# Exhibition of Prisoners' Advocacy Artifacts Includes HIV Efforts

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Some of the artifacts on display include issues of POZInterference Archive

Self-Determination Inside/Out is a new exhibition of cultural materials made by prisoners and their supporters as they struggled for justice within the prison system. The exhibit, which is at Interference Archive in Brooklyn, spans decades of history and sheds new light on both incarceration and the incarcerated. One of the curators is former POZ senior editor Laura Whitehorn, who became an advocate for prisoners while serving a 14-year sentence.

On display are publications, printed materials, and audio, film and video recordings made by people in and out of prison as they advocated for numerous causes, including the struggles of women and transgender people in prison. HIV/AIDS is part of that story, and the exhibit includes a 1988 press release by Mujahid Farid, one of the founders of the Prisoners Education Project on AIDS (PEPA). Farid sent out the press release following the transfer of PEPA co-founder David Gilbert to another prison "to punish him for the crime of helping to organize a prisoner-empowerment group," Whitehorn says. "PEPA was seen by the prison administration as posing a threat of prisoner organizing; after punishing the organizers, the administration eventually adopted the PEPA model, now known as PACE (Prisoners AIDS Counseling and Education)."

Also on display are issues of POZ magazine that profile the HIV advocacy work of incarcerated people. “Each [issue] shows some way incarcerated people affect HIV/AIDS work on the outside,” says Whitehorn. “A theme of the show is that social justice movements have been affected deeply by struggles in the prisons.”

Self-Determination Inside/Out runs through November 16 at Interference Archive, 131 8th Street No. 4 in Brooklyn. The archive, which collects cultural objects created as part of social movements, is open 1 to 9 p.m. Thursday and noon to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday. For more information on the exhibit and the concurrent educational public programs, including lectures, reading groups, discussions and film screenings, visit the Interference Archive.

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