

THE DAILY GAZETTE | Monday, April 9, 2018

ARTS



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW F

Exhibit spotlights mass incarceration

At the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery

Indiana Nash @Indijnash | August 31, 2017



A photo of the former Mount McGregor prison in the "States of Incarceration" exhibit.

PHOTOGRAPHER: DOROTHEA TRUFFELMAN

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There are times when art stays in an exhibit, safely hung on the walls of a gallery. But every once in a while, a powerful show leaves the gallery with its viewers.

That's exactly what some Skidmore College students and professors hope happens to viewers of "States of Incarceration," an exhibit they helped create.

The exhibit is a combination of art and story exchanges about the history and future of mass incarceration. It's a traveling exhibit that opened last year in New York City and will be on display at the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery from Sept. 2 to Oct. 11. There will also be several public programs and discussions held alongside the exhibit.

"We're at an interesting moment where more and more people are talking about incarceration on a bipartisan level," said Eric Morser, a history professor at Skidmore.

The exhibit was created by the Humanities Action Lab, a coalition of 20 colleges/universities, which Skidmore partnered with in 2015. The lab worked with more than 500 students and formerly incarcerated people across the country to create "States of Incarceration." Each college's work focused on local topics surrounding incarceration.

Skidmore's part in the project focused on the former Mount McGregor prison and was led by Morser through his "Adventures in Public History: The Prison Project" course. Around 20 students collected stories, photos, and took a tour of Mount McGregor. The minimum- to medium-security prison operated from 1976 to 2014, when it was shut down by New York state.

According to Morser, the mountaintop prison is deteriorating.

"It's really important for us to do this now. This is a piece of history that's disappearing fast," Morser said.

Morser's students interviewed many people who were in some way tied to the facility, including former prisoners, former security guards or people who led programs there.

Using Skidmore's Documentary Studies Collaborative, Morser's students were trained on how to use recording equipment, and Morser coached students on their interview skills.

"Students came back to me transformed by these stories," Morser said.

Some students met former prisoners in coffee shops in the Capital Region and a few traveled to New York City to interview others involved with the prison.

One story told through the exhibit recounts how a poetry course (taught by Skidmore graduate Cara Benson) got one prisoner through his time at McGregor.

Another story is told through a student's interview with the Rev. Peter Young, a pioneer in creating substance abuse treatment programs who was involved in the development of the state's first alcohol and substance abuse treatment program at McGregor.

Alongside the photos and stories students helped to collect, the college has planned several events centered around the incarceration project.

"We really want to involve the larger community," Morser said, "There is a powerful moment of dialogue taking place about the system, and the system is not set in stone."

Some of the events include community discussions on what happens after incarceration; a screening of "Rikers: An American Jail"; a Mass Story Lab discussion titled "What is Prison For?"; and several others.

"The way people treat prisoners in America tells us something about the nation," Morser said.

Although a few hit television shows (like "Orange is the New Black") focus on incarceration and have generated interest on the subject, Morser said there's so much that students and, probably most people, aren't aware of about incarceration in America.

But there is hope, according to Morser, because people are talking about it.

For more information, visit tang.skidmore.edu.

Here's a look at the "States of Incarceration" events from Tang's website:

Thursday, September 14, 7 p.m.

After Incarceration: Stories from Those Who've Lived It
Tang Teaching Museum, Somers Room

Friday, September 15, Noon

"States of Incarceration" Gallery Talk
Tang Teaching Museum, Payne Room

Thursday, September 21, 7 p.m.

Kekla Magoon: Behind the Headlines
Gannett Auditorium, Skidmore College

Thursday, September 28, 7 p.m.

Stories That Speak to Us: A conversation with Piper Anderson and Sylvia Ryerson
Davis Auditorium, Skidmore College

Saturday, September 30, 9 a.m.

Mass Story Lab: What is Prison For?
Murray-Aikins Dining Hall, 2nd floor, Skidmore College
Work alongside community members to collaborate on creative strategies to strengthen communities while improving our criminal justice system. Reservations required. Email mdocs@skidmore.edu.

Saturday, September 30, 2 p.m.

States of Incarceration Gallery Talk
Tang Teaching Museum, Payne Room

Saturday, September 30, 3 p.m.

"Rikers: An American Jail" Screening and Q&A
Tang Teaching Museum, Somers Room

Thursday, October 5, 7 p.m.
Poetry Lab with Cara Benson, Johnny Perez, & Sean Dalpiaz
Tang Teaching Museum, Atrium

Friday, October 6, 6:30 p.m.
Accelerator Series: Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex
Tang Teaching Museum, Atrium

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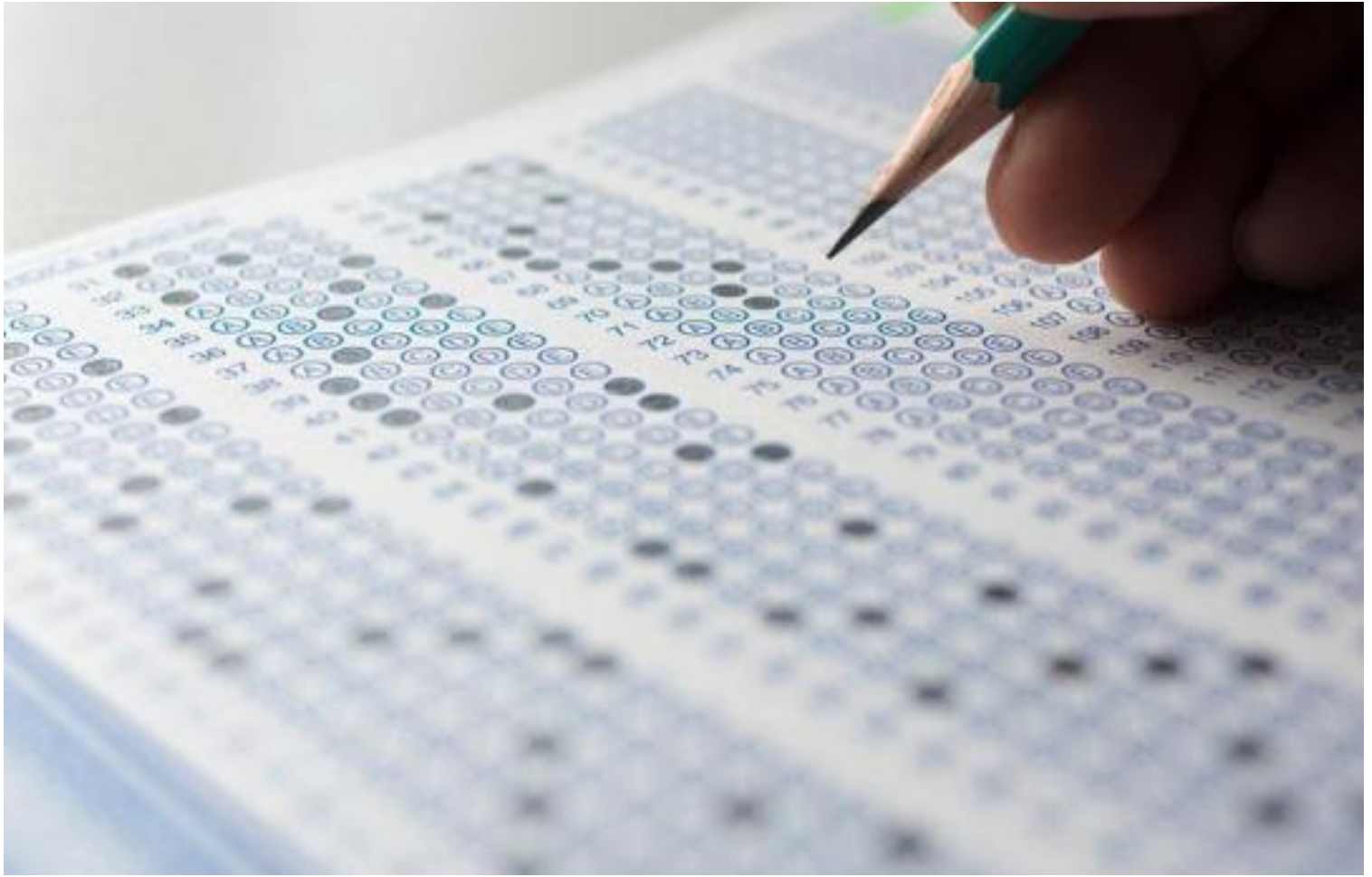
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Bill Buell  @buell_bill | August 24, 2017





Diana Ross perform in Minneapolis in 2013.

PHOTOGRAPHER: TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

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It's been more than a half century since Diana Ross and the Supremes recorded their first No. 1 hit, "Where Did Our Love Go," in August of 1964.



Wednesday night in Lenox, Massachusetts, Ross, arguably the most successful female pop/soul singer of all time, will perform at Tanglewood's Koussevitzky Music Shed. Doors open at 4 p.m. and the performance begins at 7 p.m. Tickets range from \$129-\$29.



A soloist by 1970, Ross and her two primary singing partners with the Supremes, Florence Ballard and Mary Wilson, posted an unprecedented 10 No. 1 singles between 1964 and 1967. They were the most successful girls group in U.S. history, but when Ross left she went on to become an even larger personality, topping the charts with "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" in 1970, while also becoming a major motion picture star just two years later.



Her huge cinema successes included "Lady Sings the Blues" in 1972 and "Mahogany" in 1975. She won a Golden Globe for her performance in "Lady Sings the Blues," a film that also earned him an Oscar nomination. In 1993 the Guinness World Book of Records declared Ross the most successful female music artist in history, and in 1999 she was named "Female Entertainer of the Century" by Billboard Magazine.



Ross, making her first appearance at Tanglewood in 28 years, has been touring around the world in 2017, and among the songs on her setlist in Vienna, Austria in July were "My World is Empty Without You," "Baby Love," "You Can't Hurry Love" and "Touch Me in the Morning." For more information about the concert, visit www.bso.org.



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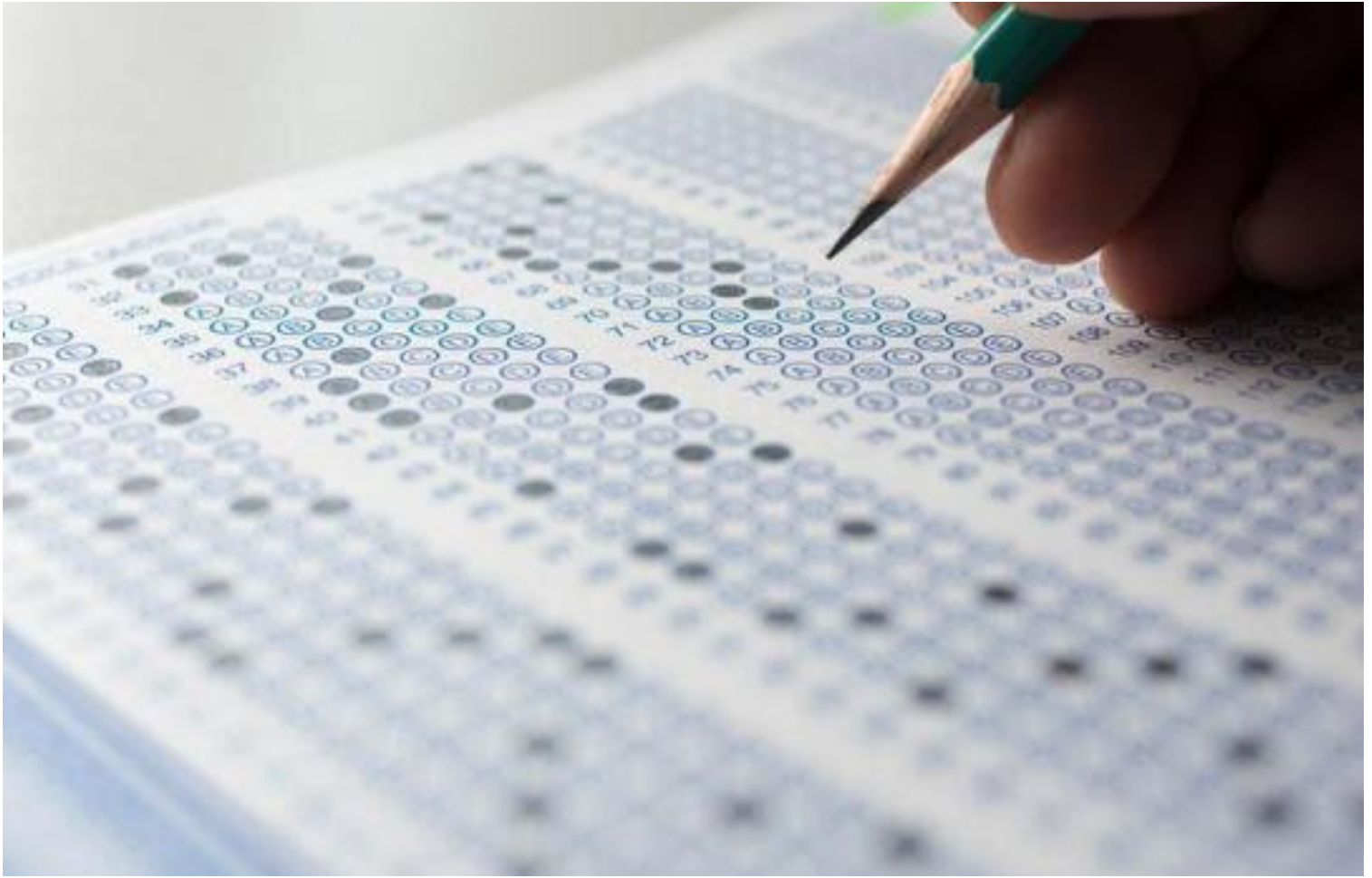
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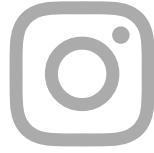
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