

SIKKEMA
JENKINS&CO.
ARLENE SHECHET

SLIP

October 10 – November 16, 2013

Opening Reception: Thursday, October 10th 6-8PM

Sikkema Jenkins & Co. is pleased to present *Slip*, an exhibition of new work by Arlene Shechet on view from October 10 to November 16, 2013.

One of the artists at the forefront of the current wave of interest in clay-based sculpture, Arlene Shechet unveils her largest and most ambitious works to date in her inaugural solo presentation at the gallery. Shechet makes tough, muscular and aggressive pieces that nonetheless flaunt their sexuality, challenging notions of gender, form, surface and material. One of the key works on view, *The Possibility of Ghosts*, a ghostly grey sculpture whose surface seems to absorb light, brings together both figurative and architectural associations. Merging the sheer force of Peter Voulkos with the wit of Ken Price, it has the awkward humor and stolid presence of an effigy from another planet. Another central work, *Out and Out*, glazed the color of unfired clay with a texture that could be mistaken for simple flocking, is a double piece--a twosome--infused with a vital combination of incursion, vulnerability, strength and eroticism. Anchored by a tall, plywood pediment topped with an exquisite layer of individually painted and glazed shining emerald and oxide pigmented fire-bricks, the sculpture flirts with monstrosity while tilting toward the droll.

Shechet references not only ceramic history but also the work of artists as diverse as Eli Nadelman, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Jim Nutt, and Umberto Boccioni. While her influences dig deep and are far-flung, and while her pieces can make us gasp or pause, there is something immediately tender and human about them. Embracing the elemental nature and responsiveness of wet clay, Shechet is drawn to the duality of the material: initially soft, wet, and unstable, it becomes a time-based medium as air promotes hardening and firing creates strength. This material invites resistance. Body to body, hollow and breathing, the sculptures have a quality Paul Ryan, in *Sculpture Magazine*, has called "generative friction," a dynamic tension that, while it both attracts and repels, is indispensable to both art and life.

Slip, the exhibition's title, alludes to Shechet's idiosyncratic forms, which seem to slip or morph when viewed from different angles or on different days. Evoking both the feminine slip and the slop of the studio, *Slip* also suggests the 'slipping' or falling of slapstick comedy and the slip of the tongue that lets something reveal its deeper nature. *Slip* also refers to the liquid clay used in casting, a process Shechet explored during her residency at the Meissen Manufacture. The residency provided a platform for experimentation with porcelain, specifically mold-making and casting methods, that leaves its evidence in these latest works.

Parting lines--mimicking those that traditionally appear during industrial production when casting from molds--are incorporated into the sculptures, allowing for drawing both in and upon them. These lines, or seams, contribute to an implicit tension in the work: between the restraint of intellect and the insistency of instinct. Disregarding established firing and glazing techniques in favor of experimentation, Shechet is widely recognized for pushing the boundaries of glaze technology. The works speak to one another while slipping in and out of a known vocabulary.

Shechet has exhibited her work extensively. Most recently, her solo show *That Time* was presented at the Weatherspoon Art Museum, NC, traveling from the VCUarts Anderson Gallery in Richmond, VA, where it debuted in 2012. On view from January 17 through July 16, 2014, the RISD Art Museum will present an exhibition of Shechet's Meissen porcelain sculptures.

Shechet is the recipient of numerous awards including a John S. Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, an Anonymous Was A Woman Artist Award, a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant, and an American Arts and Letters Award for Art. Her work is included in important public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA, and the Walker Art Center. She lives and works in New York City and upstate New York.

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UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

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ART FAIRS:

OCT. 24 – 28 ARTBO
DEC. 5 -8 ART BASEL IN MIAMI