

# NEWS

WALKER ART CENTER MINNEAPOLIS SCULPTURE GARDEN

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## **NEW WINDOW GALLERY INSTALLATION FEATURES PROJECT BY FILM/VIDEO ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE ALAN BERLINER BASED ON THE SURNAMES OF PEOPLE LIVING NEAR THE WALKER**

### **PROJECT FEATURES VISUAL POEM DISPLAYING NEARLY 18,000 NAMES AND INTERACTIVE WEB-BASED ACTIVITIES**

"Names are our titles, our passports to the world, the opening words to the stories of our lives. In many ways, they function as compressed histories, cultural badges that provide clues to our race, religion, ethnicity, kinship, class, and nationality. Each name we encounter is a window to a different history, an unfamiliar tradition or heritage, a new sound, sometimes even a new language. One way or another, every name offers up the promise of a unique story."

—Alan Berliner

As part of the reinstallation of the Walker Art Center's permanent collection galleries with the new exhibition ***Walk Around Time: Selections from the Permanent Collection***, the museum presents ***Artist-In-Residence: Alan Berliner The Language of Names***, a new installation in the Andersen Window Gallery based on the surnames of people living within three miles of the Walker. Both exhibitions open on Sunday, February 17. *Walk Around Time* will remain on view through April 4, 2004; *The Language of Names* will run through August 18.

The latest installation of the Andersen Window Gallery rests on the simplest of frames—names. Filmmaker Alan Berliner, Walker Film/Video artist-in-residence, has dedicated the majority of his work to the legacy of the family album and the personal histories embedded within surnames. To make his visual poem on display across the museum's entry wall, he gathered the names of more than 18,000 people living within three miles of the Walker. These personal titles may change the way we look at an urban center and reframe the way that it looks at itself.

(more)

A renowned experimental filmmaker (*Nobody's Business*, *Intimate Stranger*, and *The Sweetest Sound*, an exploration of his own name), Berliner transforms the gallery into an open notebook on the multilayered subjects of names and naming. It becomes an engaging and interactive installation (where visitors can research the popularity of their nomenclature, share personal histories, and discover the diverse spectrum of residents in this community). Berliner's films will be screened in April; see listing below.

### **Web Site**

[gallery9.walkerart.org/berliner/](http://gallery9.walkerart.org/berliner/)

The Walker has collaborated with Alan Berliner on the creation of five online "experiences" relating to the artist's film *The Sweetest Sound* (2001). The ideas expressed within the film and the Window Gallery installation focus on the complex identifications inherent in our own names, and the often simplistic identifications we associate with the names of others. The project's parallel Web site, [gallery9.walkerart.org/berliner/](http://gallery9.walkerart.org/berliner/), examines, in more general terms, the issue of name, self, and geography. Each version invites the viewer to a tactile investigation of the personal relationships between names and self-identity, history, and lineage, and to an exploration of how we define ourselves through our names. Each of the five "experiences" will be the main focus of the Window Gallery's physical space.

### **Alan Berliner at Café.Utne**

[café.utne.com/berliner/](http://café.utne.com/berliner/)

What's in a name? Join filmmaker Alan Berliner and Walker associate curator of Film/Video Sheryl Mousley for an online forum at Café.Utne April 1–26. Berliner will log on regularly to participate in a virtual discussion on genealogy and the power, mystery, meaning, and magic of our names. Sign up to join the forum and ask questions, contribute stories about names, and discuss related issues with Berliner, Mousley, and other members of the Walker and Utne staffs. Café.Utne is an award-winning online community hosted by the *Utne Reader*. Registration is free.

### **Funding**

Alan Berliner's Film/Video residency is made possible by The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

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**Andersen Window Gallery**  
**Artist-In-Residence: Alan Berliner**  
***The Language of Names***  
**Related Events**

**Online Forum**

**Alan Berliner at Café.Utne**

[café.utne.com/berliner/](http://café.utne.com/berliner/)

April 1–26

See above for details.

**Films**

April 24–26

***Nobody's Business***

Introduced by Alan Berliner

Wednesday, April 24, 8 pm, \$6 (\$4 Walker members)

Auditorium

Berliner turns the camera on his father, Oscar, in order to demystify his heritage and the tumultuous personal history between his father and mother. Oscar, however, proves a resistant, curmudgeonly subject who not only predicts any film about him will be a flop, but also threatens to walk out on interviews. The dynamic between father and son captures both the tension and affection of family relations, as they discuss their shared experience and narrate images culled from the genealogical archive in Granite Mountain, Utah. Entertaining and revealing, the film received three awards at the Berlin Film Festival, including the International Film Critics' prize. 1996, color, 16mm, 60 minutes.

with

***Intimate Stranger***

Joseph Cassuto, Berliner's grandfather, was in the midst of writing his autobiography when a car accident ended his life. Two decades later, Berliner assembles his own version of Cassuto's biography in this fascinating film. Cassuto, a Palestinian Jew raised in Egypt, went from Zionist to commercial ambassador as a liaison between the cotton industry and Japanese material factories; he also married an American woman who moved home to Brooklyn with two of their four children at the onset of World War II. By the time Cassuto reunited with his family in America several years later, he was out of place and more attentive to friends and business interests overseas. As one relative comments, "His business was having people like him. I never met anybody who didn't like him. Except his immediate family." 1991, U.S., color, 16mm, 60 minutes.



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### ***The Sweetest Sound***

Introduced by Alan Berliner

Friday, April 26, 8 pm, \$6 (\$4 Walker members)

Auditorium

When Belgian director Alain Berliner's *Ma Vie en Rose* became an international success, Alan Berliner began receiving a lot of mistaken congratulations, and began a worldwide search for as many Alan Berliners as he could find. Seeking both the origins of the name Berliner and contemplating his own desire to be the only Alan Berliner (he suffers from Same Name Syndrome), the filmmaker invites a dozen men with the same name to his loft for dinner. "Exploration of what's in a name has all the crowd-pleasing, wide-eyed wryness of [Berliner's] previous work," *Variety*. 2001, U.S., color, 16mm, 60 minutes.

Preceded by Berliner's short film *Everywhere at Once* (1985, U.S., color, 16mm, 10 minutes).

### **Free Thursdays**

#### **Free Thursday Tours**

Free; meet in the lobby

Thursday, February 21, 6 pm

Thursday, February 28, 1 pm

Thursday, March 14, 6 pm

Thursday, March 21, 1 pm

Thursday, April 11, 1 and 6 pm

Thursday, April 18, 6 pm

### **Free Thursday Talks**

#### **Better Looking: Through an Artist's Eyes**

Thursday, April 18, 6:30 pm, Free, meet in the lobby

Critics write the reviews, but artists also have strong opinions about what makes art good, bad, or boring. Join a special guest artist on a tour of the exhibition and learn to look at art with an artist's eyes. Better Looking is the Walker's ongoing series that offers new and frequent visitors fresh ways of looking at contemporary art.

#### **Gallery Talk: Alan Berliner**

Thursday, April 25, 7 pm, Free, meet in the lobby

Join Berliner for a discussion of his installation in the Andersen Window Gallery and his recent film, *The Sweetest Sound*. Interested in the ways that genealogy frames human experience, Berliner's work explores how names function as "our titles, our passports to the world, the opening words to the stories of our lives."

### **Saturday and Sunday Tours**

Free with gallery admission; meet in the lobby

Saturday, February 23, 2 pm

Sunday, February 24, 2 pm

Sunday, March 17, 2 pm

Saturday, March 23, 2 pm

Sunday, March 31, 2 pm