On View

Lynda Benglis at Cheim and Read

By Will Heinrich | 1/22 8:10AM

Lynda Benglis has bent, cut, unfolded, smooshed, stacked, tied, scalloped and crumpled square lengths of ceramic pipe to make the 23 new pieces at Cheim and Read. (There’s also one cutlier shaped like a globe.) They’re glazed in traffic yellow, crayon red, rose, muddy gray, blue, green and tarnished silver, as well as left bare in generous raw patches of beige. One standing pipe is ripped open to reveal a foamy, pumice-like layer on the inside skin, one unfolded into a long, fishtail stripe, one squeezed into a conch.

From certain angles, you may spot boots, tripods, coffee cups and flowers, but what’s interesting about the square tube motif is that it’s so defiantly without figurative allusion. One pale purple piece, upright, rolling at the foot, with streaks of yellow and a muddy, silvery gray, is slashed deeply on one side and then folded over into three crinkly protrusions. From the front, it moves like a wave and from the back like a brushstroke. It’s at once completely carnal and totally unspecific.

(Through Feb. 15, 2014)