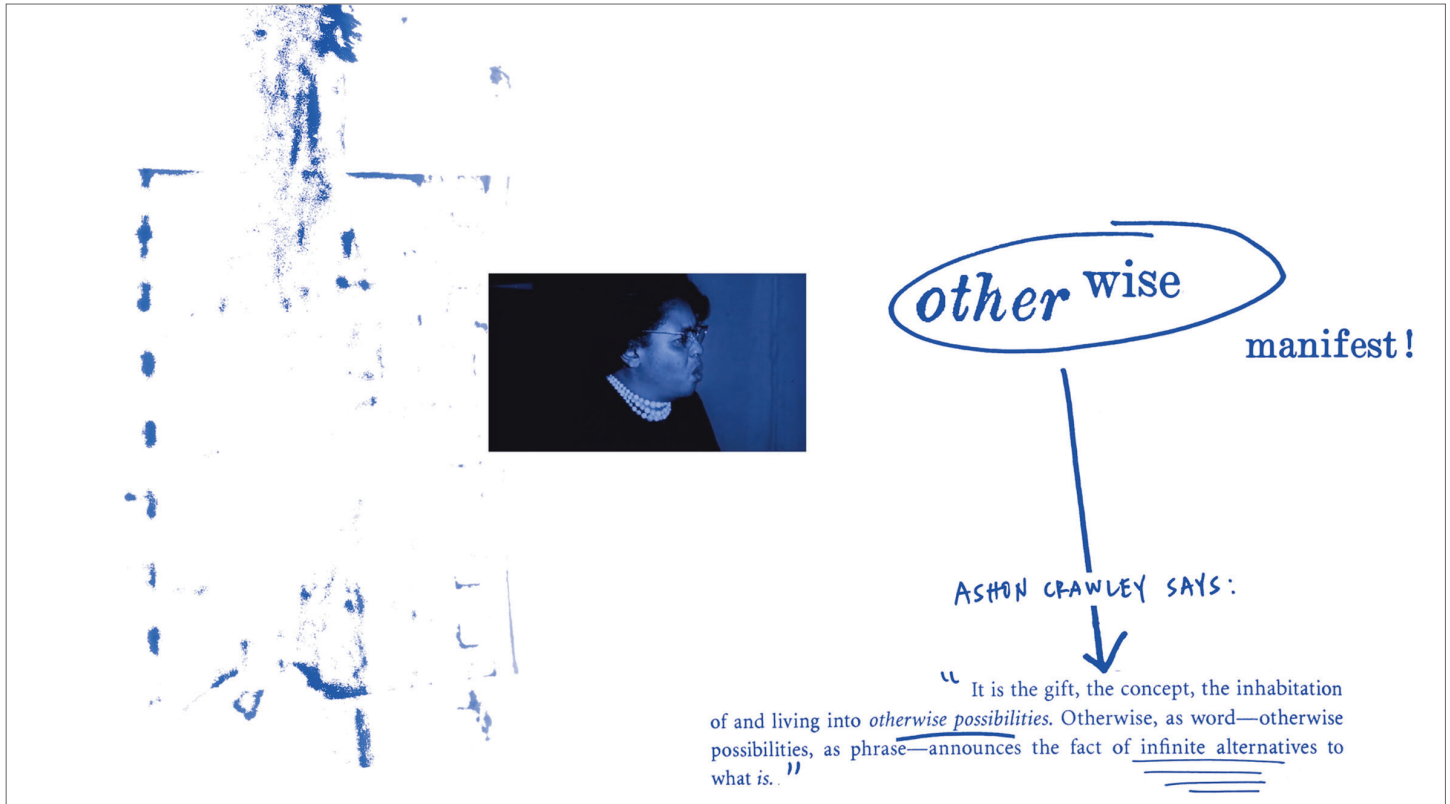


## Spring Exhibitions at the University Art Museum

### *History Lessons*

*Vito Acconci: Under-History Lessons*

On view January 27 – April 4, 2025



Kameelah Janan Rasheed, *otherwise* (still), 2021, single channel video, 4:53 minutes, no sound, courtesy of the artist and NOME

ALBANY, NY (January 7, 2025) – The University Art Museum presents *History Lessons* in its main galleries featuring 15 artists working from the 1960s to the present, and Vito Acconci's sound work *Under-History Lessons* (1976) in the Collections Study Space.

### ***History Lessons***

Artists: **Judith Braun, Colin Chase, Bethany Collins, Daniela Comani, Demian DinéYazhi', General Idea, Jeffrey Gibson, Leon Golub, Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, Corita Kent, Glenn Ligon, Joe Mama-Nitzberg, Louise Nevelson, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, and Tim Rollins and K.O.S.**

The 15 artists in *History Lessons* share new ways to make, shape, and preserve history. They situate themselves as subjects in history and literature, writing counternarratives as they speak to larger systemic questions about how we teach and remember the past. Working in a range of media and across generations from the 1960s to the present, they share commitments to collaboration, activism, and education. Handmade and printed texts that appear in their work recall a range of sources, from protest signs to newspapers, and challenge the way that history texts have been written.

Revisiting past events that deeply affect the present, such as Native histories and colonization, the American Civil War, and the AIDS crisis, these artists use creative processes to reveal hidden truths not accessible through traditional historical methodologies and often reference other art forms that do the same, including music, poetry, theater, and fiction.

These artists use several strategies to reclaim their power to rewrite history. Remixing, appropriation, and collage are often means of generating new forms and eliciting new meanings from archival materials. Erasure and redaction can paradoxically invite closer readings by pointing toward what was left unwritten or has been absent from history. Wordplay and humor allow artists to upend language, disrupting the way histories and identities have been previously constructed.

Education and collaboration are central to the practices of many of the artists in *History Lessons*. They show how art can be a way of teaching others to assert their own voices in history. The goal is not to be didactic, but to plant new seeds, to create alternative ways of framing history, and to use the lessons of the past to imagine how the present world could be made better.

To learn more, see the *History Lessons* press kit: [UAM Spring 2025 Exhibitions Press Kit](#).



Joe Mama-Nitzberg, *Another Side to the Picture*, 2021, archival inkjet print in custom painted frame, 36 x 36 inches, courtesy of the artist and Grant Wahlquist Gallery, Maine



Bethany Collins, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Hymnal*, 2023, artist book with 100 laser-cut leaves, open: 1 1/2 x 13 5/8 x 9 1/4 inches; closed: 1 x 7 x 9 1/2 inches, courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York

LEFT SPEAKER (FRONT)	RIGHT SPEAKER (REAR)
Let's say we do --	Ready: let's say we do --
Go on: we -- do --	Go on: we -- do --
Again: we -- do --	Again: we -- do --
Repeat: mm -- mm --	Repeat: mm -- mm --
Again: mm -- mm --	Again: mm -- mm --
Remember: we -- do --	Remember: we -- do --
Ready: let's say we do --	Together: let's say we do --
Again: mm -- mm --	Again: mm -- mm --
Again: we -- do --	Again: we -- do --
Remember: we -- do --	Remember: we -- do --
Repeat: mm -- mm --	Repeat: mm -- mm --
Again: mm -- mm --	Again: mm -- mm --

(Pause, 5 sec.)

Excerpt from the transcript for Vito Acconci's *Under-History Lessons*, 1976.

### **Vito Acconci: *Under-History Lessons***

The Collections Study Space features *Under-History Lessons* (1976), an early conceptual audio work by the influential performance, video, and installation artist Vito Acconci. The work is a series of short lessons in which the artist portrays both the teacher and the students. From *Lesson 1: Let's Believe We're in This Together* to the final *Lesson 12: Let's be Oppressed*, Acconci riffs on the ideological underpinnings of American education and society. Previously exhibited at the UAM in 2020, the work is a recent addition to the Collections Study Space library along with four other Acconci sound pieces.

### **About the artist**

Vito Acconci (b. 1940, New York, New York; d. 2017, New York, New York)

Numerous institutions have held solo exhibitions of his work, including Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York (2016); Santa Monica Art Museum, Santa Monica, California (2006); Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (both 2005); Musee d'Art Contemporain, Nantes, France; MACBA Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain; and Center for Contemporary Art, CCA Kitakyushu, Kitakyushu, Japan (all 2004); Royal College of Art, London, United Kingdom (2001); Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, Prato, Italy (1992); Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York (1988); La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California (1987); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois (1980). Acconci held a BA in literature from College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts and an MFA in writing from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

### **Exhibition Support**

The Spring 2025 exhibitions are supported by the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, The University at Albany Foundation, the Ann C. Mataraso Fund, the Robin Kanson Lewis '70 Exhibition Endowment Fund, the University Auxiliary Services at Albany, and the Jack and Gertrude Horan Memorial Fund for Student Outreach.

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**Museum Hours January 27 – April 4, 2025:**

Monday – Friday, 11am – 4pm

Open Select Saturdays, 11am – 4pm: 2/1, 3/29

Closed: 2/17

**Collections Study Space Hours January 27 – April 4, 2025:**

Fine Arts Building, Room 121

Tuesday and Thursday, 11am – 2pm

Or by appointment: [dabbatiello@albany.edu](mailto:dabbatiello@albany.edu)

Free admission

Please check the museum's website for public programming announcements.

**UAlbany Campus Land Acknowledgement**

The University at Albany sits at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers on the traditional lands of the Kanien'keháka and Muh-he-con-neok people, who stewarded this land for generations before the arrival of European colonists. The Kanien'keháka (People of the Flint) and Muh-he-con-neok (People of the Waters that are Never Still) are more commonly known today as the Mohawk Haudenosaunee and Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans. Despite the similarity of their westernized names, the Mohawk and Mohican were culturally and linguistically distinct.

The UAlbany community recognizes that we live and work on the homelands of sovereign Indigenous nations with rich histories and cultures that continue today – both within New York and beyond.

As an institution devoted to teaching, scholarship, and service, we strive to understand and learn from our history and to affirm Indigenous rights and issues. To this end, we are committed to cultivating reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities focused on equity, social justice, and sustainability – and dismantling legacies of colonization.

**About the University at Albany**

The [University at Albany](#) is one of the most diverse public research institutions in the nation and a national leader in educational equity [and social mobility](#). As a Carnegie-classified R1 institution, UAlbany and its faculty and students are creating critical new knowledge in fields such as artificial intelligence, atmospheric and environmental sciences, business, education, public health, social sciences, criminal justice, emergency preparedness, engineering, informatics, public administration, and social welfare. Our courses are taught by an accomplished roster of [faculty experts](#) with student success at the center of everything we do. Through our parallel commitments to academic excellence, scientific discovery, and service to community, UAlbany molds bright, curious, and engaged leaders and launches great careers.

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