

Derosia

Sam Anderson
Where's Poppa?
March 8–May 3, 2025

Where's Poppa? presents a series of new minimal assemblage works inspired by black box theater and late 20th-century media. The exhibition examines how cultural fragments shape our understanding of legacy, expectation, and disappointment, offering a meta-commentary on the self as constructed through memory and materiality.

Sam Anderson's sculptures stage archetypes—a musician, a prophet, a builder, a romantic, an unwelcome visitor, and a unicorn—each composed with symbolic motifs. DNA strands embody the scientific scaffolding of life, the twisting ladder of progress, or the burdens of genetic determinism. Cockroaches and tumbleweeds, interchangeable metaphors for enduring survivors and relics of the American West, reflect the entanglement of life and history within man-made systems. Monotone figures, painted in muted tones, echo the artist George Segal's plaster casts, extending his exploration of presence and absence.

Many works are choreographed around triadic structures, a formal strategy historically associated with balance and narrative completeness. Anderson's triads however, evoke the existential entanglements of Sartre's *No Exit*—where elements are locked in dependency and conflict, mirroring themes of absence and deferred resolution. This relationship to black box theater serves as both an aesthetic and conceptual framework, revealing the inherent theatricality of exhibition making.

While Anderson's work invites open interpretation, certain pieces have specific narrative origins. *Musician* reimagines the French folk figure Bluebeard as a 20th-century musician, who consumes groupies, collaborators, and lovers, leaving behind only fragments. Resin casts of human female rib bones and tambourines accompany a red box housing a doll (the musician). The red box isolates the musician, framing him as insulated from the consequences of his implied actions.

Where's Poppa? draws on ambiguously embodied imagery, using neutral archetypes made recognizable by their implied historical distance. These figures, though rooted in specific contexts, illustrate how we shape and distort our understanding of reality and myth, and question narratives we each inherit and perpetuate.

Sam Anderson (b. Los Angeles, California) lives and works in New York. She received her MFA in sculpture from Yale in 2010. Selected solo and two-person exhibitions include *Lunch Hour*, Tanya Leighton, Los Angeles, CA (2022); *Sam Anderson*, The Gaylord Apartments, Los Angeles, CA (2022); *I Never Loved Your Mind*, Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany (2020); *Contemporary Sculpture: Sam Anderson & Michael Dean*, Boca Raton Museum of Art, Florida (2019); *The Great Assumption*, JOAN, Los Angeles, CA (2018); *Big Bird*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Germany (2017); *The Park*, SculptureCenter, Queens, NY (2017); *The Lonely Bull*, Rowhouse Project, Baltimore, MD (2016); and *Tally's Folly*, Mother's Tankstation, Dublin, Ireland (2015). Selected group exhibitions include *The Sammlung Philara*, Düsseldorf, Germany (2022); *The Aldrich Contemporary Museum of Art*, Ridgefield, CT (2017); *Bortolami Gallery*, New York, NY (2016); *MoMA PS1*, Queens, NY (2015); *Maccarone*, New York, NY (2015); and *White Columns*, New York, NY (2015). Her films have been screened at Kölnische Kunstverein, SVA Theater, and Anthology Film Archives. A monograph of Anderson's work was published by Mousse on the occasions of her solo exhibitions at Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne and SculptureCenter, New York. She has an upcoming solo exhibition at Art Hall, Baltimore (April 2025).