ARTFORUM

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Tony Feher (1956–2016)

The sculptor Tony Feher died today. His subtle, straightforward work, made with the most throwaway things—plastic water bottles, berry cartons, jelly jars, blue painter's tape—upended Minimalist sobriety and Conceptualist cool with an intelligence that wholly embraced humor and charm.

Feher was born in Albuquerque. He grew up in a military family and had an itinerant childhood, with stints in Corpus Christi, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, and Florida. He received his BA in 1978 from the University of Texas in Austin. Around that time, he was told he lacked creativity and that if he could even make it as a shoe salesman, he'd be lucky. So with that, he moved to New York.

He had his first solo show at Wooster Gardens in New York in 1993. Since then, he has had more than forty solo exhibitions at numerous venues and institutions, such as Diverseworks in Houston; Sikkema Jenkins & Co., Pace Gallery, and D'Amelio Terras in New York; ACME in Los Angeles; Anthony Meier Fine Arts in San Francisco; and the Suburban in Oak Park, Illinois. A midcareer survey of Feher's art, curated by Claudia Schmuckli, opened at the Des Moines Art Center in 2012 and traveled to Houston's Blaffer Art Museum later that year, then to the DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, in 2013, and finally to the Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Akron Art Museum from 2013 to 2014.

"For years, I've felt Feher's assemblages of found objects—domestic, utilitarian, cute—to be the most viscerally satisfying sculptures in this or any town," said poet, painter, and critic Wayne Koestenbaum of the artist in his "Best of 2014" list from that year's December issue of *Artforum*. "He collects and arranges his colorful foundlings with custodial precision—a kinky rigor that restores the dignity of those who overly cathect to household flotsam. Feher's patterns reassure; he seems a model-maker, constructing maquettes of villages and bundled communities that imagine utopia by seceding from usefulness into gridded whimsy."