

STEVE TURNER

PRESS RELEASE



Samantha Rosenwald: *Schadenfreude*
June 20–July 18, 2020

Steve Turner is pleased to present *Schadenfreude*, a solo exhibition featuring recent work by Los Angeles-based Samantha Rosenwald. *Schadenfreude*, a German word that does not neatly translate into English, denotes the complex feeling of pleasure in witnessing another person's misfortune. This cruel form of satisfaction relates to the *Zanni*—a clownish character of 16th century Italian Commedia dell'arte. A *Zanni*, a foolish, ignorant servant, through self-humiliation and idiocy, is always the butt of the joke, both to his onstage superiors and to the audience. The English word “zany” comes from this character.

Peepee, the comically rendered insect that is central to all of the works in the exhibition, embodies the meaning of *schadenfreude* and the spirit of the *Zanni*. The comedy and cuteness of her circumstances please her onlooker while her deeper pain, anxiety, and humiliation lurk just below the surface. In this way, Peepee is herself a *Zanni*—she provides comic relief as a foolish inferior who undergoes humiliation for the sake of the observer's pleasure.

These non-stinging passive bugs, blown up in scale, cartoonized and given human traits, are Rosenwald's self-portraits and serve as allegories of the pressure on women to perform, serve, and entertain. They also relate to the fetishized and idealized female at large, both past and present. The perfect woman is small. She is slight and sweet, cute and passive. The name Peepee originated as a nickname given to Rosenwald by her boyfriend. She describes it as the perfect name for her goofy caterpillar alter-ego, both absurd and embarrassing, yet also cute, especially at first read.

Samantha Rosenwald (b. 1994, Los Angeles) received her BA in Art History from Vassar College (2016) and her MFA in Fine Art from California College of the Arts (2018). Her work has been exhibited at MCLXVII, San Francisco; Eve Leibe Gallery, London and Zevitas Marcus, Los Angeles. This is her first exhibition at Steve Turner.