

# GEORGE ADAMS GALLERY

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**Jeremy Anderson**  
***Between, Beyond: 1953-64***

*March 7 – April 20, 2019*

The George Adams Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of sculptures and related drawings by California artist Jeremy Anderson (1921-1982), in what will be his first solo exhibition in New York since 1954. The focus will be on the '50s and early '60s, with sculptures in wood and metal and drawings in pencil and mixed media. Generally overlooked in the greater narrative of post-war, Northern California sculpture, Anderson was nevertheless one of the most quietly influential artists of his time, spanning the conventions of surrealism, 'Funk' and pop art to synthesize "a whole new iconography particular to American art."<sup>1</sup>

Anderson was part of the generation of artists to attend the California School of Fine Arts on the GI Bill, himself having served in the Navy during WWII. The decade following the war which he studied (and later taught) at the school was characterized by intense experimentation and cross-disciplinary exchange. With a distinct style of expressionist painting emerging, through the example of Hassel Smith, David Park, but most notably Clyfford Still, similar headway was occurring in three dimensions under the disparate examples of Robert Howard (biomorphic) and Clay Spohn (Dada-esque). Though the ideas and imagery of surrealism remained a common reference for those working in both two and three dimensions, the art being made by Anderson and his peers quickly evolved into something else entirely.

For his part, while Anderson's sculpture initially drew from the work of artists such as Gorky, Giacometti and Miró, he also considered that sculpture had the unique potential to express intangible concepts: "ideas, being a soul with no body, have to assume some form."<sup>2</sup> After a trip to Europe following his graduation in 1951, he became increasingly engaged with ancient civilizations, or rather the artifacts that define them. The collection of medieval arms and armaments at the de Young Museum was also an early reference point and the physical and aesthetic qualities of those objects carried through to his sculptures and drawings well into the '60s. After experimenting with various materials, he began working primarily in redwood - which was cheap and readily available. Carving bulbous, totemic forms and table top sculptures evoking dream-like environments or staged battles, his work of the mid-1950s (which was rarely titled) remains enigmatic yet evocative.

By the early '60s, these surreal abstractions were increasingly gaining figurative touches with forms or appendages suggestive of human or human-adjacent objects. Major sculptures such as 'Between' and 'Beyond' (both 1961) allude to a house and a ship, respectively, populated by fragments of his earlier biomorphic forms. While in some ways rigorous and formal, Anderson's work also holds a grain of humor - increasingly so in his sculpture post-1961, as he began to introduce color and text, as well as titles. Such additions brought into focus his enduring preoccupation with mythologies of both the personal and universal sort, solidifying his concept of sculpture as a representation of intangibles. Similarly, drawings became a space for free association, with language becoming the medium of choice; one drawing from 1966 states boldly: "WARP LANGUAGE TO FIT SCULPTURE."

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Jeremy Anderson was born in Palo Alto, California in 1921 and died in Mill Valley, CA in 1982. He received a BFA from CSFA (now SFAI) in 1950, where he later taught for nearly two decades. Anderson has been the subject of three major retrospectives, at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1966, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 1975 and the Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art in 1995. His work is included in public collections such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Oakland Museum of California, CA; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, among others.

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<sup>1</sup> Coplans, J. "Sculpture in California." *Artforum*, August 1963: p 5.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Anderson, *The Artist's View*. No 2, September 1952: p 2.

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