

• FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE •

**Anthony Sonnenberg**  
*In a Time of Make Believe*

November 3 — December 2, 2023

**Opening Reception: Friday, November 3, 6–8 pm**

Free and open to the public | Artist in attendance

David B. Smith Gallery is proud to announce *In a Time of Make Believe*, a solo exhibition of ceramic sculpture by Fayetteville AR-based artist Anthony Sonnenberg. Making his Denver debut, Sonnenberg's highly embellished sculptural vessel forms harken back to the height of Rococo sensibilities while embodying timely social and cultural nuance.

Presented in the gallery's Project Room, *In a Time of Make Believe* features porcelain and stoneware sculptures, within whose accumulated layers contain found ceramic tchotchkes. Emblems of the material world, Sonnenberg's aesthetic is one of excess and delight, while alluding to the hidden, obscured, or concealed. Encased in a thick exterior shell of crackled porcelain, Sonnenberg's unique technique recycles and reclaims the potential of decorative objects. By evading the sterility and discipline of "perfection" while embracing the boldly ornamental and even ostentatious, Sonnenberg imbues queerness into the realm of objecthood.

Unapologetically ornate, Sonnenberg's visceral sculptures are a feast for the eyes. At the core of each work is a critical celebration of the role of beauty, particularly as it pertains to gay male culture. Historically focused in the Decorative arts and design realm, in professions including hairdressing, fashion, floral, etc., gay men have contributed to visual culture in modes often perceived as nonthreatening to the overarching patriarchal, heteronormative society that contains them. In forging paths to create community as well as powerfully steering visual trends, the queer imagination has been central. *In a Time of Make Believe* is an ode to the possibility of fantasy, wherein Sonnenberg studies the ways the artificial or imagined can create pathways to new realities. As fragments of the environment form identity, Sonnenberg permanently fuses found bits of cultural ephemera within a lustrous decorative shell.



Anthony Sonnenberg, *Vase with Handles (Backstage after the show)*, 2023, porcelain over stoneware and found ceramic tchotchkes, glaze, 19 x 12 x 12 in. (48.3 x 30.5 x 30.5 cm)

The utility of beauty, while often overlooked, comes to the forefront of *In a Time of Make Believe*. In the skeleton of each sculpture are hidden histories of objects and the stories and meanings those objects inherently contain. Anthony Sonnenberg, a queer man and creator of beauty, through his work creates a critical space for transformation, playfulness, and reinvention—from the inside out.

**About Anthony Sonnenberg**

Born in 1986 in Graham, TX, Anthony Sonnenberg earned a BA with an emphasis in Italian and Art History in 2009 and an MFA in Sculpture from the University of Washington, Seattle in 2012. Anthony Sonnenberg works reside in the permanent collections of the Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, Bentonville, AR and the Archie Bray Permanent Collection, Helena, MT. Recent solo exhibitions include GAVLAK, Los Angeles, CA (2023); Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX (2022); Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, FL (2021); Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, TX (2019); The Fuller Craft Museum, Brockton, MA (2019); Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA (2018); the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, Beaumont, TX (2018); The Lawndale Art Center, Houston, TX (2015); and The Old Jail Art Center, Albany, TX. His work was featured in recent group exhibitions including the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH (2020); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR (2020); the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX (2019); the Institute of Contemporary Art at MeCA, Portland, ME (2017); and the Texas Biennial, Austin, TX (2011).

**About David B. Smith Gallery**

David B. Smith Gallery is committed to presenting intelligent and culturally relevant exhibitions in its Denver location, featuring the region's most important emerging talent alongside internationally recognized artists. Through its curatorial program, participation in art fairs, and extensive media coverage in publications such as *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and *ARTnews*, David B. Smith Gallery has cultivated a strong regional, national and international collector audience. *The New York Times* hailed the gallery as offering "an exciting contrast of cutting edge works." The gallery also maintains an active publishing division, which produces exhibition catalogues and editions. David B. Smith Gallery is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA).