

## Summer of Sanford: Artist Sanford Biggers at Anderson Ranch, Baldwin Gallery, and Boesky West

By: Andrew Travers  
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From "Tricknology," curated by Sanford Biggers, at Boesky West.

*Courtesy photo*

IF YOU GO ...

What: Sanford Biggers exhibition

Where: Baldwin Gallery

When: July 26 through Sept. 2; opening reception Friday, July 26 6-8 p.m.

More info: [baldwingallery.com](http://baldwingallery.com)

What: 'Tricknology,' curated by Sanford Biggers

Where: Boesky West

When: July 26 through Sept. 9, opening reception Friday, July 26, 5-8 p.m.

More info: The show includes works by Allison Janae Hamilton and ektor garcia;

[marianneboeskygallery.com](http://marianneboeskygallery.com)

#### ANDERSON RANCH SUMMER SERIES

July 11, 12:30 p.m.: Paul McCarthy

July 16, 5 p.m.: Extraordinary Leadership Honoree Doug Casebeer in conversation with Brad Miller

July 17, 12:30 p.m.: International Artist Honoree Nick Cave

July 18, 12:30 p.m.: Service to the Arts Honoree Sarah Arison in conversation with Anne Pasternak

July 25, 12:30 p.m.: Taryn Simon in conversation with Kate Fowle

Aug. 1, 12:30 p.m.: Beth Rudin DeWoody in conversation with Maynard Monrow

Aug. 8, 12:30 p.m.: Elliott Hundley

Aug. 15, 12:30 p.m.: Lari Pittman

Summer Series talks are free but registration is required at [andersonranch.com](http://andersonranch.com)

Artist Sanford Biggers embeds his work with allegories, messages and layers of meaning. But the first-glance surface of it all is important, too, he explained in early July at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, where he [opened the annual Summer Series](#) and began a busy summer of work in the Aspen area.

Biggers, in conversation with Ranch curator-in-residence Helen Molesworth, talked through the politics and process of works like "Lotus," intricate lotus flower glass etchings made up of historic diagrams for slave ships, and his "Blossom," a player piano smashed into a tree and playing "Strange Fruit," ominously invoking the history of lynching in the U.S.

"I don't mind if somebody deals with the surface," he said of the works. "I make the surfaces to seduce. That's what I do as a maker. But when you peel back at least one layer, there is another story, and the more layers you pull the more stories there are. Keep that in mind when looking at my work. It's never just straightforward."

Some of his most overt protest art has been his recent series of resculpted wooden African statues. He'd been collecting them for years, not knowing what he'd do with them. When he learned of the murder of Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014, Biggers knew exactly what he had to do with the collection. He began dipping them in wax and riddling them with bullets from various guns to reshape them.

"I woke up to another image of someone being killed by the cops and looking at the footage and I said, 'All right, I know what I'm going to do with these figures now,'" recalled Biggers, who was living in Berlin at the

time. “It was a very violent thing on a creative level, to take these figures and then shoot them. But it was a way to express what was going on.”

This summer, the Baldwin Gallery in Aspen will debut three new Biggers sculptural works made of marble. Biggers said they were inspired by his recent time in Italy, steeping himself in marble Greco-Roman sculptures. It led him to think about how the monochromatic white of the sculptures today weren't their original forms, which included painted. And he thought about the parallel in African sculpture, which today are known for their unadorned dark black and brown wood, but were originally decorated.

“You have whitewashing happening in Europe and blackwashing happening in Africa,” he said. “So our understanding of sculpture is a myth.”

His works, sculpted with the help of digital 3-D imaging, have Greco-Roman-styled bodies with heads based on African masks. He calls them “Chimeras.”

“These are mash-ups derived and designed mostly on computers,” he said, “and when they're made I keep the computer glitches and odd spots in the final pieces as well, to show the authenticity of what we consider to be these great histories and stories, and the malleability of history itself.”

The work will debut in a solo exhibition at the Baldwin on July 26. On the same day, Biggers will open “Tricknology” at Boesky West. He's curated that show, featuring new sculptural pieces by Allison Janae Hamilton and ektor garcia.

“The works that Allison and ektor make are enigmatic, layered and nimble in their respective uses of personal and cultural history as well as materials,” Biggers said in an exhibition announcement. “They both offer visionary insight and tools for us to construct new narratives.”