

An Invitation to participate in a collective enactment of *Cicatrix 1 (that which was taken/that which remains)* - from S.J Norman

Yaama (hello) friends and colleagues,

On the evening of the 8th of January 2019, we are seeking to gather an assemblage of bodies on Mannahatta, Lenapehoking, for the purpose of a ritual observance.

The aim of this assemblage, which will be facilitated by an alliance of First Nations people from Australia and Turtle Island, is to collectively focus our attention/intention towards the dissolution of the settler-colonial carceral state. Much like our BIPOC (Black and Indigenous People of Color) siblings on Turtle Island, Aboriginal Australians are grossly over-represented in incarceration and custodial mortality statistics. Based on the best available data, we make up 3% of the overall population, and 27% of the prison population. Our people lose their lives in prison at alarming rates. Our Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ kin in particular face specific and elevated risks of harm or death whilst in prison.

Should you wish to bring your own presence to this undertaking, it is necessary for a few important things to be foregrounded in advance of your participation. Please read this letter to the end.

Cicatrix 1 (that which is taken/that which remains) will include a ritualised letting of blood. I will be receiving 147 surgical incisions on the skin of my back, over the course of 147 minutes, each notch and each increment of time representing a First Nations Australian who has died in police custody over the last decade. This is an honorific offering, as well as a gesture of sustenance to the Ancestral energies which support us in the greater work of healing and justice. Specifically, it is a petition to the Ancestors for their continued assistance in our work of resisting and dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex.

As this action will be taking place in an artistic context, we might call this an artwork. And that would be fine. However, I have a personal preference for the language of magick over the language of art, and preference for verbs over nouns. A gesture which aims to precipitate a numinous transmission might be called many things: rather than a work, we might instead call this undertaking a working.

To augment the power of this working, it is my humble request that those who participate (according to their capacities) provide **three volitional offerings of their own**. They are:

1. Monetary

Intentions are well and good as long as they are accompanied by concrete acts of solidarity. The cost of your ticket will be donated to Critical Resistance a grassroots organization dedicated to the dismantling of the prison industrial complex: criticalresistance.org

2. Temporal

It is the request of the artist and curator that the participants are present on-site for the **full four-hour duration** of the working. This will begin with the lighting of a medicinal fire at 7:30pm, and conclude with a procession from Performance Space New York to the banks of the East River at 11pm.

3. Corporeal

In a very special and gently held ritual, and with full prior and informed consent, participants are encouraged to make two pledges in flesh: an offering of blood, and an offering of skin.

The first marks a point of opening, an invocation of your own Ancestral line: with the aid of a lancing device (the same device used on a daily basis by type 1 diabetics to monitor blood glucose levels), each participant will pledge a single drop of blood. This blood will be mixed with salt water which I have drawn and transported with the permission of Elders from Gadigal Country, the site of the first colonial penal colony on the Australian continent. This will in turn be poured into the East River as an offering to Lenapehoking.

The second marks a point of remembrance, promise made and kept: each participant will submit to have the top joint of their index finger marked- imperceptibly, but permanently- by the tip of a single tattoo needle. This mark will be made with care and intention by Inupiaq tattooist Holly Mititquq Nordlum.

Of these three offerings, only the first is compulsory. The other two are strongly encouraged.

Those who are able to make a corporeal offering are asked to [Sign Up Online](#) no later than January 6 at 12pm.

Guwayu (see you soon), S.J Norman

Narrm (Melbourne), Nov. 2018