

Arlene Shechet

Dieu Donné

"Parallel Play," Arlene Shechet's luminous exhibition, featured what are best described as hybrids of paper-making and ceramics. Molds cast from the rectangular firebricks used to repair kilns were loaded with dyed wet-paper pulp in richly saturated hues. The pulp was then spread about with a loose abandon, so that it mimics the glazes on Shechet's wildly imaginative ceramic sculptures.

A small central dribble of bright, cold green sings against a yellow-orange field in *Parallel Play: Film* (2012), for example, along with a flesh-colored blotch. The same green is splashed across the ivory surface of *Parallel Play: Fall* (2012), accompanied by subtle bits of yellow and a dark greenish brown expanding like mold, as if the paper had undergone a process not unlike what occurs in a kiln as the chemicals used in glazes react against one another. Another group of works seemed to be engaged in a similar conversation, as pale and midnight blues shone out against coral and black.

An actual firebrick also appeared as a small wall sculpture titled *More than itself* (*Fudge*), 2012. Its thinly glazed shiny

brown coating is adorned with seemingly haphazard areas of thicker ivory and turquoise, giving viewers the opportunity to compare this tactile material with the paper's lusterless surface. Two freestanding sculptures were also on view, made of unglazed terra-cotta covered with a dry skin of pigmented cotton that miraculously equals the sensuality of glaze. As the viewer's eye moved among the brick and paper and clay, it was possible to imagine the free-flowing dialogues occurring between works as they evolved. Shechet's fluid liberty with her materials turns accident into inspiration.

—Elisabeth Kley



Arlene Shechet, *Parallel Play: Film*, 2012,
stenciled-and-painted linen pulp on cast cotton base sheets,
40" x 30", Dieu Donné.