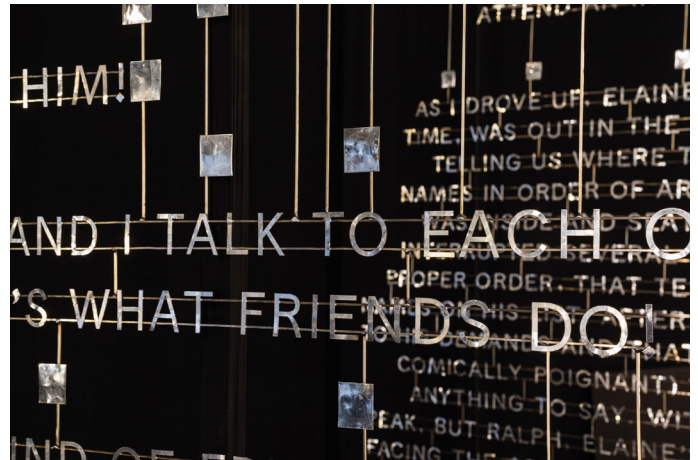


# THE NEW YORKER

## “Jonathan Berger: An Introduction to Nameless Love”

Andrea K. Scott, November 2020

Jonathan Berger is an unusual artist. You could mistake him for a biographer. One acclaimed piece—both a work of art and a curatorial project, as is Berger’s habit—divined the mysteries of Andy Kaufman. (Performance is often on Berger’s mind.) In the beautiful exhibition “An Introduction to Nameless Love,” at Participant Inc. (through Dec. 6; appointments, via [participantinc.org](http://participantinc.org), are necessary), which debuted at Harvard’s Carpenter Center, Berger again shares the lives of others. In this case, the subjects are six people who have found life-altering connections beyond the you-complete-me clichés of romance, including the autistic philosopher Mark Utter, the turtle conservationist Richard Ogust, and Maria A. Prado, who once lived in a homeless enclave beneath New York City. Their stories are spelled out in thirty-three thousand hand-cut tin letters suspended on nickel wire, shimmering planes that can turn the act of reading into a full-body experience. To take in the words of Brother Arnold Hadd, one of the last living Shakers, for instance, you have to pace methodically back and forth, as if performing a devotional ritual. A delightful book of inventive nonfiction—musings on intimacy—by Mady Schutzman, titled “Behold the Elusive Night Parrot,” was published in tandem with the exhibition.



Courtesy the artist and Participant Inc.