

## GALLERY REVIEWS

# Politics and art? Of course, she says

At Mary Goldman Gallery Andrea Bowers' work examines the connection between aesthetics and civil disobedience. Plus, Richard Deacon at L.A. Louver and more.

### Elegance of refusal

(Courtesy of Mary Goldman Gallery)

### In tension

(Courtesy of L.A. Louver Gallery)

### 'Handle with Care'

(Gary Friedman / LAT)

By Christopher Knight, Times Staff Writer

## Crafting mass against volume

Celebrated British sculptor **Richard Deacon** returns to L.A. Louver Gallery for his third solo show with four eccentric new works and one from 2000 that gives the exhibition its title — "Beyond the Clouds." Each is a marvel of sculptural smarts.

The title piece is a giant glazed ceramic vessel, which sets mass against volume in a manner that speaks directly to your body. (The lumpy block is just shorter than a standing adult.) Ten conjoined, concave surfaces are glazed in a color that looks like liquid patina, melding runny bronze and coppery green. Your mind works overtime to "inflate" this visually collapsing form, imbuing the dense sculptural mass with air.

Two puzzling wooden sculptures — "Jacob" and "Splint" — fuse organic and man-made shapes in ways that at first appear impossible. But Deacon hides nothing. Exposing the fabrication in his work, he entices your brain to work backward: You mentally take apart the sculpture, then put it back together. Liveliness gets injected into an inanimate object.

Two dimpled, stainless steel wall reliefs, one indoors and one on an adjacent patio, are each composed from biomorphic panels welded together at the edges. The curvy shapes, surface undulations and wavy light reflections create subtle cognitive dissonance. It takes an inordinate amount of time before you realize that the seven circular holes cut into these amoebic blobs actually line up in the simple pattern of a rectilinear grid.

Once that gets noticed, these glamorous wall reliefs are suddenly held in visual suspension — poised between pulling apart and locking together, meandering idly and lining up in strict order. Who knew a visual contest between ductile and tensile strength could be so cheerfully hypnotic?

*L.A. Louver Gallery, 45 N. Venice Blvd., Venice, (310) 822-4955, through July 3. Closed Sundays and Mondays.*