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Where Blue-Chip Brands Meet Brassy Outliers

From Hot to Schlock: Holland Cotter Tours Chelsea Galleries

By HOLLAND COTTER and PETE WELLS APRIL 4, 2014



Joel Otterson's sculpture "TV Vanity," from 1992, at Elizabeth Dee.
Credit Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

ELIZABETH DEE Another sculptor, Joel Otterson made a splash in the East Village in the 1980s, but left for Los Angeles and has been missed since. So it's great to have major work by him both in the Whitney Biennial and at Elizabeth Dee. He can be wonderfully, campily funny. His "Coffee Table Museum," from 1989, is a precision-tooled kaffeeklatsch on wheels, a parade float of demitasse cups, sugar bowls, creamers. But he's also deep. "Divine Intervention," with two human skeletons cast in blood-red glass hovering over a 1960s jukebox, is a heart-stopper: a memorial to a musician friend who died of AIDS, and whose ashes, in a heart-shaped urn, are set among racks of vintage 45s.

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