

6 February – 4 April 2020

The End of the Sentence Judy Price

The End of the Sentence presents artist Judy Price's research on Holloway Women's Prison.¹ The exhibition reflects on the impact of the criminal justice system on women, and features new work by Price, archival material, and artists and writers invited by Price including Erika Flowers, Carly Guest & Rachel Seoighe, Hannah Hull, Katrina McPherson and Nina Ward. *The End of a Sentence* makes visible issues around gender, class, race and economy in the prison context, and develops Price's research-led practice, concerned with how artists can produce different ways of thinking about contested sites and engage with collective struggles.

Holloway Women's Prison (1852-2016) was the largest women's prison in Western Europe and the only women's prison in London. Its prisoners "included some of the leading freedom fighters of our age, such as the suffragettes, but the vast majority were always imprisoned because of poverty and injustice, addiction and abuse".² *The End of the Sentence* draws on individual and collective stories of the prison, through the networks, collaborations and relationships developed through the coalition group Reclaim Holloway, which has been actively campaigning for a Women's Building on the former prison site since it was decommissioned in 2016. Since the 10-acre prison site's purchase by Peabody Trust in 2019, Reclaim Holloway have been working closely with Peabody, Islington Council, the Community Plan For Holloway (CPFH) and grassroots organisations on the Women's Building - a service hub helping vulnerable women stay out of the criminal justice system, a transformational space for the local community, and a positive legacy for the thousands of women held in Holloway prison over its 164-year history.

As part of *The End of the Sentence*, Price presents a new moving-image installation *The Good Enough Mother* in collaboration with Dorich House Museum, which features a bronze sculpture of a baby by Dora Gordine (1895-1991) acquired for the first Mother and Baby Unit at Holloway Women's Prison in 1948. The soundtrack to the film explores the incarcerated pregnancy, drawing on transcriptions of 28 interviews by midwife Dr Laura Abbott, as well as the field work and writing of forensic psychotherapist Pamela Windham Stewart.³ Co-scripted with artist and writer Andrew Conio the script is re-voiced by actors from Clean Break, a women's theatre company that uses theatre to keep the subject of women in prison on the cultural radar and whose members have lived experience of the criminal justice system. The material and spatial elements of the installation reflect those of Holloway Women's Prison: the door height, the bench dimensions and the carpet tiles. For the duration of the exhibition at Stanley Picker Gallery, the original bronze sculpture by Gordine, on loan from the National Justice Museum, is on display at Dorich House Museum in Kingston, Gordine's former studio home. Installed in the gallery at Dorich House, its reflection is visible in a convex mirror sourced by Price and Conio to resemble those used with the prison environment and compose an intervention titled *Reverie*. The title cites psychoanalyst Wilfred R. Bion's notion of reverie, in which the mother holds and 'digests' the baby's trauma, love, hatred, and reflects back containment. The mirror, a captivating cold glass eye, does not hold, it gives back nothing. Instead, it surveys *Smiling Baby* and the space as a whole.

Price's photographic work at Stanley Picker Gallery, included in the exhibition draw on her time spent in the decommissioned prison building, which she lives directly behind, and the wealth of intimate objects from the prison held in the Islington Museum archives. *Phoenix Rising* shows the griffin mosaic on the base of the swimming pool installed in Holloway in the 1970s redevelopment. It was argued that "the women and girls at Holloway will need

¹ The title of the exhibition is taken from *The End of a Sentence, Psychotherapy with Female Offenders*, edited by Pamela Windham Stewart and Jessica Collier, Routledge 2018.

² Caitlin Davis, *Bad Girls: the Rebels and Renegades of Holloway Prison* p.?

³ The Incarcerated Pregnancy: An Ethnographic Study of Perinatal Women in English Prisons, Dr Laura Abbott 2018 unpublished thesis. Pamela Windham Stewart various unpublished writing and recorded conversations between Stewart and Price.

adequate exercise not only for their health but also to prevent them from releasing their energy in more destructive ways”⁴ but there is also evidence of prisoners swimming with their visiting children in the 1990s. Photographs of hair and a fire hose plug offer a close examination of some of the less obvious traces of prison control – in the event of a fire in a cell at HMP Holloway, the small yellow plug was removed from the door and a hose inserted blasting water into the cell, before allowing the inmate to evacuate.

In addition to the oral histories, relationships and communities developed through *Reclaim Holloway*, examining archival material has played a central role in Price’s research into the impact of Holloway and the criminal justice system on women. A photograph from the London Metropolitan Archives depicts two women imprisoned in HMP Holloway looking out over the grounds from a prison balcony. Guest & Seoighe argue that “intimate and everyday lives of incarcerated women are shaped and controlled by prison architecture”.⁵ The architectural models and plans show the changes in the prison architecture before and after its 1970s redevelopment, and how the emphasis attempted to shift from punishment to rehabilitation. A vinyl text lists service and support organisation that operated in Holloway at different points in time and that is inconclusive. The archival material and new works presented here will form part of a long form film which Price is developing that explores the multiple narratives and redrawn boundaries of Holloway Women’s Prison and has received funding from Arts Council England and the Elephant Trust.

The exhibition also features a number of artists and writers invited by Price. Erika Flowers spent three years in HMP Holloway, which she draws on in two paintings also included in the exhibition. *The Gym Tree* depicts one of the oldest trees in the Prison grounds, which Reclaim Holloway are in the process of applying for a Tree Protection Order to preserve. The climbers and swimmers represent the focus on physical activity which came to characterise prison life following the redevelopment. *The Closure of HMP Holloway 1852-2016* celebrates the announcement of the closure of the historic site, depicting land-grabbing politicians, protesters, and the artist on her bike. Erika’s *Holloway Women’s Building Game* playfully references the Suffragettes’ satirical *Pank-a-Squith* game (1909). While *Pank-a-Squith*’s end-goal was votes for women, Flowers’ game leads to the Women’s Building. Nina Ward with Women and Law Collective’s *Time and Time Again - Women in Prison* (extracts) focuses on the lives of women incarcerated at HMP Holloway through interviews with ex-prisoners about their experiences there, and their re-assimilation into society. Katrina McPherson’s *Symphony* documents a five-week contemporary dance project at HMP Holloway involving over 200 women. Burning Salt’s *Dirt* EP was recorded following Hannah Hull’s artist residency at the *Echoes of Holloway* research project at Islington Museum in 2018, and draws on testimonies and transcripts from the prison. The colours of the walls, putty pink and pale cream, are taken from a Holloway Palette, devised by Hull at the same time. These two shades reference the colours of the mats on which the women were taught to clean, which are included in the booklet of poetry also on display in the exhibition. Carly Guest & Rachel Seoighe poems are made up of extracts of interviews with two women who were once imprisoned in Holloway. To construct the I-poems, Rachel and Carly selected the ‘I’ statements from the interview transcripts and arranged them, line by line, to form poems.

On **19 February**, Judy Price will be in conversation with Pamela Windham Stewart to celebrate the opening of the exhibition. A Programme Pack for Stanley Picker Gallery Spring / Summer 2020 designed by Fraser Muggeridge Studio features a new work by Price and is available for collection from the Gallery.

For further information on how you can contribute to the Peabody consultation for the Women’s Building, please visit: hollowayprisonconsultation.co.uk. To support the Reclaim Holloway campaign, please visit: reclaimholloway.mystrikingly.com

⁴ P Rock, *Reconstructing a Women’s Prison: the Holloway Redevelopment Project 1968-1988*, 1996, p124

⁵ Familiarity and strangeness: Seeing everyday practices of punishment and resistance in Holloway Prison

Judy Price

Judy Price is a London based artist who works across photography, moving image, sound and installation.

A focus of her work is how art can create new perceptions of the experiences of individuals and social groups and arts' effectiveness and relevance to collective struggles. Her practice involves extensive field research where she often draws on images and sounds from archival sources as well as from a sustained study of a place to explore sites and locations that are interweaved and striated by multiple histories, economies and forces. Palestine was an enduring focus of her work from 2004-2014. She is course leader on the Photography (MA) at Kingston School of Art and is a senior lecturer in Moving Image (BA) at the University of Brighton. Solo exhibitions include Mosaic Rooms, London; Danielle Arnaud Gallery, London; Wingsford Arts, Suffolk; Stiftelsen 3,14 and USF Centre, Bergen, Norway. Group exhibitions and screenings include Delfina Foundation, Imperial War Museum, Barbican, Curzon Cinema Soho, Curzon Cinema Goldsmiths, ICA, Whitechapel Gallery. Price is an active member of Reclaim Holloway.

Andrew Conio

Andrew Conio is a writer, artist, and scriptwriter. He has published on a range of subjects including philosophy, architecture, language, artist's film, institutional critique, creativity and painting and is currently editing the volume, *Occupy a People Yet to Come* for the Open Humanities Press, and writing a monograph entitled *The Anatomy of Money*. He has taught in arts schools for twenty years, including Wolverhampton, Ramallah, Bergen, Brighton, Chelsea and Kent University.

Nina Ward

Nina Ward has had a varied career working as a teacher, actress, filmmaker and lawyer. Her MA is in Social Anthropology from SOAS, London University. In 1986 she received funding from the, sadly missed, GLC which enabled her to set up The Women and the Law Collective. The Collective examined and explored the state of the UK legal system and worked with 'Women in Prison, and 'Black Female Prisoners. In 1986 Women and the Law Collective made three short films, including 'Time and Time again'. This film arose from Nina's experiences of working as a lawyer, and the participants' experiences of prison. She presently works with dyslexic students at Central School of Speech and Drama.

Hannah Hull

Hannah is a process-based, socially-engaged artist. She uses text, drawing, film, song, dialogue, and performance intervention. Burning Salt is a collaborative music project headed by Hannah. She is also currently a PhD Candidate (Practice-Based) at Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, Goldsmiths, University of London. She was artist-in-residence at the National Lottery Heritage-funded project *Echoes of Holloway* at Islington Museum in 2018-19.

Erika Flowers

Erika is an artist and illustrator. 'Recorded in Art' was a website initially set up to showcase and provide a platform for Erika's journey through her prison sentence at HMP Holloway up to and including the closure of the historic site. Erika drew at least one postcard every day for the last 3 months of the 6 months of her time on Bail and throughout her whole period of incarceration and subsequent release, which you can follow on Instagram@postcardsfromprisonidiary. An active member of Reclaim Holloway she sits on the board for the Community Plan For Holloway (CPFH) and the Steering Group of the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance.

Katrina McPherson

Having trained as a dancer and choreographer at Laban, Katrina developed a life-long, multi-faceted and influential engagement with screen dance. Katrina has made many single, multi-screen and on-line works in collaboration with numerous international artists, and these works have been presented at venues and festivals worldwide. For 15-years, Katrina was a director of arts programmes for UK television making films for the BBC, Scottish Television and Channel Four. She was co-director of Goat Media Productions from 2001-2015. Several works directed by Katrina are held in collections including Lux Artists' Moving Image UK, and the British Council. Katrina lives in Scotland and is an Associate Artist at Dance Base In Edinburgh and a Dance North Associate Artist.

Carly Guest & Rachel Seoighe

Dr Carly Guest is a senior lecturer in Sociology at Middlesex University, and Dr Rachel Seoighe is a lecturer in Criminology at the University of Kent. Together they co-wrote *Familiarity and strangeness: Seeing everyday practices of punishment and resistance in Holloway Prison* (Punishment & Society, 2019) in which they developed an innovation, emotion-led methodology to explore photographs of the decommissioned Holloway Prison building. Carly and Rachel are active members of Reclaim Holloway.



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