

Elsa Sahal

CLAUDINE PAPILLON GALERIE

Over the past decade, French ceramicist Elsa Sahal has conceived a universe where ostensible contradictions—abstraction versus figuration, male versus female, adorable versus abject—are reconciled into a variety of unsettling biomorphic forms. In her most recent exhibition, Sahal expanded her repertoire of tubular phalluses and thick-lipped orifices dribbled with syrupy glazes, creating two new breeds of large-scale androgynous figures. Explicitly corporeal, if not always blatantly figural, the sculptures are perhaps best described as bodies of clay—insistently of and about their own materiality. Harnessing the innate physical properties of her medium, Sahal convincingly suggests varied skin textures, facial expressions, general fleshiness, and assorted bodily secretions. In her deft hands, clay (soft and pliant) and glaze (runny and warm) become biological.