

PLUM



SAM ANDERSON, WHITNEY CLAFLIN, ANDREA FOURCHY, SADAF H. NAVA, AND VALENTINA VACCARELLA

6 - Text by *Pina Lomb*

In what, in this theatre critic's view, is becoming a growing convergence between the worlds of *theater*, and the special amalgamation of *fashion and art* that has long led the more poignant outputs of New York since sometime in the 90s, I found myself at a venue called, simply *Earth*, at 49 Orchard, last week.

Before a packed room of New Yorkers who quickly exceeded 50 chairs, on a small dais, a set of five women (Sam Anderson, Whitney Clafin, Andrea Fourchy, Sadaf H. Nava, and Valentina Vaccarella) read a one-act play originally written by Conchata Ferrell in 1973, Sam Anderson's mother (who I personally am fond of from *Mr. Deeds*). Sam had discovered the play in the archives of the New York Public Library, not knowing her mother had written it, and decided to revive it.

The play, a sharp and sinewy one-act, offers the raw marrow of the 1970s underground—an era when American theater pulsed with the final vestiges of the avant-garde before finally being swallowed by... commerce, if I may.

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Tanya Leighton

Ferrell, whose roots at Circle Repertory Company tethered her to the likes of Lanford Wilson and Sam Shepard, wrote *The Wolf* with a tight grip. Its language is barbed-wire lyricism, its characters bruised but electric.

Inherently a piece of nostalgia, harkening to a time when theatre and the arts had a more general, and less niche-y, tenacity about it, in Anderson's hands, it became something else: a reflection distorted by time and thrust back into the present, sharpened for a generation equally poised on the edges of its own growing upheaval.

The readers themselves admitted that this was, in fact, a reading—supported by non-professional actors, and that the exercise was made up of a patchwork of individuals known mostly for their work in visual art. But each performer brought their own alchemy. Anderson, whose artistic practice has long explored the interplay of material and ephemerality, should be proud of what she is doing, and at the expense of theatre critics who would lampoon the entrance of art- and fashion- people into theatre, one should be impervious. And I for one am looking forward to precisely more of this interplay.

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Earth, located at 49 Orchard Street in New York City, is a dynamic arts space hosting a variety of cultural events. Interested individuals can stay informed about upcoming events by visiting their official website at earth.net or following their Instagram account [@earth__net](https://www.instagram.com/earth__net).