

NEW YORK

## “THE PENCIL IS A KEY: DRAWINGS BY INCARCERATED ARTISTS”

THE DRAWING CENTER

35 Wooster Street

October 11, 2019–January 5, 2020

*Curated by Claire Gilman, Rosario Güiraldes, Laura Hoptman, Isabella Kapur, and Duncan Tomlin*

“The Pencil Is a Key” will take a global approach to the genre of “prison art,” exhibiting works made in carceral conditions ranging from the Soviet gulag to Chilean prisons under Pinochet’s dictatorship to America’s Japanese internment camps, its contemporary institutions of mass incarceration, and its offshore penal colony at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base. Radical pieces made despite intense surveillance, along with those created within the reformist space of penitentiary arts programming—the latter often used by the state to humanize, and thus obscure, prison’s inherent violence—will be on display, continuing the vital undertaking of legitimizing art made “inside,” be it against or condoned by the institution. Implicit in these drawings is a call for viewers to stretch their imaginations beyond the act of witnessing, to take literally the metaphor proposed by the title of the show. Can we not just envision but materialize a world without cages?

— Cyrus Dunham

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