

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
January 1987

PROJECTS: JOEL OTTERSON

January 17 - March 3, 1987

The Museum of Modern Art continues its PROJECTS series with an exhibition of sculpture by the New York-based artist Joel Otterson, on view from January 17 through March 3, 1987. Organized by Marjorie Frankel Nathanson, curatorial assistant in the Department of Painting and Sculpture, PROJECTS: JOEL OTTERSON is the artist's first solo museum exhibition. It includes twelve recent works which juxtapose such disparate elements as a bronze cast of a detergent bottle and plumber's fittings or redwood driftwood and aluminum baseball bats.

By combining found objects, Otterson sets up contrasts that negate the original functions of the objects that make up his sculptures. His recent work Devil/Jesus (1986), for example, combines a reproduction Queen Anne table with copper pipe. The utilitarian pipe, which extends above and below the table top, becomes decorative and simultaneously prevents the table from functioning as a surface. Through manipulation the seemingly old and precious table and the common pipe are made compatible.

Otterson, like many younger artists working today, is intrigued by objects of mass consumption. While some of these artists deal with this subject in very direct ways, Otterson manipulates objects. He notes, "I insistently go through grand maneuvers to give these things a new identity and change their context to hopefully reveal hidden meanings. I'm trying to make sense out of this complicated consumer-object-oriented world that we're in."

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Joel Otterson was born in Los Angeles in 1959 and received his BFA degree from Parson's School of Design in 1982. He has participated in several group exhibitions throughout the country and was the subject of a solo exhibition in 1984 at Gallery Nature Morte in New York.

The PROJECTS series is made possible by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lannan Foundation, and the Wallace Funds, established by the founders of Reader's Digest. PROJECTS is a series of exhibitions devoted to the work of contemporary artists. JOEL OTTERSON will be followed by MAGDALENA JETELOVÁ (March 14 - April 28, 1987).

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No. 109

For further information or photographic materials, contact the Department of Public Information, 212/708-9750.