by earning huge profits for private companies that deal with prisons and police forces; helping earn political gains for “tough on crime” politicians; increasing the influence of prison guard and police unions; and eliminating social and political dissent by

oppressed communities that make demands for self-determination and reorganization of power in the US.

Abolition:

PIC abolition is a political vision with the goal of eliminating imprisonment, policing, and surveillance and creating lasting alternatives to punishment and imprisonment.

From where we are now, sometimes we can't really imagine what abolition is going to look like. Abolition isn't just about getting rid of buildings full of cages. It's also about undoing the society we live in because the PIC both feeds on and maintains oppression and inequalities through punishment, violence, and controls millions of people. Because the PIC is not an isolated system, abolition is a broad strategy. An abolitionist vision means that we must build models today that can represent how we want to live in the future. It means developing practical strategies for taking small steps that move us toward making our dreams real and that lead us all to believe that things really could be different. It means living this vision in our daily lives.

Abolition is both a practical organizing tool and a long-term goal.⁸

8. "What is the PIC? What is Abolition?"
Critical Resistance. 2017. Accessed October 12,
2017. <http://criticalresistance.org/about/not-so-common-language/>.

List of sites — Federal / Provincial

Archambault Institution (Medium)
Archambault Institution (Minimum)
Cowansville Institution
Donnacona Institution
Drummond Institution
Federal Training Centre (Multi-level)
Federal Training Centre (Minimum)
Joliette Institution for Women
La Macaza Institution
Port-Cartier Institution
Regional Mental Health Centre
Regional Reception Centre
Waseskun Healing Center
Laval Immigration Detention Centre

Établissement de détention d'Amos
Établissement de détention de Baie-Comeau
Établissement de détention de Rimouski
Établissement de détention de Roberval
Établissement de détention de Saint-Jérôme
Établissement de détention de Sept-Îles
Établissement de détention de Sherbrooke
Établissement de détention de Trois-Rivières
Établissement de détention Leclerc de Laval
Établissement de détention Montréal (Bordeaux)
Établissement de détention pour femmes
Maison Tanguay
Établissement de détention Québec—Secteur féminin
Établissement de détention Québec—Secteur masculin
Établissement de détention Rivières des Prairies
Établissement de détention Sorel
Établissement de Hull
Établissement de Longueuil
Établissement de Montréal
Établissement de New Carlisle
Établissement de Percé
Établissement de Valleyfield
Établissement d'Havre-Aubert

Prisoner Correspondence Project

<https://prisoner Correspondence Project.com/>

Solidarity Across Borders

<http://www.Solidarity Across Borders.org/en/>

Ear Hustle Podcast

<https://www.earhustlesq.com/>

End Immigration Detention

<https://endimmigrationdetention.com/>

Critical Resistance

<http://criticalresistance.org/>

Demand Prisons Change

<https://demandprisonschange.wordpress.com/>

It's Going Down

<https://itsgoingdown.org/>

DECOLONIZING ANTI-PRISON WORK

Saturday January 6th, 6–9 pm

The Arts Project

203 Dundas St., London, ON, N6A 1G4

Snacks provided

Free

This circle process, facilitated by Giselle Dias, will create an opportunity for conversation that will deepen our understanding of the ways in which the current criminal (in)justice system maintains colonial systems of control. It will also offer participants an opportunity to explore their own understanding of the prison industrial complex, talk about ways of resolving harm and find ways to work towards decolonizing anti-prison movements.

Giselle Dias Bio: Niigaanii Zhaawshko Giizhigokwe (Leading Blue Sky Woman) is a Métis organizer and activist. She has been working on issues related to prisoners' rights, penal abolition, and transformative justice for 25 years. Her most recent work involves decolonization and indigenizing education, and anti-prison movements.

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This event is held in conjunction with Sheena Hoszko's exhibition *35+ Prisons in Québec* at Forest City Gallery.