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Billboard art by Sherrill Roland

## **8 x 5 Miami:** **Roundtable on Mass Incarceration** with Artists, Activists and Policymakers

August 19th, 6:30 pm est

Location: Bakehouse Art Complex  
561 NW 32 Street  
Miami, FL 33127

Organized by **Art at a Time Like This**  
Co-presented by **Bakehouse Art Complex** and **Locust Projects**

[Registration: Eventbrite](#)

**[MIAMI]: On August 19th**—just before the primary elections—artists and activists will come together to discuss the impact of mass incarceration on creativity and community, offering alternative solutions to this massive crisis in U.S. democracy. The featured speakers include 2021 MacArthur Fellow **Desmond Meade**, president and director of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition; **Vivian Azalia**, program director of the Dream Defenders; Miami-based artists **Chire Regans aka VantaBlack** and **Reginald O'Neal**; and **Sherrill**

**Roland**, an artist living in Durham, NC, who was wrongfully imprisoned for ten months and later exonerated. **Barbara Pollack**, co-founder and co-director of Art at a Time Like This, will serve as moderator.

How can we make a difference? The discussion will focus on steps to instigate change, either by raising visibility of this crucial issue through art/public art or by activating political engagement and civic participation, especially timely and relevant with the upcoming primary election that includes candidates for D.A. and judges.

This roundtable is held in conjunction with the launch of 8x5, a nationally touring public art exhibition organized by Art at a Time Like This that kicked off this summer in Miami with several artist-designed billboards across the City's urban core. Named for the size of an average prison cell, 8x5 featured artworks by **Shepard Fairey**, the **Guerrilla Girls**, **Trenton Doyle Hancock**, **Sam Durant**, **Sherrill Roland** and **Faylita Hicks**. The billboards and bus stop posters were situated near courthouses and legislative offices to stimulate dialogue about the condition of what the organizers feel is our country's "so-called" justice system.

### **About the organizations**

**Art at a Time Like This** is a nonprofit arts organization that provides a platform of free expression—both online and IRL—for artists responding to current events and crises. Founded in 2020 at the outset of the pandemic by independent curators Anne Verhallen and Barbara Pollack, Art at a Time Like This has since addressed a range of issues prevalent in the U.S. and globally, including the online exhibition, *Thinking of A Place*, curated by returned citizen Jesse Krimes and focusing on carceral aesthetics. The latest public art project, 8x5, was sponsored by collector Jorge Mora, the law firm of Willkie, Farr, the Barton Family Foundation and the Mimi Saltzman Foundation.

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, **Locust Projects** is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space.

Founded in 1985 by artists and for artists in a former industrial Art Deco-era bakery, **Bakehouse Art Complex** provides studio residencies, infrastructure, and community to enable the highest level of artistic creativity, development, and collaboration for the most promising talent.

## Speakers Bios:

MacArthur “Genius” Fellow **Desmond Meade** is a formerly homeless returning citizen who eventually became the President of the Florida Rights Restoration Coalition (FRRRC), Chair of Floridians for a Fair

Democracy, a graduate of Miami-Dade College, Florida International University College of Law and a Ford Global Fellow. Recognized by Time Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World in 2019, Desmond presently leads efforts to empower and civically re-engage local communities across the state, and to reshape local, state, and national criminal justice policies.



**Vivian Azalia** is a visual artist, educator, and organizer based in Miami by way of Peru. Vivian has worked as an educator since 2011 in various spaces from museums to juvenile detention centers and most recently as the Youth Programs Director of the Healing and Justice Center of Dream Defenders. In 2013, after the murder of her best friend at the hands of police, she was constantly harassed, arrested and put in jail on 3 separate occasions.



Winner of the 2020 Ellies Social Justice Award, **Chire Regans**, also known as VantaBlack, was born in Saint Louis, Missouri and relocated to Miami with her family in the late 1980s. A graduate of Florida A&M University, Regans has dedicated her artistic practice and her life to community advocacy and activism. Regan's Social Commentary Art, began with five portraits of victims of gun violence and now includes over 200 portraits and their stories. Regans serves on the Miami-Dade Community Relations Board's Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Committee and works as a teaching artist at PAMM.

**Reginald O'Neal**, aka L.E.O, has completed murals throughout Europe, the Americas, and the Caribbean. His work is held in the collections of Perez Art Museum Miami, the Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, the Rubell Collection, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, Oolite Arts, and the Green Family Art Foundation. O'Neal is a



recipient of the South Florida Cultural Consortium in 2019 and has participated in residencies in Spain, Japan, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and Bed Stuy Residency. Reginald's murals and canvases are largely inspired by personal experiences of growing up in the public housing project in Miami's Overtown neighborhood.



**Sherrill Roland** is a recipient of the Creative Capital Award and is an Art for Justice fellow, now represented by the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York. A resident of Durham, North Carolina, Roland was arrested and incarcerated on a wrongful conviction while preparing to attend graduate school. He is a participant in 8x5, the billboard project focusing on the mass incarceration crisis, sponsored by Art at a Time Like This.

