

Break the mold: Adam Silverman debuts new ceramic works at Friedman Benda

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The LA-based ceramic artist Adam Silverman marks his debut solo exhibition with *Ground Control*, now on view at New York's Friedman Benda

‘There's a lot of overlap,’ explains LA ceramic artist Adam Silverman when discussing *Ground Control*, his debut solo exhibition at New York's Friedman Benda and its relation to *Body Language*, his recent two-gallery solo exhibition at Culver City's Cherry and Martin.

The big differences: new non-functional pots (there were no vessels in the previous show) that are mostly installed directly on the floor (with a few pieces atop burnt Japanese *shou-*

sugi-ban pedestals and shelves). The clay-festooned, tie-dyed denim wall installation he debuted in LA has also grown by a panel (with glossy purple hunks of clay, which blend into the fabric more, replacing the matte Yves Klein Blue hunks he used last time).

‘Part of the title is that it is on the ground and it does control how you move around the space,’ says Silverman, who painted the floor a dark chocolate brown. ‘But it doesn’t dictate in the sense that it has arrows like an Ikea store telling you which way to move.’

That movement, defined in his previous outing, was inspired by the conceptual choreography of Merce Cunningham. Instead of highlighting the frozen moments in dance as he did in LA, Silverman arranged a ‘choreographic map’ that explores motion, defining the space around his clay creations, while still allowing for improvisation.

‘It’s telling you to move somewhere in this space and start and stop where you want, but don’t occupy this space, move around it,’ he says, noting the best way to experience the installation may be after the opening when you can move through it alone or with one other person. ‘It’s also subterranean with a window onto the street, so there’s another way to experience it from above, almost as if they were looking down on a stage. The light comes down the wall and we changed all the lightbulbs, so it’s a warm yellow bath of light. It’s a very New York experience.’

Highlights include a matte glazed yellow pot – the first time he’s shown this glaze – some figurative vessels (with a mouth-like opening) and an extruded worm-like creation. This time around his assemblages explore verticality (against planar crags functioning as plinths) rather than horizontality (with them as backdrops). Again, playing to his surroundings. One standout piece is a black assemblage that was ‘violently assaulted’, says Silverman. ‘There are pieces getting stuck through the surface, piercing the surface, then it’s rammed onto this base. There’s a lot of physical alteration going on in a not so subtle way.’