

Teaching & Learning in Prison

Organized by Dialogue & Transformation and The Center for Critical Democracy Studies at the American University of Paris

9h30 | Introductory Remarks

Hannah Taieb (AUP and Dialogue & Transformation), Friederike Windel (AUP and Dialogue & Transformation), Roman Zinigrad (Center for Critical Democracy Studies, AUP), Kassia Aleksic (researcher, Dialogue & Transformation), Lauren Vanzandt-Escobar (former teacher at Rikers Island, Dialogue & Transformation), Aude Rabaud (Section des étudiants empêchés, Centre interdisciplinaire Enseignement, Recherche et Création en milieu carcéral, Université Paris Cité).

10h00 | What are we doing when we teach, learn, and create in prisons?

Participatory workshop facilitated by Hannah Taieb, HW (Dialogue & Transformation), and Michelle Kuo (AUP, National Chengchi University, Dialogue & Transformation)

What exactly are we doing when we teach, learn, and create in prisons? This question may seem quite basic, but it's a crucial one to ask. Through this session, we will open the symposium with an invitation to reflect on why we teach, create, and learn in prison. What do our practices mean to us? Are our goals coherent, or are they sometimes in tension with one another? We will begin by discussing our practices and objectives, and from there we will explore ethical and existential questions about our work, examining the things that we take for granted when we talk about teaching, creating, and learning in prison.

12h00 | Lunch break

13h30 | Getting out of prison: Creating pathways and knowledge.

Part 1: French perspectives

Round table moderated by Jules Ramage (artist) and Hannah Taieb, with Brigitte Bami (poet, writer) and Stephane (author, director, receptionist).

This discussion will reflect on the stigmas projected onto people who have "done time" in prison, and on the administrative and professional constraints that censor speech around the lived experience of incarceration. With regard to people who work in prisons but who do not have lived experiences of incarceration, we discuss the different ways that our work is received and represented (voyeurism, taboos, glorification), and the social opportunities it generates (access to funding, visibility, prestige). We also talk about how narratives around incarceration can be shared and made public, through the co-production and transmission of knowledge (academic, literary, cinematographic, etc.). What obstacles and financial constraints do these processes of knowledge creation face? And how can they contribute to processes of reintegration, restorative justice, and political emancipation?

15h30 | Break with snacks

16h00 | Getting out of prison: Creating pathways and knowledge.

Part 2: North American perspectives

We will continue the previous discussion with a round table moderated by Michelle Kuo and Andre Ward (Director, Institute for Justice and Opportunity, John Jay College of Criminal Justice), with the participation of BL Shirelle (musician, producer, activist, and Co-Executive director of FREER Records), Tiina Eldrige (researcher, activist, and director of Rittenhouse), and Lorraine Pinnock (Coordinator of Walls to Bridges Ontario).

Hybrid session in English with French translation, livestream on Teams.

18h00 | Concluding remarks

18h30 | Reception

FRIDAY
JUNE 21
Day One

Gisele & Omid Kordestani
Rooftop Conference Center
(Q-801) 6, rue du Colonel
Combes 75007 Paris

Please note: you must register in advance by sending an email to dialoguetransformation@gmail.com.

You will need an ID to enter the building.

This event is bilingual English – French. Translation will be available as needed.

This symposium brings together people who are involved in education and the arts in prison. We will share our experiences and ask fundamental questions about what our work does.



Center for Critical
Democracy Studies

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9h00 | Welcome

9h30 | Theater in Prison

Round table moderated by Kassia Aleksic (researcher, Dialogue & Transformation), with Luca Giacomoni (director), Mourad Aït Outman (actor), and Celia Daniellou-Molinié (writer-dramatist, director and researcher).

Why do we do theater in prison, whether we are incarcerated or working on the inside? What opportunities for theater does the prison institution create, what kind of encounters and forms of expression does it allow for? What do we allow ourselves to do during theater workshops, and how do we build trust? What do we decide to represent and what roles do we choose to play? Which texts and stagings do we select? Which groups, audiences, and funders do we decide to work with? What are the possibilities for co-creating knowledge and egalitarian pedagogies? How does this work position itself (and ourselves) in society? These questions will lead to a dialogue across multiple interlocutors.

11h00 | Break with snacks

11h30 | Prison in its social and political context

Round table and participatory workshops led by Kassia Aleksic and Lauren Vanzandt-Escobar (former teacher at Rikers Island, Dialogue & Transformation)

How do our experiences in prison shape our reading of the social and political world? What political issues run through our teaching, learning, and creative activities in prison? A simple question, "What did we learn in prison?" will act as a starting point for a round-table discussion by people who have experienced incarceration. Then, in small groups, we will interrogate how our respective activities in prison bring us face to face with political issues and debates, and the different forms that the relationship between politics and education can take.

13h00 | Closing Discussion



SATURDAY
JUNE 22
Day Two

Gisele & Omid Kordestani
Rooftop Conference Center
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Combes 75007 Paris

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