

Bushwick Daily



Bushwick Artist Releases Anti-Prison Art Book and Plans for Full-Length Music Album
Die Jim Crow is a multimedia concept album about the black American experience in the era of mass incarceration.

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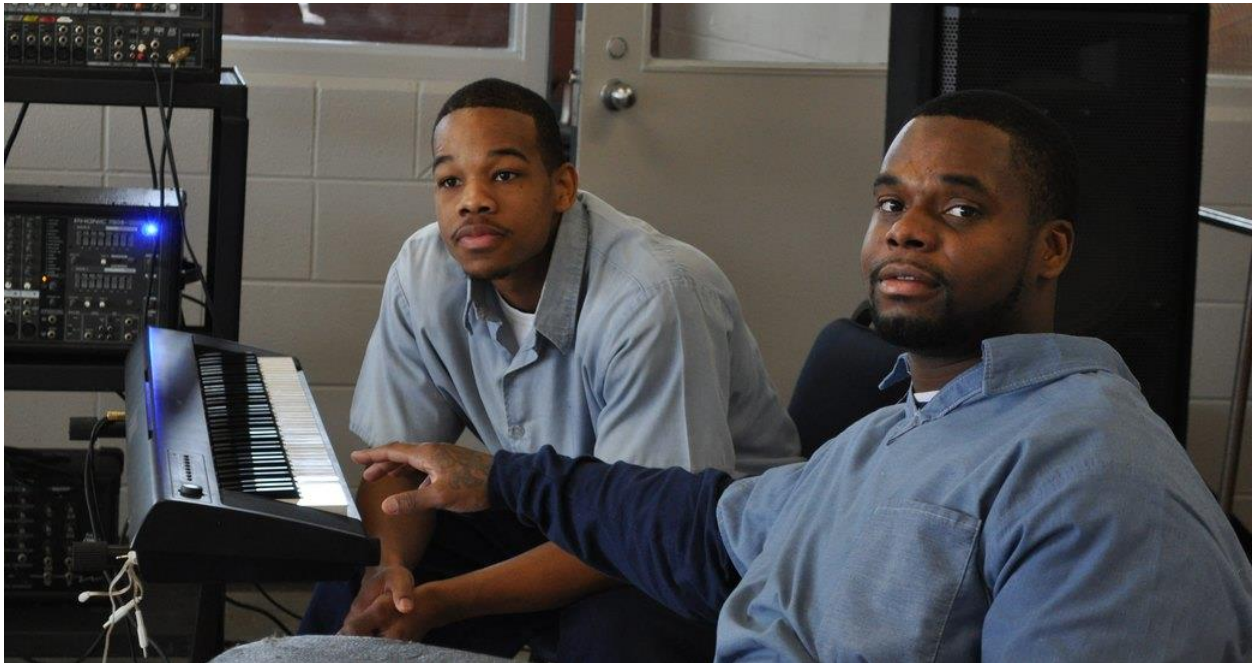
Nothing heals the soul like music. That's the essence of Fury Young's project [Die Jim Crow](#). The musical multimedia project advocates for prison reform, focusing on the African-American experience in the era of mass incarceration. The years-long project features recorded collaborations with musicians who are former inmates or currently incarcerated. Six songs in the form of an eponymous EP album were released in 2016. Last month, an artbook companion was published, spotlighting five musicians whose lives have been affected by mass incarceration.

Bushwick artist Fury Young credited Michelle Alexander's best-seller, [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#), as the inspiration for his project. The art book shows the process of the project: artwork, writing of the lyrics, and state documents. Fury Young explained to Bushwick Daily in an email, "The art book provides an in-

depth look at each song on the Die Jim Crow EP, so that's just to get readers and listeners even more engaged with the artists behind these tracks and to further that interest, empathy, and perhaps proclivity to help out whether in the field of prison work or social justice work at large."

Young hopes that the prison experience and those behind the bars will be humanized for the listeners, "They don't need to love these people but they should empathize with them. Folks inside are some of the most misconceived and stereotyped members of society. Looking to change that narrative and smash a lot of stereotypes. That's sort of what it means to say 'Die Jim Crow.'"

"Folks who are in prison are some of the most misunderstood misconceived folks in society," Young said to [News 12 Brooklyn](#). "The second song is about a guy who is wrongfully convicted, the third song is about entering prison for the first time and seeing all the crazy stuff that goes on around you and becoming into a number instead of a name."

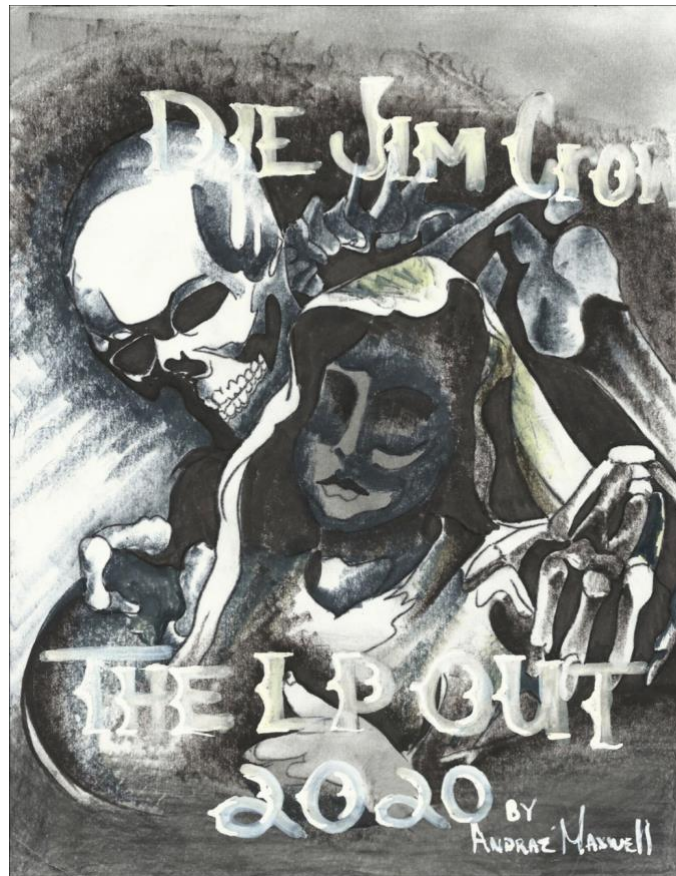


Deonte Leary (left) and Charles Williams at Warren Correctional Institution.

Young is currently traveling the country to [speak at colleges](#) about his project and raise awareness on mass incarceration. Also on the tour are [Maxwell Melvin](#), a Grammy-nominated musician and Lifers Group founder, and [B.L. Shirelle](#), one of the lyricists featured on the Die Jim Crow record. Shirelle told [Rolling Stone](#) that the lyrics to "Headed to the Streets" were inspired by inner tensions ahead of Shirelle's release from Muncy State Correctional Institution in Pennsylvania. It took Shirelle 15 minutes to pen down. Supporters can listen to the powerful lyrics from the Die Jim Crow EP album [here](#) and donate to the project.

According to the [website](#), the creation of the album was inspired by Pink Floyd's 1979 concept album The Wall, and "explores the journey of the contributing artists through intimate first-person narrative, overarching political themes, and haunting musical through-lines. Fusing

several genres of traditionally African American music, the album features rock n roll, jazz, blues, r&b, hip hop, and more.” The project is a release for current and former inmates to express their humanity in a way that the public often forgets when talking about incarceration.



Artwork by Andraé Maxwell Mansfield Correctional Institution, Ohio

Next, the full-length Die Jim Crow album plans to feature 20+ original tracks and is set for a 2020 release date.

“Currently the album is being recorded. 2019 will be the year of field recordings in various prisons and with formerly incarcerated artists. I currently have four prisons lined up: one in Mississippi (juvenile male), one in Colorado (male), and two in South Carolina (one men’s, one women’s). Probably will record in a few more,” Young wrote. “So we are fundraising, doing speaking and performance events, building a fan base. The album will come out in November 2020. That year will be all about producing/mixing the tracks and working on the LP Book and documentary film components.”

All photos courtesy of [Die Jim Crow](#).