

Time Out New York

Jun 24-Jul 1, 2004



Tony Feher, *Red into Blue*, 2004.

Tony Feher
D'Amelio Terras, through Jul 10
(see Chelsea).

Tony Feher makes art out of bags, bottles and jars, plastic crates and packing tape—all the odd, unnoticed doodads that hold and bind the stuff we buy. He assembles, makes stacks and rows, puts round things on top of square things: small transformations that nonetheless seem decisive and dead-on. If you haven't seen his work before, picture an all-American equivalent of Japanese flower arranging; imagine the same studied simplicity, the resonant spareness and delicacy of touch. Only this home-grown craft begins

not in a garden or greenhouse, but in a dumpster behind the supermarket.

It can take time to adjust to Feher's muted rhythms. In his current show at D'Amelio Terras, each piece offers its own specific jolt, but these little pleasures struggle to emerge from the clutter of the room. Focus is rewarded, though. A double-file line of foam trays pops with cheerfully syncopated shifts in color; a gathering of brown bottles capped with red and blue marbles resembles a

strange new constellation.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Feher's work is how much it looks like art. Here are nine chip bags, punched with holes and turned inside out to reveal their silvery Mylar interiors—is this really a sculpture? Of course it is. A history of repurposing the commonplace—from the Duchampian readymade and the Minimalist object to the scatter-art installation—feeds into Feher's work. But he wears this history lightly. Using familiar conceptual strategies for aesthetic ends, Feher is actually an old-fashioned sort of artist: an eccentric formalist with a flawless eye.

—Steven Stern

The Village Voice

May 28th, 2004

Genie in a Bottle: Tony Feher's Witty, Twisted Readymades

by Jane Harris

May 28th, 2004 12:30 PM



Tony Feher: *Untitled* (2004)
(photo: Courtesy D'Amelio Terras)

Tony Feher

D'Amelio Terras
525 West 22nd Street
Through July 2

John Cage once wittily wrote, "Say it's not a Duchamp. Turn it over and it is," and these days, thanks to Warhol, Duchamp's legacy is as commonplace as his readymades. But not every artist sees in the refuse of the everyday the kind of humble beauty Tony Feher does. Since his early "scatter art" days, Feher has assembled materials most would ignore—bottles, string, cleaning fluid, marbles, lightbulbs, crates, and tinfoil—into post-minimal sculptures that are as formal as they are whimsical. These often fragile configurations never completely alchemize their materials because it is the simple magic of the ordinary—a marble being

just a marble—that Feher is after. The title of his current show, "The Wart on the Bosom of Mother Nature," may seem wryly at odds with such a sensibility, but it conveys Feher's desire to reveal just how connected the ordinary and the beautiful really are. In one piece he punches holes into variously sized foil snack bags, which he then turns inside out and hangs on the wall. What we litter our sofas and sidewalks with suddenly become precious silver vessels that glow with red, orange, and yellow. Similarly, in *Mountain Home*, he stacks 140 green plastic strawberry baskets, bottoms up, into a luminous pyramid structure. One of the best works on display, #2, is made from yet another food-related item, one you could easily smuggle out of a cafeteria and install at home. Featuring 16 polystyrene food trays in black, white, and creamy yellow, laid in pairs on the floor, it's reminiscent of a Carl Andre (and, oddly, houndstooth plaid), but the trays remain what they are: functional, ephemeral objects—beautiful just the same.

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2004

ART IN REVIEW

Tony Feher

'The Wart on the Bosom of Mother Nature'

*D'Amelio Terras
525 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through July 2*

Tony Feher makes wryly poetic and visually enchanting sculptures from the least promising of materials. His palette includes plastic and glass bottles and bottle caps, foam packing material, bent wire, fruit baskets, soda stacking crates, Windex and other colored liquids, marbles, colored string, crushed aluminum foil and stones. What he does with these and other materials requires no manual skill. He puts disparate things together or performs simple operations that produce something surprisingly more than the sum of its mundane parts.

Building a two-foot-tall pyramid of the green plastic baskets used to sell strawberries is not, in itself, such an unpredictable idea. But the visual effect is remarkable. As the layering of the semitransparent baskets appears denser toward the center of the pyramid and fades around the outside, the whole has a luminous, almost dematerialized appearance.

"Red Into Blue" consists of about a hundred brown glass bottles of various sizes, gathered together in an oval formation. Half the bottle openings are stopped by opaque red marbles, the other half by blue marbles. The combination of colors, glassy surfaces and percussive compositional rhythm is captivatingly sensuous. There is political resonance in the red and blue marbles, too.

Looking closely at a collection of perforated, metallic, shell-like forms pinned to the wall, you see that Mr. Feher used a hole-puncher on potato-chip bags and other sorts of snack bags, then simply turned them inside out. It is inspiring to behold something so ordinary be so magically transformed by such transparently economical means.

KEN JOHNSON