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# Critic's Choice The sculptures of Cammie Staros contain beautiful wit

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**W**it cannot always be found in beauty, but beauty seems intrinsic to wit -- the beauty of acute intelligence, if not handsome form. Such comes to mind among Cammie Staros' thoroughly absorbing sculptures at François Ghebaly.

Staros draws upon two basic vocabularies -- architecture and ancient pottery -- which she combines using the grammar of the body.

In the most obvious, but still amusing example, "Reclining Nude," she sets a large black amphora on its side atop a pedestal in the shape of a squat, white, fluted column. The vase's arms read as if hands behind the head of a languorous Venus, and its coded, painted markings suggest the features of a deconstructed face, or perhaps the curve of a breast.

In "A Dark Art," a piece more characteristically nuanced, Staros sets an upside-down black vase between two elegantly carved walnut arms mounted on contiguous walls -- the deft conjuring of an act of conjuring. "Ess" tickles as a visual-verbal pun: the letter, on its side, in wood, forms a human-scaled doorway both upright and inverted, as well as a snake, issuer of that titular hiss.

Staros, based in L.A., earned her MFA from California Institute of the Arts in 2011. Crackling fresh, her work is yet deeply rooted in art history and material culture. Her 10-foot stack of faux-ancient pots riffs spunkily on Brancusi's "Endless Column," much as her herringbone-patterned, graphite-painted ceramic tile runner ("Sleep Walker") inevitably echoes Carl Andre's floor pieces, albeit dosed with that beautiful wit.

François Ghebaly Gallery, 2245 E. Washington Blvd., (323) 282-5187, through June 6. Closed Sundays and Mondays. [www.ghebaly.com](http://www.ghebaly.com)

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