ALMINE RECH

Arlene Shechet
Some Truths

Apr 21 — May 26, 2018 | Paris

Almine Rech Gallery Paris is pleased to present 'Some Truths', the first solo exhibition in Paris by the American artist Arlene Shechet.

Arlene Shechet's sculptures capture an uncanny combination of the raw and the refined. By inhabiting the intermediate area between subject and object, figuration and abstraction, color and form, and humor and pathos, she seeks to address both the power and vulnerability of what it is like to be embodied and alive. Extremes of balance and precariousness exist within a single work, in which disparate materials are stacked, inlayed, woven or folded together. Employing a rich constellation of materials, her palpable objects include wild juxtapositions of materials and sensibilities. Shechet is well known as a brilliant ceramicist but in these latest works she uses her ceramic vocabulary to generate forms in companion materials as well. In this, her first solo exhibition in Paris, Shechet feels the weight of history.

On view in the main gallery are sculptures executed between 2015 and 2018 that show off Shechet's idiosyncratic visual language. Pairings and couplings abound. Continuing to mine the psychology of transitional space, the sculptures, each in their own unique posture, provoke an immediate empathic response in the viewer. This is evident in the large sculpture entitled *The Body is an Ear* (2016) with its implied movement and humorous swish of a wooden skirt. Pierced asymmetrically by a linear void—the ear, the sex, the window, the absent plane, the space of imagination—*The Body is an Ear* refers in equal parts to architecture, figure, costume, and 18th century furniture. Visually held together by ephemeral gold leaf, this impressive construction is balanced on a carved hoof and a glazed ceramic block. *Equal Time* (2017)—a related work done exclusively in black, white, and grey—nods at Constructivism with its aggregation of elemental shapes miraculously heaped together. Shechet brings a refined and intensely manipulated aesthetic vocabulary into these rough-hewn and rugged compositions.

Debuting in the front room, *Paw* (2018), a large sand-cast aluminum sculpture, relates to Shechet's upcoming far-reaching outdoor project at New York City's Madison Square Park. Opening in September of 2018 and running through April of 2019, this public exhibition will reference both a classical sculpture court and a sunken living room while seeking to provide a new language for public gathering. This project's imagery originated with work done during Shechet's time at the historical Meissen porcelain factory near Dresden, Germany which then extended into a groundbreaking intervention at The Frick Collection in New York City (May 2016–April 2017).

The smallest of three rooms in the gallery pays direct homage to an original installation (from 1900) she has long admired at the Rodin Museum where a grouping of idiosyncratic columnar plinths are gathered together on a large low oval. Rodin's *Madame Fenaille, buste drapé, la tête relevée, sur gaine à rinceaux* (1898-1900) boldly extends over the edge of one of these classical columns. Bowing to Rodin's Madame, Shechet's new bronze cast of evocative paper constructions, *Prophet: Madame F* (2018), flow over her plinth just as Rodin's creation spilled from his. The title of the exhibition, 'Some Truths', speaks to Shechet's active investigations in the studio resulting in works that are each singular and hard won. Through unrehearsed steps, but with an eye on history, a surprising and coherent body of work comes to life.

Arlene Shechet's recent solo exhibitions include 'From Here On Now', Phillips Collection (2016); 'Porcelain, No Simple Matter: Arlene Shechet and the Arnhold Collection', The Frick Collection, New York (2016); and 'All at Once', a major, critically acclaimed 20-year survey of Shechet's work, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2015, with accompanying monograph). Recent group exhibitions include The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (2017); The Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, US (2017); and The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, US (2017). Her work can be found in many distinguished public and private collections, including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The National Gallery, Washington, DC; The Jewish Museum, New York; The Brooklyn Museum, and the CCS Bard Hessel Museum in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

In 2018, her work will be exhibited at Madison Square Park, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, US and The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, US.

Arlene Shechet lives and works in New York and the Hudson Valley.

Special thanks to Olivier Renaud-Clément who introduced us to Arlene Shechet.