

rachel uffner

For Immediate Release:



Hilary Harnischfeger

May 6 - June 19, 2011

Opening Reception: Sunday, May 8, 6-8 pm

Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present a show of new works by Hilary Harnischfeger. For her second solo show in the gallery, Harnischfeger will exhibit wall-mounted compositions as well as sculptures. In her wall-based abstractions, the artist employs varied materials such as paper, plaster, clay, ink and chunks of rock and quartz to create tactilely seductive pieces that straddle the line between two- and three-dimensionality. In her freestanding sculptures, also on show, the artist continues to mine the meeting point between abstraction and materiality, chiefly using clay to lend her objects a fleshy, corporeal quality.

Ohio, where Harnischfeger has been living and working over the past year, was a vital early 20th century hub for the American ceramics industry, thanks to the area's natural clay reserves. Influenced by this landscape and the manufacturing it gave rise to, Harnischfeger recently began working with clay, combining it with plaster, paper and minerals to create freestanding sculptures that hover on the cusp of serviceable everyday objects (vases, ashtrays, pots) and odd, monstrous creatures. Their lumpy shapes, ugly/beautiful sensibility and focus on the grafting of bodies and things draw on varied influences, such as ritualistic *Haniwa* terracotta figures, Eva Hesse's eccentric abstractions and Rosemarie Trockel's defamiliarized ceramics. The artist's mixing of dyed clay, based on the Japanese method of *Neriage*, ensures that unlike traditional ceramics that are tinted and glazed only on their surface, these pieces are instead wholly infused with vibrant color.

Harnischfeger's wall-mounted works, in which she paints, builds up and carves out layers of paper and plaster to a deliberate but rough-hewn effect, or shapes hunks of clay and plaster into freeform objects, resemble fantastical topographical maps, odd geological formations, or fragmented, expressive portraits. In their physical resistance to a standard rectangular 2D framework – a refusal reminiscent of the work of artists ranging from Bontecou to Stella – these compositions almost seem poised to jump off the wall, ready to assert their solid autonomy.

Hilary Harnischfeger has participated in numerous exhibitions, among them shows at Foxy Production, New York, Eleven Rivington, New York, Dallas Contemporary, Dallas, Ballroom Marfa, Texas, Artists Space, New York, Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York and Grimm Fine Art, Amsterdam. She received her MFA from Columbia University. She lives and works in Granville, OH and Brooklyn, NY.

* Artist talk with Suzanne Hudson in conjunction with New York Gallery Week: Saturday, May 7, 1:00 pm

Image: Hilary Harnischfeger, "Hocking Hill," 2011, paper, plaster, clay, tourmaline, 27 x 23 x 5 inches, 68.6 x 58.4 x 12.7 cm

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