

Studio Visit: Sculptor Arlene Shechet on How to Fight a Creative Block and the Studio Task She Loves Most

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Arlene Shechet in her studio in Woodstock, New York © Arlene Shechet, courtesy Pace Gallery.

The New York-based artist offers us a peek inside her studio as she unveils a series of 12 new sculptures at Pace.

During those long and increasingly blurred-together days at the height of lockdown, sculptor Arlene Shechet was determined to shift her mood. So she got to work in her Woodstock, New York, studio on a new series of sculptures—jewel-toned, human-scale, and decidedly more upbeat than one might expect.

“Instead of making things that reflected how I felt, I decided to make things that reflected what I needed: color therapy,” the artist said in a statement. The resulting 12 works are on view now at Pace’s temporary location in East Hampton.

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We spoke to the artist about her favorite studio chore, her best tip to fight a creative block, and her favorite sources for social-media inspiration.

What are the most indispensable items in your studio and why?

“Mop”-style paintbrushes of every size for painting glaze, plus my front-loading kiln—gotta make the fire happen, [since my work requires] five days of heat and then cooling.

Can you send a picture of your work in progress?



A work in progress by Arlene Shechet. Photo: Arlene Shechet.

What is the studio task on your agenda tomorrow that you are most looking forward to?

Carving.

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What kind of atmosphere do you prefer when you work? Do you listen to music or podcasts, or do you prefer silence?

There's no such thing as silence. I listen to birds and forest sounds. Right now, the tree nuts are beginning to fall and make great punctuating sounds. Sometimes I listen to playlists made for me by my son, composer and musician Will Epstein.

What trait do you most admire in a work of art? What trait do you most despise?

I don't like to be fed a punchline, but I remain open to almost all art, from all times, if it is made with urgency and heart.



Arlene Shechet in her studio in Woodstock, New York. © Arlene Shechet, courtesy of Pace Gallery.

What snack food could your studio not function without?

My home brew of ginger and spearmint tea, hot or cold.

Who are your favorite artists, curators, or other thinkers to follow on social media right now?

This is too hard to narrow down, but a few are @willcrushwater, @sonia_s_e, @sarahcpr, @anhourbeforesleep, @dusttodigital, and @data4blacklives.

When you feel stuck in the studio, what do you do to get un-stuck?

I cover up the piece and work on something else. There's always more than one thing I want to be working on.

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Arlene Shechet, *Together: 3 a.m.* (2020). © Arlene Shechet, Courtesy of Pace Gallery.

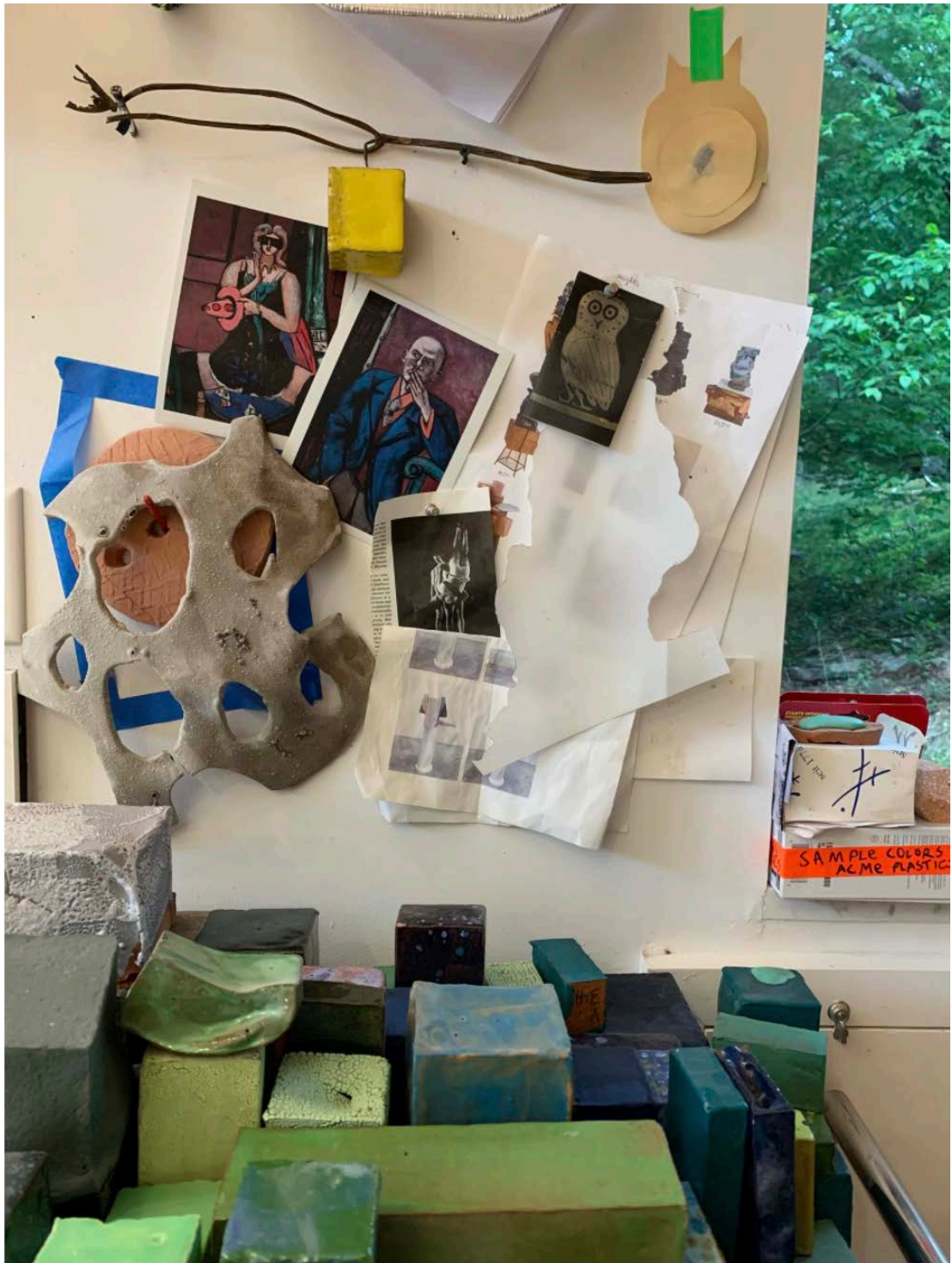
What is the last exhibition you saw (virtual or otherwise) that made an impression on you?

I still like my art in real life. Guo Fengyi's concurrent shows at the Drawing Center and Gladstone Gallery. I also managed to catch [Gerhard] Richter [at the Met Breuer] and [Donald] Judd [at the Museum of Modern Art] before they shut down.

If you had to put together a mood board, what would be on it right now?

I don't know what a mood board is, but here's a snap from my studio wall right now.

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Arlene Shechet's studio wall. Photo: Arlene Shechet.