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Arlene Shechet: Ceramic Meets Paper

A step by step guide to highlights across fashion, art and culture
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Paper collides with ceramics in a beautiful new series of works by American sculptor Arlene Shechet

Who? Best known for her sculptures in ceramic and paper, American artist Arlene Shechet has garnered a great deal of attention with her latest series of work: stunningly coloured, beautifully cast pieces that are a sort of amalgam of her two preferred mediums.

What? Shechet conceived and produced the series in her New York ceramics studio resulting in what she describes as "a reciprocal relationship" with her ceramic practice. To start, Shechet made molds from rectangular firebricks (used in the repairing of kilns) and then loaded them with dyed wet paper in richly saturated colours. She then "spread the pulp out in loose abandon" to create the same effect as the glazes used on her recent, highly idiosyncratic ceramic sculptures, the result being a truly unusual and mesmerising set of abstract colour studies.

"I wanted them to exude a raw and uncontrollable energy that relates to the process of working in the papermill with liquid pulp" — Arlene Shechet

Why? This compounded approach is key to Shechet's artistic vision - "I try to make things that are hybrids," she once explained - and it is the fact that these paper works have been manipulated by a sculptor's hand, and treated in a similar manner to clay, that makes them so unique. That said, Shechet remained conscious of her medium: "I wanted them to exude a raw and uncontrollable energy that relates to the process of working in the papermill with liquid pulp," she says. "I have investigated materials and meaning for a long time, and that, along with my deep commitment to the exploration of paper, has culminated in these works."