

Hany Armanious

Year of the Pig Sty

Foxy Production

617 West 27th Street, Chelsea

Through Dec. 5

The inaugural New York exhibition of Hany Armanious, an Egyptian-born artist who lives in Sydney, Australia, is a kind of riot of fabrication, conflict and mindless consumption involving quantities of mud that cover the floor, are splattered on the walls and are central to the art.

In the center of the gallery little cylinders of mud are being cast, dried beneath a light and then assembled into long staffs that might be pool cues. In the far corner polystyrene barriers form a large pen, strewn with mud and shreds of plastic fabric, where two strange, shell-like forms of cast mud face off. The pig theme may explain why they suggest enormous truffles or other fungal forms about to battle to the death.

In the near corner a pile of clogs, mostly cast in pink silicone and mixed with socks, casts of human feet and white net billiards pockets, spill from bags and boxes.

Themes of industry, creativity, elemental nature and consumption are touched on here, evoking a narrative whose combination of obscurity and elaborateness could be a necessity or simply a received idea. From an American viewpoint, Mr. Armanious's precedents include Joseph Beuys, Matthew Barney and Jason Rhoades, which is neither here nor there, but his debut conveys an impressive sculptural ease and an appealing, provocative bit of let-it-rip madness. Anything, or nothing, could happen.

ROBERTA SMITH