



April 30th – May 21st, 2016\*\*

Opening reception: April 30th, 2016 7-10pm\*\*

Gallery hours: Saturday 11-5pm

**PLATFORM** is proud to present a dual exhibition with works by Baltimore Youth Arts and Free Space in A WAY OUT. A WAY OUT celebrates the creativity and talent of the members of the Blank Page Project.

**THE BLANK PAGE PROJECT** is an artist educator-led initiative that provides arts programming to youth and adults, with a focus on those involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. Our mission is to create opportunities, both within and outside of correctional institutions, which allow participants to gain creative, educational and personal skills. We believe that the arts are powerful tools for social change, personal discovery, and community building. They allow us to imagine and work towards a world that is free of oppression. Due to the distinct needs of participants, the Blank Page Project is comprised of two separate programs: Baltimore Youth Arts and Free Space.

**BALTIMORE YOUTH ARTS (BYA)**, is an arts and entrepreneurship program for youth, with a focus on those involved in the juvenile justice system. BYA's aim is to assist youth in gaining the creative, personal, and educational skills that will assist them in becoming leaders in their communities. BYA offers weekly programming at the Baltimore City Juvenile Justice Center, the Lillian S. Jones Recreation Center, and the BYA Community Studio. We also offer special programming at the Thomas J.S. Waxter Children's Center, the Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, and Gilmore Homes. In addition to regular classes, BYA invites local artists and entrepreneurs to share their work and processes with youth participants.

**FREE SPACE**, BPP's adult program, operates within the following institutions: the Maryland Correctional Institution-Jessup, the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women and Dorsey Run Correctional Facility. Participants are given access to time, materials, and classes that foster self-expression and offer an alternative to prison culture. Weekly classes create a safe space for incarcerated individuals utilizing the visual and literary arts while encouraging individual and collaborative growth. Free Space also invites visiting artists to introduce participants to new creative skills in hopes of helping to prepare them for post-incarceration.

This exhibition highlights artwork that was created by multiple artists, ages 3-60, within the program over the past year. Painting, drawing, sculpture, and printmaking come together to exemplify the immense talent and vision that these individuals possess, even while the majority of them spend days in settings that stifle creativity, individuality, and self expression.

**PLATFORM** was founded in 2014 by Lydia Pettit and Abigail Parrish on the first floor of Platform Arts Center. Functioning as a commercial gallery, Platform promises to create driving, thoughtprovoking shows that question the relationship between artist, curator, and community as well as providing opportunities for Baltimore and regional artists to show their work. Run by women, Platform is an open, safe space for artists of all genre to meet and collaborate with community members of any class, race, gender, or age in hopes of influencing future shows and programming. Exhibitions span from new age artists that are influential to contemporary art to curated historical investigations of art in Baltimore. Platform promises to excite audiences beyond the art community, challenge convention, create new paths, and open its doors to change.

\*\*To maintain anonymity for detained youth and select adult participants, some of the artist's are not credited beneath their pieces.

For more information about The Blank Page Project:

[www.blankpageproject.org](http://www.blankpageproject.org) \\ [www.bmoreyoutharts.org](http://www.bmoreyoutharts.org) \\ [www.freespace-md.org](http://www.freespace-md.org) \\

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