

Will the Crow escape Sin City without losing his Pit Bull brother to violence?
“How I Use Drama with Youth in Juvenile Detention”

Oakland, CA. November, 2015—Norman Gee will discuss how he uses drama with youth in juvenile detention as part of a larger event in a series about California prisons at Peralta Hacienda entitled “Home and Away: Oakland, California Prisons and the Geography of the Heart.”

The event will take place Nov 21 at 130 at Peralta Hacienda Historical Park in Fruitvale, and will feature Gee, Oakland actor and dramatist, and community member Gwen Jackson, as well as author Linda Norton, who is writing a book in about the effect of incarceration on Oakland communities under a Creative Work Fund grant. The audience will have the chance to talk back, ask questions, and tell their own stories.

“The police took me out to the car, as if they were going to lock me up, and made the proposition to have sex with them...Prison was like being in a slave camp. All black girls. We worked during the day picking cotton.”—Gwen Jackson.

Jackson was incarcerated repeatedly as a young girl in the South and found ways out of the cycle. She believes memories of the past in the South affect relationships between the community and the police in Oakland today.

Norton and community members have created collages from historical photos from the Library of Congress to form Home and Away’s visual display in the Peralta House Museum of History and Community. Following the presentation on Nov 21, the audience will be invited to create their own written and visual pieces to add. Each participant can choose historical photos that are pinned to a giant horse sculpture in the historic house museum to create a collage, or they can create a poem. The exhibit will grow throughout the year through a series of similar events.

This is the first of an series of public events funded by the California Arts Council and the Zellerbach Foundation connected with Peralta Hacienda's "Home and Away" exhibit on the effect of incarceration in this community. Holly Alonso is creating the exhibit's audio, and Jeff Norman, graphic artist, assisted by Itzel Diaz, is designing the visual display.



Norman Gee

Quote from Norman Gee, actor and theater producer in a StoryCorps interview at Peralta Hacienda:

"I came in as an actor to read the pieces the young women in juvenile detention had written. I did it, it was amazing. We did a 'feelback' afterwards. No judgment, but what are the emotions you feel in that story? Wow! The tears that come from all the family members in that room. Here was someone that had been thrown away and she is this gem."



Gwen Jackson

Quote from Gwen Jackson in a StoryCorps interview at Peralta Hacienda:

The jobs that I could get, I couldn't earn enough money. You put that skin up, what they used to call a hustle in the South, to try to get by, like selling your body, or selling drugs. so I had a hustle and got put in jail.

My first time was maybe when I was around twelve. I took some clothes off the rack and put them in a suitcase. When they picked me up I was in the bus station. They could see I was homeless but they didn't know that I was just twelve.

The police took me out to the car, as if they were going to lock me up. And made the proposition to have sex with them.

Prison was like being in a slave camp.
All black girls.
We worked during the day picking cotton.

Sometimes the guards will abuse the girls
because they are afraid
that if they say anything
they will get more time.

You have a bondsman you pay every month
to get you out of jail.
You pay him every month.
When you get in jail, he'll get you out.

About Linda Norton



Linda Norton is collaborating with staff and visitors to Peralta Hacienda Historical Park (Peralta Hacienda) to explore how mass incarceration affects the daily lives of low-income families living in the blocks around the Peralta Hacienda site in Oakland's Fruitvale District.

Norton notes, "In East Oakland we know many people of color who are 'away' (or on parole or probation) at any given time," and these community members are dispersed to facilities throughout the state—far from their families. For this project, *Home and Away: Oakland California's Prisons, and the Geography of the Heart*, Norton will work at the Peralta Hacienda and offsite to explore the connections between those who remain in the neighborhood and those who are behind bars. She will conduct outreach and interviews in collaboration with Peralta staff and community, invite community members' hands-on participation, create an exhibition and web presentation, and write a book.

Writer Linda Norton is an archivist and senior editor at the Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office. She has a long history of working with documentary and found objects in her collages and exhibits. Her debut publication, *The Public Gardens: Poems and History* (2011), was a finalist for an *LA Times* book prize.

About Peralta Hacienda

The mission of Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park is to promote understanding, historical healing and community amid change and diversity. We present and interpret the untold history of the Peralta rancho and the stories of the Fruitvale community today, giving voice to the many cultures that have created - and are still transforming - California. The six-acre park and historic house form an arts and educational hub for local families and youth, and regional center for historical inquiry and discovery.

Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park offers an environment for the enjoyment of the community, where neighbors as well as visitors from the region, state, and nation can be actively involved in its historical and natural features through performances, celebrations and educational workshops and programs.

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