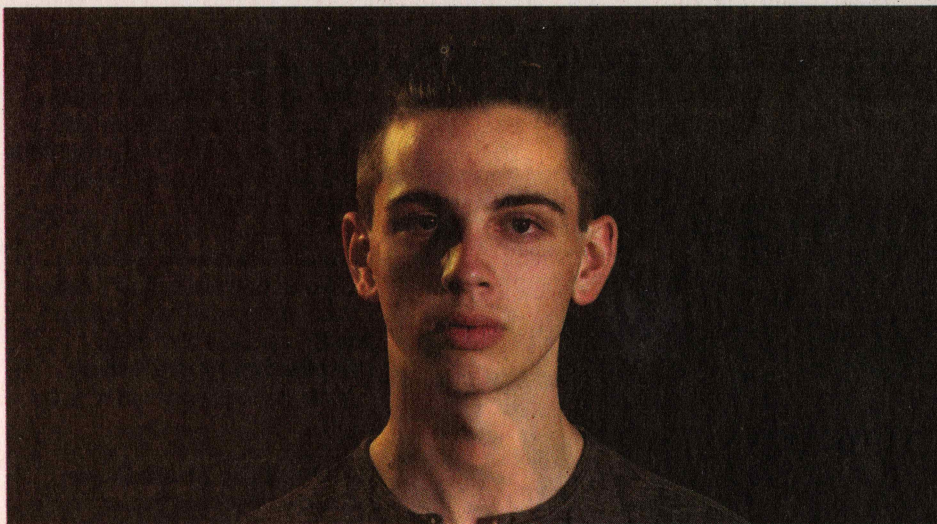




Doug Hall / Rena Bransten Gallery



Doug Hall / Rena Bransten Gallery

Above left: Adam Baron recites selections from Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass" in the installation. Above right: Moving images in negative are projected.

# Satirist changes his tune to soothing

San Francisco artist Doug Hall has been a stalwart presence on the Bay Area art scene since the early 1970s. His early work often evidenced biting satire and a political bent. Now, it seems, the political environment has prompted a different approach. Call it maturity, or maybe a reaction to the current moment born of empathy and a deeply felt sadness.

Either way, his video installation "Song of Ourselves (After Walt Whitman)," at Rena Bransten Gallery through June 16, is a balm for the inflamed nerves of the American body politic.

The work is straightforward in concept, though projected at skewed angles in a small room. Young people — we learn from a wall label that they are drama students at a local high school — recite movingly from Whitman's majestic tribute to democracy and humanity, "Song of

## Doug Hall: "Song of Ourselves (After Walt Whitman)": 11

a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesdays-Saturdays. Through June 16. Free. Rena Bransten Gallery, 1275 Minnesota St., S.F. 415-982-3292.

<http://renabranstengallery.com>

Myself." They gently confront us from uninflected head shots, bold in color and close in framing. Opposite, densely peopled scenes wash in waves of negative black-and-white images across a wall.

"Whoever degrades another degrades me," one voice intones, "and whatever is done or said returns at last to me."

"And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy walks to his own funeral dressed in his shroud," says another.

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John Janca / Rena Bransten Gallery

"Doug Hall: Song of Ourselves (After Walt Whitman)," at Rena Bransten Gallery.