



# Art Galleries

*The State University of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Through January 11, 2015

**Contact:**

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**UB Anderson Gallery presents *Art=Text=Art: Private Languages / Public Systems***

*Exhibition explores the intersection of words and images in art.*

September 20, 2014 through January 11, 2015

**OPENING PUBLIC RECEPTION**

**Saturday, September 20, 2014**

**6-8 pm**

**Buffalo, N.Y.** – *Art=Text=Art: Private Languages / Public Systems* explores the re-emergence of text in the visual arts in post-war America, and the simultaneous emergence of concrete poetry. These practices embraced language's ability to carry multiple, even contradictory meanings, thus creating a space for individual acts of anti-conformist thought. Through words in art, flirtations with ideas unauthorized by then-dominant socio-political realities were allowed expression, especially among an early generation of LGBTQ artists.

Sandra Olsen, Director, Anderson Gallery, commented, "visitors will have the extraordinary opportunity to see more than 100 artworks on paper, by new and well known post-war American artists, drawn largely from the New York City-based Sally & Wynn Kramarsky Collection, with additional loans from The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Brooklyn Museum, the University at Buffalo Art Galleries, and the Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo."

This exhibition is an expansion and re-curation of the *Art=Text=Art* exhibition originally organized by the University of Richmond Museums, Virginia, and curated by N. Elizabeth Schlatter, Deputy Director & Curator of Exhibitions, University Museums, with Rachel Nackman, Curator, Kramarsky Collection. This new presentation is re-curated by graduate students Sarah JM Kolberg, Cat Dawson, and Maddie Phinney, under the direction of

Jonathan D. Katz, Director of the Doctoral Program in Visual Studies at the University at Buffalo.

Jonathan D. Katz said, “The objects in the exhibition showcase a largely unexamined, yet critically important shift during the post-war period away from Abstract Expressionism and toward a new reliance on text, particularly in paper-based media. This new deployment not only made words function in artwork in terms of their denotative meanings (what they actually meant), but also opened up their connotative registers as a means of communicating unacknowledged or even suppressed forms of meaning: a crucial strategy for the Cold War era, when what wasn’t said mattered as much as what was.”

Arguing for the mobilization of text as a mode of subtle resistance in the 1950s, the exhibition explores the use of words to catalyze viewers’ self-awareness as makers of meaning, tracing these explorations in the works of Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Robert Indiana, Ray Johnson, John Cage, and Grace Hartigan.

Co-Curator Sarah JM Kolberg explained, “The consensus culture of the Cold War demanded, if not actual conformity, then at least the outward appearance of it. An interest in the multiplicity of meanings is central to the work of these artists for whom, in the highly homophobic atmosphere of the Cold War, the prospect of authorial expression was fraught with danger.”

A focus on the simultaneous emergence of concrete poetry by practitioners Dom Pierre Sylvester Houédard and Ian Hamilton Finlay provides a literary analog to these painterly developments as these poets, too, explored the relationship of text and image. What was born out of the particular socio-historical conditions of the Cold War was adopted by artists of the succeeding generation and diffused to both explore and challenge systems that organize how we understand the world. Beginning with early Minimal and Conceptual artists such as Sol LeWitt, Carl Andre, and Richard Serra, the exhibition explores how subsequent generations of artists such as Dan Flavin, and Jane Hammond, looked back for models of formal innovation that spoke to or challenged the politics of the decade.

While conformity had been the watchword at the height of the Cold War, beginning in the 1960s a renewed investment in surfacing, rather than suppressing, difference emerged. Artists including Cy Twombly, William Anastasi, Ed Ruscha, Stefana McClure, and Joel Shapiro seek to critique systematization as a means of exposing all systems’ investments in hierarchy. In the decades that followed, artists Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Annabel Daou, Karen Schiff, and Richard Bassett explore the personal as political, grounding the systematization of Minimal and Conceptual art in the immediacy of social life as lived.

Co-curator Maddie Phinney commented, “The question of social history is all too often glossed over, if not omitted entirely, from exhibitions that explore formal trends in art practice. I am thrilled to be a part of a project that carefully charts the social conditions in which these artworks were produced.”

**Participating Artists: (Please find attached)**

**CONFERENCE:** *The Sexuality of Words* accompanies the exhibition.

Opens Friday, November 7, 6 to 8 pm, UB Anderson Gallery, with a reception and performance by Matias Viegner, Artist and Professor, Critical Studies, California Institute of the Arts, Presentations on Saturday, November 8, from 9:30 am to 6 pm in 112 Center for the Arts on UB's North Campus.

### **ONLINE CATALOGUE**

The exhibition is accompanied by an online catalogue featuring images, texts, sound, and audio commentary by more than 45 contributors, including curatorial essays by Sarah JM Kolberg, Cat Dawson, Maddie Phinney, and Jonathan D. Katz.

UB Anderson Gallery is located at One Martha Jackson Place, near UB's Main Street Campus and the intersection of Englewood and Kenmore Avenues.

Hours: Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm; Sunday, 1 to 5 pm

For more information call 716-829-3754

All events are free and open to the public.

### ***Image Captions:***

**Image #1.** Ray Johnson, /BOO[K]/(inside, front cover), ca. 1955, artist's book: collage on cardboard cover with hand-sewn binding; handwritten text and drawing in black and red inks on cut paper pages, 8 x 6 inches (20.3 x 15.2 cm), closed. © Ray Johnson Estate, Courtesy Richard L. Feigen & Co.  
/ Photo: Ellen McDermott

**Image #2.** Ray Johnson, *BOO[K]*/(inside, first page), ca. 1955, artist's book: collage on cardboard cover with hand-sewn binding; handwritten text and drawing in black and red inks on cut paper pages, 8 x 6 inches (20.3 x 15.2 cm), closed. © Ray Johnson Estate, Courtesy Richard L. Feigen & Co. / Photo: Ellen McDermott

**Image #3.** Annabel Daou, *The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms*, 2006, graphite on paper, 7 ½ x 5 ½ inches (19.1 x 14 cm). © Annabel Daou / Photo: Laura Mitchell

***A complete roster of exhibiting artists is available at [artequalstext.aboutdrawing.org](http://artequalstext.aboutdrawing.org).***

[www.ubartgalleries.org](http://www.ubartgalleries.org)

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# ART=TEXT=ART

## PRIVATE LANGUAGES / PUBLIC SYSTEMS

Sept. 20, 2014 – Jan. 11, 2015

William Anastasi	Donald Evans	Mark Lombardi
Carl Andre	Ian Hamilton Finlay	Stefana McClure
Frank Badur	Dan Flavin	Mary McDonnell
Jill Baroff	John Fraser	Deborah Gottheil Nehmad
Robert Barry	Michael Goldberg	Jill O'Bryan
Richard Bassett	Jane Hammond	Gloria Ortiz-Hernández
Kry Bastian	Grace Hartigan	Robert Rauschenberg
Bill Berkson	Susanna Harwood Rubin	Larry Rivers
Suzanne Bocanegra	Nancy Haynes	Raphael Rubinstein
Mel Bochner	Christine Hiebert	Ed Ruscha
Dove Bradshaw	Dom Pierre Sylvester Houédard	Anne Ryan
Joe Brainard	Robert Indiana	Karen Schiff
Stephanie Brody-Lederman	Jess	Richard Serra
Trisha Brown	Jasper Johns	Joel Shapiro
John Cage	Ray Johnson	Sara Sosnowy
Buster Cleveland	Bronlyn Jones	Molly Springfield
Bruce Conner	Ellsworth Kelly	Allyson Strafella
Russell Crotty	William Kent	Lenore Tawney
Annabel Daou	Jón Laxdal	Cy Twombly
Stephen Dean	Ann Ledy	John Waters
Elena del Rivero	Sol LeWitt	Lawrence Weiner
Jim Dine	K. McGill Loftus	Robert Whitman