

Jeannette Tossounian is a life-long professional artist who spent two years in maximum-security at Vanier Centre for Women in Milton, Ontario. While in her tiny metal and concrete cell, she kept herself busy by drawing her cell features and jail-issue items with golf-sized pencils on plain copy paper. She also wrote nine books, two of which she has self-published since her release. While continuing to maintain her innocence, Jeannette is currently in the appeal process and active in fighting for reforms to the penal system. Her books can be purchased at www.anklebonebooks.com and her art can be viewed at www.tossounianart.com.

Front Cover: “My Maximum Security Home”
2013, white paper with black pencil sketch
Jeannette Tossounian

“Apparently there’s a huge snow storm today. Of course I can’t see out my frosted windows, but there’s the shadow of snow on the ledge over a foot high. All programs were cancelled today and there was no mail.

I drew a picture of my bare bunk and the shadow of snow on the window sill”.

— Excerpt of a 8 February 2013 journal entry from the book
The Human Kennel (Ankle Bone Books, 2016)

Back Cover: “The Human Kennel”
2016, sculpture
Jeannette Tossounian

The sculptural installation piece that is spawn from the book *The Human Kennel* reflects my experiences being locked up for two years in maximum-security in a women’s detention centre. The artwork shows where the justice system places those who are most marginalized. The jail cell becomes home.

Stick figures are used because they are not bias and could represent anyone of any age, colour, gender, ability, etc. The figures are wrapped with green cloth and yarn, which represents the green provincial institution uniform mandatory for incarcerated women in Ontario. The cloth and yarn

also represents skills often associated with women. However, because green yarn is used, the artwork could easily represent anyone incarcerated as the green stick figures could also represent the forest being caged as we are human beings, living creatures, trapped by concrete and metal, stifled from growth and slowly dying.