

Adam Pendleton

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Arlene Shechet

March 5 – April 13, 2024

Madrid

Pedro Cera is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Adam Pendleton and Arlene Shechet. This show is the third to take place at the gallery's new Madrid location, and marks the first collaboration between the two artists. Pendleton will be presenting five new paintings with half a dozen intimately sized drawings, alongside seven large, free-standing sculptures executed by Shechet.

Abstraction has always been a primary concern in Adam Pendleton's work. Rather than avoiding representation, Pendleton's recent work seeks to define a form of abstraction for the 21st century—one that encourages an experience of the world on a sensorial level. The paintings and works on paper included in the show can be thought of as both visual compositions and diaristic records of the artist's daily studio practice. His vocabulary of simple shapes, expressive brush strokes, and marks creates layered pictorial fields. Despite their apparent abstraction, the paintings are evocative of the visual logic of written language pursued to its logical limits. A sense of legibility is frustrated as any straightforward attempt to "read" Pendleton's gestures is disrupted by the urgent movement of each composition. These dynamics mark Pendleton's ongoing exploration of the boundaries between legibility and illegibility, between the familiar and strange.

The speculative nature of these works and the sense of disjunction generated by the antagonism of known forms unite the practices of Adam Pendleton and Arlene Shechet in many ways. The forceful dynamic between the two artists results from a shared friendship and mutual exploration of a new language where existing modes of communication have proven insufficient.

Highly technical and yet entirely intuitive, Arlene Shechet's sculptures combine disparate elements into seemingly provisional arrangements, showcasing organic and architectural elements. Shechet's sculptures, like Pendleton's paintings and drawings, highlight the entanglements between space, time, material, and form. Shechet has changed the landscape of ceramics since she began working with clay in 2007, and this exhibition showcases her mastery of the material. Her hybrid works are boundary collapsing and embody the tensions between stillness and movement. Referencing bodies, the forms fold and bend, breath and posture, inviting close examination as one encircles the sculptures, revealing new insights with every angle. Utilizing the malleability and strength of her materials to show the inherent stability and instability of life, Shechet's work embraces improvisation and seeks to examine the humor and pathos of being alive and in a body.

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Pendleton (b. 1984 in Richmond, VA) is based in Brooklyn, New York. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at notable museums including the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum in St. Louis (2023-24), mumok - Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (2023-24), the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (2022), the Museum of Modern Art in New York (2021-22), Le Consortium in Dijon (2020), and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin (2017). His work has also been featured in the Whitney Biennial (2022), the Venice Biennale (2015), and other prominent group exhibitions, including *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America* at the New Museum (2021). Pendleton's work is held in numerous public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Studio

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Museum in Harlem, New York; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; and Tate Modern, London.

Writing and publishing are central to Pendleton's practice. His many books include *Pasts, Futures, and Aftermaths: Revisiting the Black Dada Reader* (2021), *Who Is Queen? A Reader* (2021), *As Heavy as Sculpture* (2021) and *Black Dada Reader* (2017), which The New York Times named one of the best art books of 2017.

Shechet (b. 1951 in New York, NY) has been the subject of many solo exhibitions, including *All at Once* (2015), a major, critically acclaimed survey of her work at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston that the New York Times called, "some of the most imaginative American sculpture of the past 20 years, and some of the most radically personal," and *Full Steam Ahead* (2018), an ambitious, large-scale public project installed in Madison Square Park in New York. Her curatorial vision has been shown in the exhibitions *Porcelain, No Simple Matter* at The Frick Collection (2016-2017), *From Here On Now* at The Phillips Collection (2016), *Making Knowing* at The Drawing Center (2021), *STUFF* at Pace Gallery, NY (2022), and *Disrupt the View* at the Harvard Art Museums (2022-25), currently on view. Shechet's approach to installation and curation is intuitive and playful, responding to the architecture of space and creating a dialogue between works, sites, and spectators, inviting them into space and ushering them through its choreography.

In 2023, Shechet was elected as a lifetime member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. This follows many other awards and honors including the CAA Artist Award for a Distinguished Body of Work, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. Shechet's work is in over fifty public collections worldwide, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Centre Pompidou, the National Gallery of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Hirshhorn Museum, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Walker Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. She currently lives and works in New York City and the Hudson Valley.

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