

Anton Kern Gallery

Liz Larner

Maybe not

September 3 - October 22, 2025

Anton Kern Gallery is pleased to present *Maybe not*, an exhibition of wall mounted and floor based sculptures by Liz Larner on view across the first and second floors of the gallery. This marks Larner's first exhibition with the gallery and her first major presentation in New York since her 2022 survey at SculptureCenter.

Since the late 1990s, Larner has used clay not as homage, but as provocation. The word ceramics derives from the Greek *keramos* (κέραμο) - "potter's clay," or more literally, "burnt earth." It is a name, not just for a material, but for a process: the irreversible moment when malleable clay becomes fixed through fire. It implies an ending; a shift from process to completion, yet in Larner's work, that logic is quietly undone.



dark fuse, 2024, Ceramic, glaze, brass, 36 x 25 1/2 x 9 inches, (91.4 x 64.8 x 22.9 cm)

Larner's wall-mounted works appear to float in place, suspended with a weightlessness that seems at odds with their ceramic makeup. Their geologic forms range from singular slabs to layered groupings of smaller, rounded, plantlike forms, arranged in deliberate, sometimes dispersed compositions that have coalesced at eye level. From the front, they seem to hover rather than hang; viewed from an angle, however, their mounting hardware comes into view and asserts itself as sculptural in its own right. Milled from aluminum, copper, and brass and polished to a reflective sheen, these visible fasteners serve as both structural supports and material counterpoints, revealing the works' undersides and physical construction. In contrast, the surfaces they support feel organic: smooth and rippled, cracked and porous, like a hybrid of eroded rock and weathered hide.

These varied surface qualities derive from Larner's experimental use of glaze, applied in successive layers and transformed under high heat into deep, crystalline surfaces. Depending on the viewer's proximity and the light, these surfaces shift from matte monochrome to iridescent shimmer. For Larner, color is not an afterthought but sculptural: it refracts, distorts, and remakes the form beneath it, refusing to reinforce shape and instead bringing forms into a new state.

Alongside her wall-mounted works, Larner presents three bulbous ceramic sculptures titled after known asteroids—*Psyche*, *Eros*, and *12001F032*. Based on imagery from NASA's photographic archive, each piece reimagines its celestial namesake, translating a two-dimensional image into sculptural form. Yet their resemblance to the original bodies is complicated by process: they are hand-formed, fired, and glazed. Here, Larner's cosmic subject matter stands in direct contrast to their making, which is earthbound, tactile, and shaped by human hands. This friction between subject and material produces an illusionary space—one in which perception hovers between representation and material fact.

The works in *Maybe not* exist in a state of perpetual unfolding—an expression of what John Keats called “negative capability,” the capacity to dwell in uncertainty and resist the pressure to resolve. Larner’s works don’t illustrate that idea; they inhabit it, and give it form. Material instability becomes a mode of thinking, recalling her early experiments with bacterial cultures, where control gave way to observation. As in those works, the artist’s role is to set conditions so that material can behave on its own terms. While Larner’s sculptures are undeniably ceramic—formed from clay and fired—they resist the familiar signifiers of ceramics: vessels, craft, function, and containment. They do not represent anything beyond themselves—not figures, not metaphors—but remain suspended in material presence. This spatial ambiguity frees Larner’s work into the realm of sculpture and from the burden of recognition or utility, allowing it to become something else entirely.

If *keramos* marks the moment clay becomes ceramic, Larner’s sculptures stretch that moment into a kind of suspension—where fixed perception gives way to ambiguity, and a more open, less nameable way of seeing begins.

Liz Larner (B. 1960, Sacramento, CA) attended California Institute of Arts (BFA, 1985). Her work has been the focus of major exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zürich (2022); SculptureCenter (2022); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2022); Aspen Museum of Art (2016); Art Institute of Chicago (2015); MoCA, Los Angeles (2015, 2013, 2012, 2001); Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami (2014); Kunsthaus Graz (2014); Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2014); Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (2013-14); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (2013); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo (2013); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2012); and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2012), among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of institutions such as: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Art Institute of Chicago; The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Jumex, Mexico City; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington; The Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; among many others. Larner lives and works in Bellingham, WA.