



Alessandra Exposito  
 "Greener Pastures"  
 Mixed Greens  
 531 W. 26th St.  
 Tue.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
 Through Oct. 7  
 212-331-8888



Courtesy Mixed Greens

Alessandra Exposito embellishes her glossy-painted animal skulls with cameo portraits, script, filigree decorations, rhinestone outlines, and sculpted horns or antlers for a finishing touch.

## Dead Pet Trophy Art

The slick, sparkling skulls of Alessandra Exposito  
 BY SUSAN YUNG

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Alessandra Exposito creates curiously appealing sculptures—trophy heads—by embellishing animal skulls. The scale of the skulls range from a horse to mice, which are unbelievably tiny (about 1.4" long), in addition to a number of hens, cats, and dogs. On each skull, she paints a glossy foundation of white, black, or bubble gum pink, then a detailed color cameo portrait of the animal. She writes its name in elaborate script, and adds filigree decorations of flowers or icons presumably germane to the animal's life. She outlines eye and nose cavities with rhinestones, and adds sculpted horns or antlers for a finishing touch, creating an intoxicating mythology for each deceased critter.

The first impressions are all about slick surface, sparkliness, and rococo detail. A second look raises more questions about the individual creature that once inhabited the skull. Was this dog really named Buckshot, and did it look just as its portrait conveys? Exposito fetishizes these creatures in their afterlife the way our society fetishizes pets during their lives. Think of a yorkie's owner dolling it up in a coat and rhinestone collar and carrying it around to cocktail parties. Then apply that trumped up glamour to a chicken or mouse.

The skulls also broach humans' need to conquer other species, most blatantly exemplified by big game hunting. If one person can question how it's possible to shoot in cold blood a magnificent animal that's simply grazing, it's just as easy for another person to actually carry it out. And once you've seen Exposito's mouse skulls—so incredibly fragile and precious—every time you see a mouse in the subway, you'll think twice about the life it lives. These nagging existential thoughts tangle with the sculptures' outright covetability and newfound purpose.

Also on view are several paintings done in a realistic, plastic/pop feel. They are more introspective and less accessible than the skulls. The featured figures—a standing woman near a deer, or holding a severed stag's head, and two pigs' heads—float on fields of pink or white, as the rhinestone-studded titles of the paintings hover overhead.

Mixed Greens gallery, whose slogan is "We sell art," flies in the face of all that the New York art world has come to represent, fairly or not, with its reputation of elitist, high priced work and indifferent staffers. This gallery aims to make art accessible and acquirable by anyone. It prints and distributes a seasonal color catalogue that for all intents and purposes may as well be from Williams Sonoma; its prices tend toward affordable. It is reflexive to resist this unconventional approach as overly commercial, but ultimately, it brings you one step closer to appreciating and buying art. No harm done except to your wallet.