

ARTFORUM

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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

FALL PREVIEW

HIGH RISK: ART, ENVIRONMENT, CRISIS

VENICE BIENNALE: EIGHT VIEWS



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of photomontage, the *Wirtschaftswunder*, and US hippie counterculture. After all, one must consider that Roehr's work is made up of the fabric of daily life, situating him as a proto-Pictures artist in the vein of Jack Goldstein. His mass-produced ciphers, whether blond bathers, careening sedans, or red price stickers, amount to a visual assault that, with humble means, muses on systemization, pointlessness, and a societal embarrassment of riches. Offering as much insight as needed, this concise exhibition served as a fitting tribute to Roehr's simultaneously ascetic and abundant vision.

—Beau Rutland

LINCOLN, MA

Tony Feher

DECORDOVA SCULPTURE PARK AND MUSEUM

In the early 1990s, Tony Feher became known, along with contemporaries such as Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Gabriel Orozco, for rearranging common materials into poetic configurations. Extending the tradition of the readymade into a sculptural sensibility privileging tactile and temporal engagements with ordinary things, Feher struck a balance between allowing his found elements to retain their objecthood, and transforming their individual qualities. Presenting more than twenty-five years of work, this survey establishes Feher as an important figure in the transition between Minimalist industrial austerity and the return to handmade and assembled sculpture in the early 2000s by artists such as Tara Donovan and Sarah Sze. (Organized by Claudia Schmuckli at the University of Houston's Blaffer Art Museum, where it was recently on view, this exhibition also appeared at the Des Moines Art Center and will travel to the Bronx Museum of the Arts this fall.)

Feher's works often fluctuate between maintaining authorial privacy and revealing traces of subjectivity. He generally downplays his presence in the finished sculptures, allowing the marbles, plastic lids, glass jars, and pennies to assert their own qualities of color, texture, and relative transparency—features that are accentuated, in Feher's installations, by proximity to other things. Indications of his labor are consigned to quiet details and careful placement of his ubiquitous components, which rest on the floor, hang from the ceiling, or stretch across the wall. Yet, despite the emphasis on material presence in his exhibitions, Feher is known to be vocal in interviews about both his working methods and his biography. The show's catalogue is, accordingly, full of quotations explaining his personal influences, including his involvement with ACT UP and his own struggle with HIV/AIDS.

Feher developed his strategy of letting things speak for themselves in reaction to the culture wars, when many artists of his generation prioritized speech over objects. Now that his work is being historicized

in a museum setting, however, the immediate sense of reticence in Feher's sculptures is being modified; several pieces in the show are accompanied by audio recordings (accessed by dialing a listed number) of the artist himself recounting his works' origins. For instance, when encountering *Enjoy*, 2001, a large block of 350 red plastic Coca-Cola cases with the company's logo scratched out, one first notices the formal qualities of the crates themselves and the record of Feher's having roughly erased something on their surfaces. But the deCordova's supplementary recording both explains the crates' corporate source and offers viewers access to the artist's personal experience as an integral, if otherwise undetectable, aspect of the piece. In this case, we learn that he did not steal the crates from a beverage distributor but scavenged them from the streets of New York. Only a few sculptures—such as *My Liver*, 2007, a plastic bag filled with shredded paper resting in a molded foam packing crate, and *Take It Up with Tut*, 2008, a tabletop display of heterogeneous elements that includes a bucket of Marlboro packs—visibly hint at certain aspects of their maker's private life. Still, we cannot be certain whether Feher's own body bore the brunt of the implied hard living. The remainder of the work on view, if observed without the aid of the voice recordings, firmly upholds the artist's customary cool distance.

Feher's direct response to the deCordova takes the form of two new installations adapted to the building's structure: He has blocked visual access to the lush sculpture garden by covering a window with strips of blue painter's tape arranged in a dynamic pattern (*Come Out and Play Stephen Jay*, 2013) and, on a larger scale, has placed dozens of two-liter bottles containing water colored with dye to filter the sunlight as it enters the windows along the museum's steep staircase (*Wishing Well Wishes Well*, 2013). In these new projects, as with many of his material investigations over the years, Feher seems to be playing with opacity and transparency as both literal and metaphorical effects of the work—an oscillation that allows for the ongoing, delicate tension in his practice between formalism and allusion.

—Gregory Williams

PHILADELPHIA

Lynda Benglis

LOCKS GALLERY

"Lynda Benglis: Everything Flows (1980–2013)" encouraged viewers to think of the artist's imposing metalized pleat pieces and intimately scaled ceramic sculptures as closely related bodies of work, despite their significant formal discrepancies. Allowing the two series, created between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, to coexist in all their difference, this exhibition revealed commonalities vital to Benglis's practice, and the show's title signaled at least one unifying thread: the artist's belief that "everything flows."

Pleat pieces such as *Trippel II*, 1988–90, and *Toyopet Crown*, 1989, capture the fluidity of drapery, conjuring images of ethereal caryatids. They bear traces of Benglis's hand where she scrunched the initially pliable mesh structures before spraying them, using a metalizing gun, with liquid aluminum that dried into hard shells, sometimes more, sometimes less shiny. The ceramic sculptures, also hard, dry, and manifesting various levels of sheen, show records of gravity's pull and of manhandling in ways that convey their originally malleable identities. *Anagama S*, 1995, and *Knot/Hat A*, 1992, are made of hollow or flat sags of clay, respectively; *Draped Knot B*, 1993, features long, thick extrusions wrestled into contorted squiggles; and *Terracotta Helmet*, 1993, is decorated with patterns left by fingers repetitively indenting the formerly soft surfaces. The glazes, of course, were also fluid once,



View of "Tony Feher," 2013.