

# rachel uffner

## Los Angeles Times

### Review In 'Hard and Soft,' four sculptors explore contradictions in clay



"Soft Catch" by Rebecca Manson at Acme gallery in Los Angeles. (Robert Wedemeyer / Acme Los Angeles)

By **LEAH OLLMAN**

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"Hard and Soft," a compelling show at Acme gallery in Los Angeles, substantiates a single general point about clay's contradictory attributes.

The four featured artists span three generations (the oldest born in 1941, the youngest in 1989), and are all women. In a show about materiality, perhaps that matters too.

Fluidity and fixity serve as the primary poles between which all of these works dance and tease and strike their own marvelously precarious balances.

Lynda Benglis' radiant, wall-mounted, gold-glazed, pleated fan form evokes the pliability of heavy fabric.

In a sly, spirited work by Arlene Shechet, little rectangular boxes barnacle onto the lumpen sides of what looks like a cement-gray termite mound: hard latches onto soft, the geometric colonizes the organic.

Plaster, glass, porcelain, paper, mica and more collide in the fragmentary geological events of Hilary Harnischfeger. Each is an amalgamated wonderland of texture and density, catalyzed by heat and the hand.

Rebecca Manson's captivating, modestly scaled wall pieces in white porcelain tinged blue or brown in the shadows conjure accretions of nails and bones, the spindly lengths forming armatures, cages and webbings.

In these crude, fine, visceral surprises, line doubles as surface, delicacy allies with durability, and hard, of course, is also soft.

Acme, 6150 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, (323) 857-5942, through March 14. [www.acmelosangeles.com](http://www.acmelosangeles.com)

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