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Critic's Choice

Female sculptors, full of humor and verve, prove to be way more than 'All Right'



Take the bravado of sculptors Peter Voukos and John Mason, fast-forward two generations, cross the gender line and what do you get? "All Right," a hugely satisfying assembly of 16 female artists working in clay.

The show at Redling Fine Art in Los Angeles abounds in formal ingenuity and boundary-bending play. Intimacy and humble informality prevail, but there's also a dose or two of good-humored brashness.

At the bawdy end of the spectrum are two large pieces by Ruby Neri that beg to be called sexpots. One of them riffs wittily on the associations between woman and vessel, vessel and body. The figure of a caricaturish blond pinup doubles as the form of the pot, one of its handles being her arm bent behind her head and the other a loop of her sallow tresses.

On a more modest but just as vibrant note are three small, crude cups by Magdalena Suarez Frimkess. On one of them, six figures ride a single bicycle that encircles the cup -- an endearing ode to roundness, continuity and the motion of every kind of wheel, potters' included.

More spirited negotiations between human figure and sculptural form occur on the surfaces of Jennifer Rochlin's multi-panel, wall-mounted stoneware works. The leg of a seated nude in one wonderfully sly piece bends in a physically impossible but graphically useful way to serve dual duty as ornamental border.

Most of the works in "All Right" are recent, except for two little tabletop pieces from the '70s by the late Hannah Wilke and a 1981 pleated wallwork by Lynda Benglis. What unites everything in this refreshing show is unabashed verve.