

UMassAmherst

Fine Arts Center

For Immediate Release
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University Museum of Contemporary Art Announces Spring Exhibitions

BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 | STACCATO

Courtney M. Leonard

February 14 - May 10 & September 19 - December 9, 2024
Opening Reception and Artist Talk: February 21, 5 - 7:30 p.m.

FAINT/HIDDEN/SHROUDED: Contemplating Obscurity

Annual Eva Fierst Graduate Student Curatorial Exhibition

March 27 - May 10, 2024
Opening Reception and Curatorial Talk: March 26, 5 - 7:30 p.m.

AMHERST, Mass. — The University Museum of Contemporary Art at UMass Amherst is proud to present two new exhibitions for the spring 2024 semester. *BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 / STACCATO* will open on February 14 with a reception and talk by Shinnecock artist Courtney M. Leonard on February 21. The annual Graduate Curatorial Exhibition *FAINT/HIDDEN/SHROUDED: Contemplating Obscurity* will open in the North Gallery on March 27 with an opening reception on March 26.

The University Museum of Contemporary Art, located on the lower level of the Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts is open Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; and until 8 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month when UMass is in session. The public is always welcome, and admission is free.



Rib bone of Staccato, North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), UMass Natural History Collections.
Photograph by Stephen Petegorsky

BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 | STACCATO

Courtney M. Leonard

February 14 - May 10 & September 19 - December 09, 2024

Reception & Artist Talk: Feb 21, 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts lobby / UMCA

BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 | STACCATO is the result of a multi-year artist residency initiated by the UMCA in collaboration with the UMass College of Natural Sciences and partially funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The installation will fill the UMCA's Main, East and West Galleries. It includes paintings, sculptures, and video exploring the life and kinship ties of *Staccato*, a North Atlantic Right Whale killed by a ship strike in 1999, whose remains are housed in the UMass Natural History Collections.

The artist Courtney M. Leonard is a citizen of the Shinnecock Nation of Long Island. Her work explores marine biology, Indigenous food sovereignty, migration, and human environmental impact through visual logbooks that investigate the multiple definitions of the term "breach."

Based on the artist's research and in collaboration with faculty and students from the UMass Biology and Environmental Conservation Departments, the exhibition melds art and science to explore the anthropogenic stressors that threaten migratory whales, including shipping traffic, wind energy development, and climate change. As a contributor to the Offshore Art Movement, Leonard believes it is vital for artists to connect with communities through inclusion and recognition, a foundation that has led her to travel and dialogue extensively with coastal Indigenous communities about their sustenance harvesting traditions and rights.

Additional specimens from the Natural History Collections will be on display in the exhibition, and an interactive space called "The Science Room" will invite further investigation of humans' impact on whales and our natural world.

On February 21 from 5 to 7:30 p.m., Leonard will join the student and faculty scientists who supported her research for a reception and conversation about the installation.

Courtney M. Leonard earned her Master of Fine Arts in Ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design. She received a Best of Division in Sculpture from Eiteljorg Indian Market in 2011. Leonard's work is in the permanent public collections of the United States Art In Embassies, the Crocker Art Museum, the Heard Museum, ASU's Art Museum and Ceramic Research Center, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, the Museum of the North, the Mystic Seaport Museum, and the Pomona Museum of Art.

BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 | STACCATO was created in partnership with the UMass College of Natural Sciences and is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Office of the Provost, The Class of 1961 Artists' Residency Fund, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the UMass Natural History Collections and the UMassFive College Credit Union. Significant research and exhibition contributions came from Kathrine Doyle, staff in the UMass Biology Dept and Vertebrate Collections Manager for the UMass Natural History Collections, Tristram Seidler, Curator of the UMass Herbarium, and Michelle D. Staudinger, Ph.D., UMass Department of Environmental Conservation. Emily Volmar, a UMass undergraduate Natural Resource Conservation major, was a summer Art & Science research assistant for this project. Her work and that of UMass Postdoctoral Researcher Amy Teffer was supported by the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center.



Barbara B. Morgan, *Pearl Primus, Speak to Me of Rivers* 1944 negative; circa 1980 print, gelatin silver print, UM 2009.12.2

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Opening Reception & Curatorial Talk: March 26, 5:00 - 7:30 p.m. Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts lobby/ UMCA

This exhibition, to be shown in the UMCA's North Gallery, seeks to uncover hidden meanings and symbols buried beneath layers. The artworks are selected from the UMCA's permanent collection, featuring works by distinguished artists including sculptor Chakaia Booker, photographers Elliott Erwitt and Ralph Gibson, conceptual artist Rashid Johnson, performance artist Jefferson Pinder, and others.

The exhibition explores the interplay between remembrance and forgetting, presence and absence, and erasure and illumination. The curators work to inquire about what is visible and what has been deliberately concealed.

FAINT/HIDDEN/SHROUDED: Contemplating Obscurity is co-curated by Ruthie Baker, M.F.A. Studio Arts candidate, Simone Cambridge, M.A. History of Art and Architecture candidate, and Olivia Haynes, Ph.D. Afro-American Studies candidate.

The Student Curatorial Program was initiated by the museum in 2006. The program has been supported by The Eva Fierst Student Curatorial Exhibition Fund since 2021. UMCA provides a unique curatorial experience for graduate students interested in museum careers. A small team of graduate students, selected each May, researches within the UMCA's permanent collection and designs a special exhibition presented the following spring. This year's exhibition will open with a reception on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, during which the graduate student curators will discuss the installation.

UMCA SPRING 2024 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Wednesday, February 14 / **Regular museum hours resume:** Tuesday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.; and first Thursdays until 8 p.m.

Wednesday, February 21, 5 - 7:30 p.m. / **Opening Reception and Artist Talk with Courtney M. Leonard** for *BREACH: LOGBOOK 24 | STACCATO* / UMCA and Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts lobby

Tuesday, March 26, 5 - 7:30 p.m. / **Opening Reception and Curatorial Talk** for *FAINT/HIDDEN/SHROUDED: Contemplating Obscurity* / UMCA and Randolph W. Bromery Center for the Arts lobby

Friday, April 19, **Fine Arts Center Spring Art Walk** / UMCA, Augusta Savage Gallery, Hampden Gallery

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