

# DEREK ELLER GALLERY

## **Randy Wray**

*Heaven on High*

May 26 - June 25, 2005

**Opening Reception: Thursday, May 26, 6 - 8 pm**

Derek Eller is pleased to present *Heaven on High*, recent works by Randy Wray.

In this body of work Randy Wray continues with his sculptural explorations, which he refers to as psychic architecture, but on a larger scale than in the past. These three-dimensional forms, inspired in part by the artist's southern heritage, evoke moonshine liquor stills, spirit jars, and homespun crafts gone awry. They touch upon issues of identity, memory, and loss among others, as they strive for a balance of contradictory ideas and sensibilities. As in the past his works are made of synthetic and natural materials and fluctuate between abstraction and representation while being simultaneously grotesque and beautiful.

*Moonshine Garden* consists of a large quilt sewn in the image of the Confederate flag that rests on the ground. The flag is edged in human hair braids and serves as a field for a group of sculptures based on moonshine liquor stills and jugs. These containers of spirits (alcohol), all white in color, rise from the quilt like spirits (ghosts) creating a kind of apparition both modern and historical. The quilt, traditionally used for warmth during slumber, evokes the sleep of reason that took place during the time of the Civil War. The sculpture Spirit Jars is made of several dozen bottles, jugs, and jars resting on a table covered in paper pulp and fabric. The jars are encrusted with buttons, shells, tiles, crystals and minerals from the artist's rock collection from his teen years. The act of gathering trinkets that once belonged to a deceased love one and gluing them to a bottle was a popular craft during Victorian times. This practice probably originated with slaves who placed the bottles on grave sites of loved ones as markers. Wray's tribute is more generalized and serves as a memorial for all that is lost with the passage of time including his own youth. This exhibition will also include related paintings and drawings.

Wray's work can be seen in P.S.1's *Greater New York* 2005 through September, 2005. This will be his third solo show with the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 526 West 25th Street, 2nd floor. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm. For further information or visuals, please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com)