

Discussion Moderator



Isaac Scott

is a mixed-media fine artist and activist. He is currently the Social Relations Lab Technician and Communications Specialist at the Center for Justice at Columbia University, teaching young adults graphic design while managing the center's public outreach. His passion as an advocate for justice reform runs deep, as he is directly affected by the justice system and its disenfranchising nature. Today Isaac is a leader in promoting justice reform through the transformative power of the arts. Since Mr. Scott's return to society, he has used his passion for the arts to accomplish goals that could not have been achieved without such a socially valued means of expression.

Through his accomplishments as the Program Director for The Confined Arts, he is now in a position to assist those artists following behind him. He has made an impact in those involved in reentry through the field of arts and holds a position with Columbia University where he can use his creativity in many different ways to educate and promote change. In his most recent accomplishments, Isaac has been accepted to the Columbia University School of General Studies to complete his Undergraduate Degree and is expect to graduate May 2022.

- In 2016, Isaac testified multiple times before the New York City Council's hearing committee on issues related to the advancement of alternatives to incarceration.
- In February 2016, Isaac contributed his prison experience as an Inmate Grievance Representative at a Symposium in Beacon, NY, which was a result of the death of Samuel Harrell at the hands of NYS Correctional Officers.
- In 2016 Isaac Scott visited Washington, D.C. to contribute his prison experience as a father with young children at his time of arrest, to a discussion about children of incarcerated parents. Sponsored by Patrick Baker author of "My Father is in Prison," This Discussion was in the 7th Ward, where Isaac had the opportunity to witness poverty in a different part of the country.
- In 2016 Isaac Scott was featured as a panelist on a symposium following Ava Duvernay's documentary 13th that took place at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Isaac highlighted the importance of language in relation to the dehumanization of people who have criminal justice involvement.
- In addition to teaching art with Columbia, Isaac also teaches visual arts to ATI (Alternatives To Incarceration) mandates at the Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES), and ProjectArt.
- Since 2015, Isaac has been given a number of awards and acknowledgements, all including City, State and Local initiatives.

Discussion Panelist



Dr. Kirk A. James
Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work
AA, BA, MSW, DSW
kirkajames@nyu.edu
212-998-5989
[Curriculum Vitae](#)

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Mass Incarceration and the intersection of race, class, power, privilege, immigration and critical pedagogy; Trauma and healing modalities for impacted people; Human rights and social justice frameworks

BIOGRAPHY

Kirk Anthony James is a Clinical Assistant Professor at the NYU Silver School of Social Work. He completed his doctorate from the School of Social Policy and Practice at The University of Pennsylvania in May 2013. His dissertation, “The Invisible Epidemic in Social Work Academia,” examined the complex phenomena of mass incarceration through a historical and contemporary lens. He concluded by developing curricula for Master level students to increase awareness, activism and holistic practice in the milieu. Courses developed from his dissertation have been implemented at Columbia University, Temple University, City College, and the University of Pennsylvania amongst others. Dr. James’s primary research and publications focus on deconstructing issues of mass incarceration — specifically as it pertains to trauma, cognitive development, culpability, and the examination of systems that foster and perpetuate racial injustice. He also works collaboratively with the Center For Justice at Columbia University on its annual “Beyond The Bars” conference — which brings impacted people together with academics, activists, policy makers, and practitioners from across the country to create a more informed understanding, and subsequent response to mass incarceration. Dr. James has over a decade of leadership experience in various social justice settings, and is a highly sought out speaker and human rights advocate. He has been a consultant on social justice projects from the Caribbean to Africa. At the University of Pennsylvania, he developed and directed the Goldring Reentry Initiative (GRI). The primary goals of the GRI are to identify best practices in reducing recidivism for individuals transitioning from Philadelphia jails, and to train clinical and macro level social work students to work with incarcerated individuals (pre and post release).

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

Keynote: Columbia University (3/2016) – Mandatory Immigration Detention And

Deportation: The Greatest Collateral Consequence of Mass Incarceration?

Keynote: Governor State University (3/2015) – A Historical Examination of Mass Incarceration, and The Implications for Social Work Education

Keynote: New Jersey National Association of Social Work (5/2014) – Social Work, Social Justice, And Mass Incarceration: Why The Dissonance?

Council of Social Work Education (10/2013) - Social Work Education In A Period Of Mass Incarceration

Council of Social Work Education (10/2013) - Criminal Justice Infusion: Examining A New MSW Criminal Justice Initiative



Ebony Walcott

is an artist from Brooklyn and is the Studio Manager for Artistic Noise. She is using her time at Artistic Noise to not only build upon her skills as an artist but also to learn the ins and outs of running a non-profit. She hopes to use everything she is learning here to spread awareness about life after lock up to the people who don't understand. She recently completed an internship with the New York Woman's Foundation where she was apart of a grant review committee. Ebony constantly applies for internships because she loves to pass on knowledge as well as gain new insights.



Victor Alvarez

is a 25 year old Bronx native. As a juvenile Victor was impacted by incarceration as he was is a former Street Organizer. Ultimately serving a sentence of 7 years he was away from the ages of 18 to 24. While in prison he told myself that he would provide change in his community. Today Victor is currently enrolled at LaGuardia Community College studying Human Services and Mental Health. His plan is to acquire his LMSW and implement his own healing practice.