

# Peter Merts, photographer

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## PRO-BONO DOCUMENTARY WORK

2018-present	serving on the advisory board of the Prison Arts Collective
2004-present	documentation of Arts in Corrections programs in California Prisons
1980-present	documentation of Bread & Roses, a service organization in Marin County, CA
2016	documentation for Imagine Bus Project, which provides art instruction for incarcerated juveniles in the SF Bay Area
2015 & 2017	documentation for TeamWorks, which provides art instruction for incarcerated juveniles Marin County
2010	documentation of the production of <i>Hamlet</i> on Alcatraz Island by WE Players
2009	photo and audio documentation of a Habitat for Humanity project in New Orleans, LA
2009	photo documentation of Mother Miracle School, which provides free education to poor children in Rishikesh, India

## PUBLICATIONS

### Authored Books:

2022	<i>Ex Crucible: The Passion of Incarcerated Artists</i> , with Daylight Books
2020	<i>UNBOUND! The Artistic Passion of Incarcerated Artists</i>
2015	<i>Paths of Discovery: Art Practice and Its Impact in California Prisons</i> (2nd edition), with Dr. Larry Brewster
2015	<i>Outside the Box: Artwork from Solano State Prison</i>
2012	<i>Paths of Discovery: Art Practice and Its Impact in California Prisons</i> , with Dr. Larry Brewster

### Authored Articles:

2002	<i>Foto Mundo</i> (Argentina; #413) — illustrated technical article
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### About my photography, or using my photography (partial list):

2023	ZEKE Magazine, Fall issue on incarceration in the U.S.
2023	<i>San Quentin News</i> , September issue—article about my prison arts photos
2021	<i>The Guardian</i>
2021	<i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>
2021	<i>Washington Post</i>
2019	the Marshall Project website (themarshallproject.org)
2019	<i>The Economist</i>
2019	<i>New York Times</i>
2017	<i>HuffPost</i>
2017	<i>Los Angeles Review of Books</i> —photos used in multiple articles on prison art programs by Arts in Corrections instructor Annie Buckley
2017	<i>High Country News</i> (Feb. 20)—photo for an article on prison art teacher Quetzal Flores
2016	<i>BOOM: a Journal of California</i> (Summer)—photos for article on prison art programs
2016	<i>Upworthy.com</i> (Dec. 2)—photos for article on prison art programs
2014	<i>Naratively</i> (8/22/14)—photo for article about the <i>San Quentin News</i> , the inmate newspaper
2013	<i>Grazia</i> (France)—for an article on Tim Robbins and the Actors' Gang
2010	<i>Stanford Magazine</i> (Nov/Dec)—editorial images of WE Players' <i>Hamlet</i> on Alcatraz
2005	<i>Pozytyw</i> (Poland; July)—Statue of Liberty portfolio
2004	<i>Conde Nast Traveller Magazine</i> (Spain; December)—article on Statue of Liberty project
2004	<i>Conde Nast Traveller Magazine</i> (USA; July)—article on Statue of Liberty project
2004	<i>The Buenos Aires Herald</i> (Sunday January 4)—illustrated article on my photography, by art critic Alina Tortosa
2003	<i>The Buenos Aires Herald</i> (Sunday May 4)—illustrated article on my photography, by art critic

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- Alina Tortosa  
2002 *La Fotografía Actual* (Spain) - vol 92 (Aug/Sept)—four-page feature  
2002 *Foto Mundo* (Argentina; #410)—two-page feature  
2002 *Black and White Magazine* (April, #18)—four-page Spotlight feature  
2001 *Modern Maturity Magazine*—five editorial images  
1999 *Geo Saisson* (Germany)—one-page portfolio feature  
1999 *The Sunday Review* (Independent on Sunday, London)—four-page portfolio feature  
1999 The Gallery, *Newsweek Online* (www.Newsweek.com; week of July 4)—portfolio featured

## SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2019 Photoville, Los Angeles—solo show of my prison art portfolio  
2010 Main Cellblock, Alcatraz Island – images of Alcatraz Island structures  
2009 Pictura Gallery - Bloomington, Indiana – pieces from Solitude, Little Cumberland Island, and Argentina portfolios  
2007 Aldo de Sousa - Galeria de Arte /Buenos Aires Photo - Buenos Aires, Argentina - Little Cumberland Island portfolio  
2007 Compass Point Gallery - San Francisco, CA - Bread & Roses portfolio  
2006 El Borde Arte Contemporáneo - Buenos Aires, Argentina (XIV Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía) - the Little Cumberland Island portfolio [with artist Margarita Wilson-Rae]  
2006 Foto Galería F.C.E. - Córdoba, Argentina (XIV Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía) - Hombres y la Masculinidad (Men and Masculinity)  
2004 Mill Valley City Hall – The Bread & Roses Portfolio  
2004 XIII Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía, Buenos Aires (Pura Gallery) – Masculinity portfolio  
2002 XII Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía, Buenos Aires (Centro Cultural Recoleta) – Solitude portfolio

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Turchin Center for the Visual Arts, “Circular Solutions” by 2021/2022 CENTER awardees  
2022 San Francisco Arts Education Project (Minnesota Street Project), “We Shall Be Free” exhibition  
2022 Barrett Gallery, Santa Monica College; Art + Transformation—prison art photos  
2022 Bridge Gallery, Cambridge, MA; World View exhibition—prison art photos  
2021 San Francisco Opera House—prison art photos  
2021 Eloise Packard Smith Gallery, UC Santa Cruz—prison art photos  
2021 Freedom and Captivity: Art on Abolition—prison art photos  
2020 San Francisco Airport—prison arts photos  
2019 Pitzer College Art Gallery—Claremont, California  
2019 California State Capitol, Sacramento—*Beyond the Blue*, work from the Prison Arts Collective  
2017 Oakland Asian Cultural Center, group show of origami and photos, from San Quentin prison  
2017 CB1 Gallery, Los Angeles—group show of prison art  
2017 Alcatraz Island: *Connection Lost: Families Unraveled by Prison*  
2014 Alcatraz Island: *Telling Our Stories: Work from San Quentin Prison Arts Project*  
2014 Yerba Buena Center for the Arts: *Inside Out*, an exhibition of prison art  
2013 *Photo ID* (art about identity) at Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, a selection from my *Masculinity* series  
2007 Lendrum Fine Art, Los Angeles, California  
2005 fresh stART, Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica, California  
2005 Marin Arts Council Individual Artist Grantees’ Exhibit — Marin Community Foundation, Novato  
2004 *Verde, que te quiero verde* (representations of the Argentine landscape), Buenos Aires  
2004 Watermark Fine Art Photographs and Books, Houston Texas  
2004 “Cultural Artifacts”, Colorado Photographic Arts Center, Denver  
2003 Center for Photographic Art (Carmel, CA), Center Awards Juried Exhibition  
2003 Photo Review Competition (published in *The Photo Review*, Summer 2003)  
2000 Galleria de Arte Fotografico, San Miguei de Allende, Mexico

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- 2001 & 2003 Houston Center of Photography Juried Membership Exhibition
- 2000 Casa da Fotografia, Sao Paulo, Brazil
- 2000 Falkirk Cultural Center, San Rafael, California

## FILMS

- 2022 *He Had Wings*, a film about artist Ronnie Goodman
- 2017 prison art photos used in the short film *Unbound*, about Arts in Corrections instructor Amy Querin
- 2015 Alcatraz photos used in the Discovery Channel's documentary *Alcatraz* (Indigo Films)
- 2015 Statue of Liberty photos used in the Discovery Channel's documentary *The Statue of Liberty* (Indigo Films)
- 2014 prison art photos used in the film *Cambodian Son*

## PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Houston Museum of Fine Arts — Allan Chasanoff Photographic Collection

## PHOTO AWARDS

- 2021 Social Award, CENTER Santa Fe
- 2021 artist interview published at Catalyst:Interviews
- 2020 Top Fifty, Photo Lucida Critical Mass
- 2004 Marin Arts Council Individual Artist Grant
- 2001 Santa Fe Center for Visual Arts — honorable mention, Vision 2001 (Assignment Earth)

## RELATED PHOTO EXPERIENCE

- 2023 taught a course/mentorship on advocacy photography (in partnership with The Image Flow in San Anselmo, CA)
- 2017 slide lecture on prison art photography at the Freedom Festival, Los Angeles City College, CA
- 2017 slide lecture on prison art photography at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, Fullerton, CA
- 2017 mentored a photography student at California State University-San Bernardino, on how to photograph prison art programs (6 months, funded by an NEA grant)
- 2006 presented slide lecture at Foto Galería F.C.E. - Córdoba, Argentina (Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía XIV)
- 2006 served as juror for Marin Arts Council Community Arts Partnership Grant
- 2004 presented slide lecture at Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía XIII (Buenos Aires)
- 2002 presented slide lecture at Encuentros Abiertos de Fotografía XII (Buenos Aires)
- 2001 taught a 3-day photography workshop sponsored by the Marin YMCA Arts & Humanities Program

## EDUCATION

B.A., Duke University (including one year at Exeter University, England)  
photographic education — various courses at UC Berkeley Extension, and self-taught