

Art in America

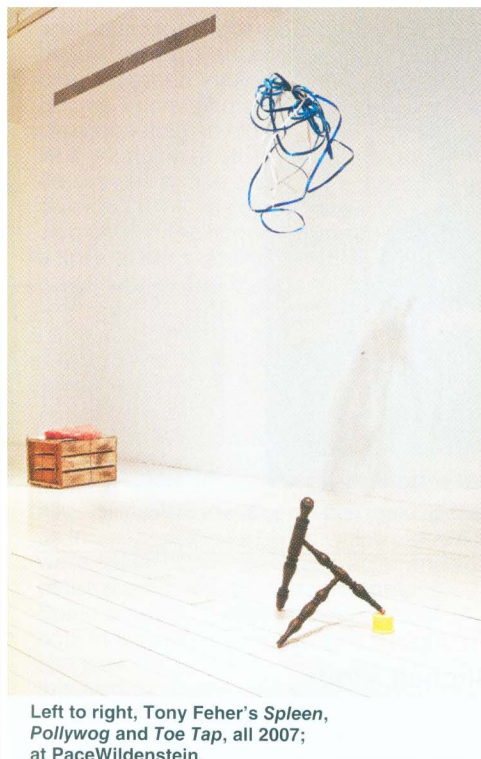
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Tony Feher D'Amelio Terras and PaceWildenstein

When Tony Feher emerged in the early 1990s, his modest and seemingly effortless sculptures repurposed the banal detritus of consumer culture and seemed to telegraph the malaise that afflicted the art world and the broader economy. Feher's creative tactics have essentially remained the same since then. And his career has flourished, as affirmed by two synchronized solo shows at prominent New York galleries that have recently agreed to share representation of the artist.

In the project room at D'Amelio Terras (Feher's gallery since 1997) were 13 works made between 1987 and 1993, displayed on a table-size plinth. All of these untitled sculptures combine ordinary beverage bottles and condiment jars with pebbles, marbles, tiny shards of glass and plastic, and various other miniature objects that one might find discarded on a sidewalk. Often such items are placed inside the glass vessels, creating discrete units of found color. In three of the sculptures, the flotsam and jetsam is carefully marshaled into parallel lines, a grid or a circle, and arranged beside an empty jar. These precise compositions suggest the work of an obsessive collector, and remind one that Feher, who is frequently tethered to Post-Minimalism, is as much an heir to Joseph Cornell.

Glass jars and marbles have remained central to Feher's work, appearing in many of the 31 recent sculptures he exhibited at PaceWildenstein. But Feher's material reach has extended over the years, allowing him to colonize space in different ways while never forsaking his simple and transparent construction methods, which involve the barest manipulation of his found objects. Several new sculptures hung from the ceiling, including *Pollywog* (2007), a tangle of blue and white plastic strapping that was cinched by an overhead cord and allowed to draw cursive lines through the air. Other works, such as *Lapping* (2007), hugged the floor. For this sculpture, Feher filled the bottom of a slouched plastic garbage bag with clear and blue marbles, deftly creating a glistening circular form that resembles a deflated swimming pool.



Left to right, Tony Feher's *Spleen*, *Pollywog* and *Toe Tap*, all 2007; at PaceWildenstein.

As a general rule, Feher elicits moments of unexpected visual delight from the most commonplace materials. But some of his recent work darkens this pleasure with more disturbing allusions. *Spleen* (2007), for example, is an inner-organ-shaped bag of shredded pink paper that rests on a shabby wooden crate. *Three* (2007), which consists of several vodka flasks filled with blood-red marbles and lashed to a suspended metal chain, brings to mind the apparatus of an intravenous drip.

—Matthew Guy Nichols