

Finkel, Jori, "Jonas Wood Collects His Work. David Kordansky Says It Changed His Life. Step Inside the Singular World of Sculptor Evan Holloway," *CulturedMag.com*, March 20, 2024

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ART

Jonas Wood Collects His Work. David Kordansky Says It Changed His Life. Step Inside the Singular World of Sculptor Evan Holloway

The Los Angeles-based artist, whose work inspired his dealer to move to the city, is playing with fashion—and rejecting preciousness—in his new show.

Jori Finkel

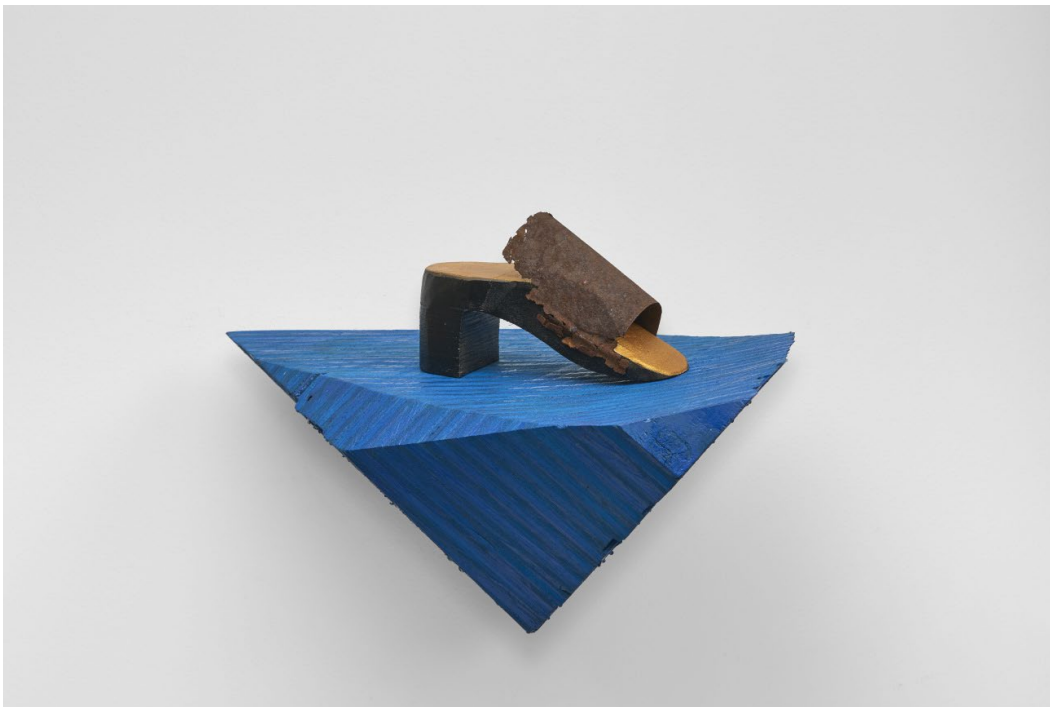
March 20, 2024



Portrait of Evan Holloway by Indah Datau.

Writers often fall down on the job when describing particularly inventive, hands-on artists—the ones who mix mediums and create their own tools along the way. We fall back on clichés associated with mad scientists or use readymade labels like “tinkerer,” which sounds rather tedious, and “bricoleur,” which is a strangely formal moniker for a DIY aesthetic.

But Evan Holloway’s new show at David Kordansky presents another vision of artists who have doubled down, even in the age of AR and VR, as analog object-makers. “Cobbler,” opening Mar. 23, features a series of over-the-top retail-style display cases and shoe-like sculptures that Holloway has built out of scrap materials found mainly in his studio, from laminated plywood and stretches of garden hose to cut-up license plates. His “shoes” made of rusty metal might be excruciating to wear, but the metaphor fits—artists can be cobblers of a sort too.



Evan Holloway, *Shoe Shelf (Blue)*, 2024. Photography by Flying Studio. Image courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery.

The show’s conceit reminds us that artworks are the products of a very particular hand, that their meaning is embodied in materials. Holloway touches on such issues in songs that he has composed about his exhibitions. In early March, when I visited his studio, he performed some of them for me in a velvety baritone.

“It’s too early for words / To use language to fix on a meaning / Like when you open your eyes / and you don’t apprehend it’s the ceiling,” he sang. “You can feel with your body / You can sense with your mass / Understand three dimensions / Teach your own master class,” he intoned in another, which just might be the only song ever to cite William James’s theory of

"The Spatial Quale." (Holloway described it as "the quality of sensing an object with your body" and "a set of ideas that have been a really big influence for me.")



Photography by Indah Datau.

The idea for "Cobbler" came about, he said, after visiting Dover Street Market last year in Tokyo with his wife, artist Karin Gulbran. He was struck by the avant-garde display cases that high-end designers like Comme des Garçons use instead of standard clothing racks—sculptures that are, he said with a smile, "oftentimes better than what I'm seeing in the galleries."

But that's not to say these retail display structures are highly original works of art. In fact, many are quite derivative, with echoes of artists such as Tony Smith and Cady Noland. "The way they borrow pretty freely, without anxiety, from the history of contemporary sculpture was very interesting to me," Holloway said. He imagined flipping the script, entering the studio as if he were a designer in charge of hanging those clothes, and taking creative license as needed.

"Should I worry about stealing from Lee Bontecou?" he said, standing before his own version of a clothing rack, complete with a couple of gauzy handmade garments, for which he covered his welded-rod structure with a wire-stitched canvas patchwork à la the late American sculptor. "A designer wouldn't trouble themselves for a moment with this thought. There's a job to be done. Let's hang these clothes."

The Kordansky show also features a series of colorful automatic drawings that Holloway began in 2019 called "Scrys." They echo a kid's spiograph

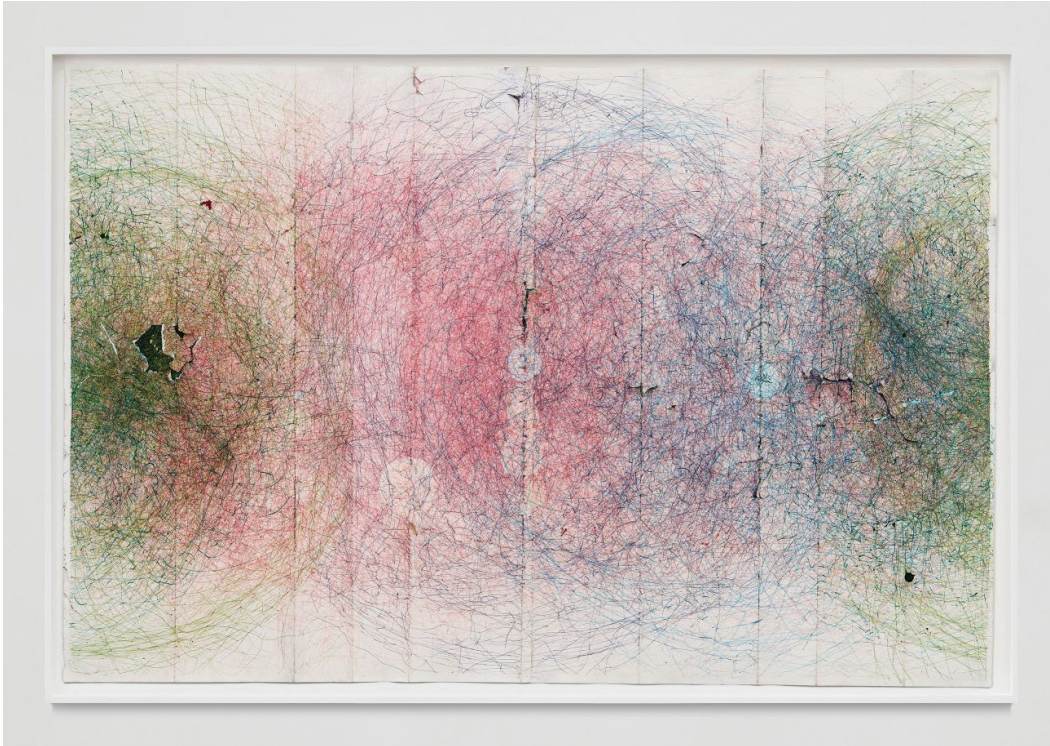


Evan Holloway, *Pants Display*, 2024. Photography by Flying Studio. Image courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery.

drawings in their looping logic, only they're made much more freely, with Holloway (eyes closed or averted to allow a deeper sort of vision) spending many hours holding a pen above a large sheet of paper on a turntable of his own making. As the turntable spins, the looping abstraction begins. "Scry" is the action of seeing the future in a crystal ball and he understands his scry drawings, more broadly, as "a tool for seeing into another space, for me and the viewer."

Kordansky says he's been a Holloway "superfan" long before he started showing the work. "Evan is one of the most important artists to come out of Los Angeles in the last 30 years and yet he is still an under-known participant," he said. "There's a reason why Jonas Wood and Mark Grotjahn collect his work, why Ricky Swallow cites him as a close friend. There's a real respect for Evan amongst the great LA artists."

The dealer first came across Holloway's work in 2000 in an Artforum essay



Evan Holloway, *June 2023, 2023*. Photography by Flying Studio. Image courtesy of the artist and David Kordansky Gallery.

by Bruce Hainley about a new generation of Southern California sculptors. Kordansky was in school in Hartford, Connecticut, at the time, and went on to attend CalArts for his M.F.A. "I wouldn't have ended up in LA if it weren't for Evan Holloway," he said, recalling a formative encounter with an image of Holloway's sculpture *Left-Handed Guitarist*.

"It's a shoddy, Styrofoam carving of Kurt Cobain staring into a piece of paper rendered to be the abyss—it's the most punk anti-monument," Kordansky said. "I thought, holy shit. This sculpture is antithetical to everything currently going on in the art world, I want to go to California." These days, Kordansky sees a connection between the works of "Cobbler" and *Left-Handed Guitarist*. "It feels to me this new work is referencing those early works. They're just so free and kooky and brilliant and magical."

And much like he mined the myth of Kurt Cobain before, the artist is now exploring or even inhabiting the luxury fashion theme. With their visceral pleasures and fierce sense of playfulness, Holloway's versions of clothing racks and designer shoes seem less like a critique of rampant capitalism or art-as-commodity and more like a way of trying certain high-end consumer rituals on for size. Or, as the artist said at the end of our visit, evoking an image of a car careening out of control: "I'm just turning into the skid."

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"Cobbler" will be on view from March 23 through April 27, 2024 at David Kordansky Gallery in Los Angeles.