

SAMUEL FREEMAN

Los Angeles, California

MINEO MIZUNO AT SAMUEL FREEMAN
by Hunter Drohojowska-Philip for ArtNews
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By his own account, ceramist Mineo Mizuno spent the first part of his career in Los Angeles trying to deny his Japanese heritage and the next part trying to reclaim it. In the works in this show, "Coexistence," he reconciled both views in a sophisticated technique that blends practices from East and West.

Mizuno fires domes of light-colored clay, drills small holes into them, and plants them with the tiny mosses he collects on walks in the Hollywood Hills. As the mosses grow they cover the domes in blankets of emerald, chocolate, and gold. Other

life forms contribute as well. On one dome here, a spider wove a little web amid the mosses. On another, leaves and stems of various flora make a tentative appearance. A couple of pieces have shiny black glazes. Most are the color of sand.

Reminiscent of tortoiseshells in shape and two to five feet in length, the domes were arranged in the gallery with the precision of a Zen garden. The mossiest dome was positioned in an alcove like a Buddha in a temple. Devices in Mizuno's design occasionally let loose veils of soft mist that



added atmosphere. Standing like a waterfall at the gallery's entrance was a six-foot-tall ceramic column, its surface dripping with vertical streams of matte blues and greens. These are the glazes for which Mizuno first gained renown, and the new piece integrates his past and present work.



As the moss grows, the domes will continue to change. The entire exhibition stood as a moving statement about the enduring power of the Japanese aesthetic in contemporary art.