

**BLAKE  
GOPNIK**  
on art



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**DAILY PIC:** The sculptor Arlene Shechet, who was showing this piece of hers at the Sikkema Jenkins booth at Art Basel, once told me that she started working in ceramics almost by accident. It seems she was never a classic art-school mud bunny, obsessed with clay and the potter's wheel. With her latest project, however, executed during a residency at the great Meissen clayworks in Germany, Shechet may have to buy herself some mud-bunny ears, after all. This fascinating porcelain piece, titled "Mold of the Mold #29694 Pushed", was cast from the exterior of one of the ancient molds that Meissen still uses to make precious *objets*, and then was painted by a master in the mode of such treasures. Riffing on the venerable blue-and-white tradition has become something of a trend on clay's cutting edge (see my posting on Robert Dawson). Shechet adds to it smartly. To go a bit Greenbergian here, I think clay's at its best when it talks about clay – or at least when it knows its history.