



**Brian Dettmer:**

By: Toast and Jillian Northrop  
*High Fructose Magazine*, Vol. 7, p. 14

Brian Dettmer operates his meticulous operations out of Atlanta, Georgia and instead of the common post-modern sampling, cutting and pasting, and juxtaposition in most contemporary art, he presents us with something very much the opposite. It's a condensing, a digging.

Carving, cutting, and shaping layers of dead media, Dettmer dissects old books, maps, cassette and VHS tapes. They are splayed out like Gray's Anatomy, another place where the once living are displayed in their dead entirety.

The pieces overwhelm us. This media that was originally made to be experienced in a well-behaved and linear fashion, page by page, note by note along magnetic tape, moving along through time, is now presented to us as a single entity. A big burst, straight to the brain, an over exaggerated Cliff Notes, like staring at a stump and seeing all the rings of the tree's layers of growth.

Is this the soul of the book? Is this the spirit of the cassette tape? But then the rings of a cut log don't really tell us much other than the age of the tree, and maybe where it came from, do they?

In some of Dettmer's pieces it, seems that that is exactly what we are seeing. The dead media's spirit revealed. An old VHS of "The Godfather" has decayed into a single black

rose. Like his cow skulls made of old audiotapes, melted down and reformed to represent maybe how old we see that technology to be. Thrown away books that have been carved up like logs, treated as the pure material resource that they always were. Yet in many of his pieces, there's much more going on: maps made into hands, old media taking on new forms, meanings, messages.

All the information, both original and new, is abstracted and condensed into one visual experience. With a single glance, you can see exactly what the book, map, or VHS was about. And yet we will never really know all the details or be able to read it or watch the tape again. We're seeing the whole picture at once, but can never actually know everything about it. And while we can see what it may have been about, and still is somewhat about, it's taken on a whole new meaning as well, a new form that simultaneously tells us more and less about the original object, more and less about the piece itself.

## KINZ, TILLOU + FEIGEN

529 W. 20TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011  
TEL: 212 929 0500 FAX: 212 929 0065  
INFO@KTFGALLERY.COM WWW.KTFGALLERY.COM