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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 3, 2014



Rob Fischer's "Good Weather (Glass House)" is at the Derek Eller Gallery in Chelsea. Ruth Fremson/The New York Times

WITH upward of 200 galleries, Chelsea is still the largest and, cash-wise, the richest of the city's art districts. It's also a microcosm of the art industry, offering a range of current product, a ton of junk and some stimulating work. Apart from a few outlier galleries, its main boundaries have stayed consistent: 17th Street to 27th Street, 10th to 11th Avenues. Here, you'll find some of the largest commercial art spaces in town, possibly on earth; multisite franchises ([Gagosian](#), [Matthew Marks](#), [David Zwirner](#)); and a handful of reliably ambitious small galleries, which show some of the best work. Art district, not art neighborhood, most accurately describes this area, though that's changing. Apartment buildings are going up, along with the new Whitney Museum. And the High Line is bringing a fringe of green to our streets. Painting is everywhere, but the most interesting work I saw was in sculpture, photography and video, with a continuing performance piece my attraction of choice.

DEREK ELLER GALLERY Rob Fischer's work is also based on recovering the lost and the old, and sits somewhere between sculpture and architecture. He constructs shelters from, among other things, the remains of derelict buildings across the country. "Good Weather (Glass House)," which fills the main gallery at [Derek Eller](#), was originally assembled in Texas. Made of sheets of glass, it's equipped for living, with a loft bedroom, and a kitchen. It is, however, uninsulated, and the painted windows afford almost no privacy. On the upside, their colors are mostly red, yellow and blue, Mondrian's utopian palette. If you moved in, you'd not only live with art; you'd also live in it.

DEREK ELLER GALLERY 615 West 27th Street; [derekeller.com](#).