

Arlene Shechet Sum

May 15 — Sep 2, 2012 | Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, KS

Artists Matthias Merkel Hess, William J. O'Brien, and Arlene Shechet each employ clay as a sculptural medium for their respective works. In addition, site-specific installations are a critical aspect of each artist's practice. For .SUM, Merkel Hess, O'Brien, and Shechet were invited by the Nerman Museum to each create an installation for one of the museum's first floor galleries.

A New York studio-based artist, Arlene Shechet, has been making sculptures for over two decades. And, while Shechet found clay to be her primary medium some six years ago, her most recent works demonstrate a shift toward a new body of dynamic forms that stretch the limits of her material and reveal her ongoing exploration of imperfection and impermanence and function as a vehicle for transformation, vulnerability, and grace. Her works on view precariously defy their own weight, leaning against themselves, opening interiors in spouts and drips, coiling with energetic fecundity in luscious glazes and stoically seated objects that seem to reach in multiple directions at once. As paradoxical forms – simultaneously awkward and self-supporting – they demonstrate a poetic relationship to the nature of human experience in all its imperfections and miraculous possibility.