

Exploring Asylum Hill – Prison Arts Exhibit at Twain Center

Nearly two years ago the Prison Arts Project Exhibition came to Asylum Hill Congregational Church with sixteen examples of their work, and we wrote an article about it in the November News & Views.

If you don't recall, it's a part of Community Partners in Action (CPA), a charitable organization founded on the principle that even those incarcerated can change for the better, given half

a chance. It also boasts of having Sam Clemens as a founding board member.

Since the 2020 show that was planned to be at the Mark Twain House & Museum was cancelled, it was only fitting that the 2021 show should be bigger and longer. It includes works from the COVID cancelled 2020 show as well as new works created in 2021. In total more than 1000 works are on display at the Mark Twain Museum in their 2nd floor gallery, and the exhibition will remain through December 2021.

The works are as varied as the 183 artists who created them and then some. There are even half a dozen representations of Mark Twain. The down side here is that photography is not permitted in the Gallery, the image above is one of the dozen or so displayed down stairs to encourage patrons to visit the full exhibit. The upside is that the gallery is free, 7 days a week from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm as are the 20-minute video about the life of Mark Twain.

What makes this artwork so remarkable is that none of these artists studied art, but instead embraced it as a way of making something of their lives while doing time. Each of them has been challenged to "make art that only they could make". As a result, they had to go within to find out what that meant. Then they needed to find the patience and perseverance to see the work to completion. For more of these amazing works stop by The Mark Twain House & Museum anytime between 10:00 and 4:30. It will only cost you your time, and it is well worth the investment.

