



SANFORD BIGGERS

LOCATION

Aidekman Arts Center / Medford
Tisch Family Gallery

CONTACT

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October 8 — December 15, 2019

***Sanford Biggers* is the first exhibition focused on the artist's *BAM* series, begun in 2015, in which the artist seeks to memorialize and honor unarmed black victims of police gun violence in America.**

Medford, MA – Tufts University Art Galleries are thrilled to be the sole east coast venue for the first exhibition devoted to Sanford Biggers' *BAM* series. Over the past two decades, Biggers has developed a practice that encourages meaningful dialogue around history and trauma in the United States. Through video, sculpture, and textiles, he brings to light the pain these acts have perpetrated upon society, but also points to the wider human condition and a desire to transcend.

To create his *BAM* sculptures, the artist begins with an African figurative sculpture—whether of authentic or dubious origin—acquired during his travels. Each figure is dipped in wax and taken to a shooting range, where Biggers directs the resculpting of each with gunshots. The artist then casts the resculpted figure in bronze—a historically noble and weighty medium.



For Biggers, this process bestows honor to the damaged figure, allowing it to become a “power object” worthy of veneration, and the victims to be realized as symbols of power and endurance. Through these works, Biggers points toward recent transgressions in American history and elevates the stories of specific individuals in order to combat historical amnesia: in this exhibition sculptures are named after Sandra Bland, Michael Brown, Terence Crutcher, and Jordan Edwards. *BAM* not only brings to light the pain of these individuals, their families, and society, but also aims to create a platform for thoughtful discussion.

The multichannel video installation *Infinite Tabernacle* features images of the original wooden figures being riddled with bullets, as well as the playback of the ballistic sculpting in reverse and at different speeds. As the title suggests, the work serves as a sanctuary for the reconvened figures. The overall effect touches on a theme that Biggers explores throughout his practice: the cycle of life, death, and transcendence.

Biggers also acquires and alters antique quilts, referring to the completed works as paintings. Each painting on view includes an image of an African figure—in two instances, directly representing the *Seated Warrior* sculpture on display at the beginning of the exhibition. In contributing his own imagery to these often encoded patchwork quilts, Biggers, in effect, collaborates with the unknown quilters and forms a dialogue between them, himself, viewers, the past, and the present.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, with contributions by Naomi Beckwith (Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago), Christa Clarke (Senior Curator, Arts of Global Africa, Newark Museum), Lisa Melandri (Executive Director of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis), and Kahlil Gibran Muhammad (Professor of History, Race, and Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School).

Sanford Biggers was organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Lisa Melandri, Executive Director. The exhibition and catalog are generously supported by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Dr. Daniel S. Berger, Hedy Fischer and Randy Shull, and Christy and Bill Gautreaux.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sanford Biggers lives and works in New York. His work has been celebrated through solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally, most recently at the Brooklyn Museum, Sculpture Center and Mass MoCA and is in the collection of museums worldwide. He was a 2017 recipient of the Rome Prize Visual Arts and is also the creative director of Moon Medicin, a multimedia concept band that straddles visual art and music with performances staged against a backdrop of curated sound effects and video.



PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

Wednesday, October 16, 7pm
ALUMNAE LOUNGE / AIDEKMAN ARTS CENTER, MEDFORD
ANNUAL BECKWITH LECTURE

In Conversation:

SANFORD BIGGERS + CHRISTA CLARKE

Sanford Biggers will speak with Christa Clarke, Independent Curator and Affiliate, Hutchins Center, Harvard. The Annual Beckwith Lecture was established in 1978 by Leo and Betty Beckwith to bring curators and cultural thinkers of national and international stature to the SMFA. Free and open to all. Followed by a reception in Remis Sculpture Court / Aidekman

Wednesday, November 20, 6pm
BARNUM HALL / PACKARD AVE., MEDFORD

Screening + Conversation:

Where the Pavement Ends

Jane Gillooly, Professor of the Practice in Film & Animation, + Khary Jones, Professor of the Practice in Drama, Dance, and Performance Studies, moderated by Kendra Fields, Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies

Wednesday, December 4, 12:15pm
TISCH FAMILY GALLERY

Talk: PETER PROBST

Does Heritage Have a Form?

Professor of Art History and Anthropology

ABOUT TUFTS UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES

Housed within a research university and an art school, the Tufts University Art Galleries engage with artists, scholars, and works of art to provoke discourse around cultural and social contexts. Through exhibitions, programming, research, and collecting, we create a pedagogical platform for the Tufts community and wider publics.

Tufts University Art Galleries operates from two main gallery locations:

Aidekman Arts Center / Medford

40 Talbot Avenue
Tuesday—Sunday, 11AM-5PM
Closed Mondays and university holidays

SMFA at Tufts / Boston

230 Fenway
Monday—Saturday, 10AM-5PM
Closed Sundays and university holidays

FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC

artgalleries.tufts.edu

Images from top: Sanford Biggers, *Infinite Tabernacle*, 2017. HD video installation, dimensions variable, 4:26 minutes. Courtesy the artist; Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen; and Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong. © Sanford Biggers. Photo credit: Object Studies. Sanford Biggers, *Pink Seated Warrior*, 2017. Antique futon cover, various textiles, sequins, 58 x 39 inches. Courtesy the artist; Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen; and Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong. © Sanford Biggers. Sanford Biggers, *BAM (for Terence)*, 2016. Bronze with black patina, 14 ½ x 4 ½ x 4 ½ inches. Edition 1 of 3 + AP, unique. Courtesy the artist; Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen; and Massimo De Carlo, Milan/London/Hong Kong. © Sanford Biggers.

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