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Charles LeDray



Sperone Westwater, through Mar 24 (see Chelsea)

The best works in this strong but uneven show ramp up the psychological intensity of Charles LeDray's project. He emerged in the early '90s with meticulously sewn miniature clothing, like the brave little tailor of the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales reborn as a sculptor. He has often insinuated sexual taboos. For example, a group of delicately constructed, dismembered teddy bears from the early '90s raised the question of whether their condition was the result of sadism (as might be the case with the Grimms), too much love or both.

His latest show carries on in the same vein. Little outergarment—including a Pierre Cardin jacket and a leopard-print coat—are piled atop the equally undersize *Party Bed*; a pair of boxers are crumpled underneath the boxspring, next to a black leather glove. In the 13-inch-high *Toy Box*, a little leather belt lurks among stuffed



Party Bed

animals, a soccer ball and a security blanket. The juxtaposition posits childhood as a time of both play and punishment, while hinting at perverse sexual secrets.

LeDray's intimate scale and obsessive technique are disarming, but it's the air of fetish lurking around his work that sustains our attention. One piece reproduces Victorian-style shoe-shaped pin cushions and adds to them tiny vinyl heels; square-toed and awash in gaudy details, they could have come straight out of a dollsize drag queen's closet. Like the best pieces here, this sculpture moves beyond mere novelty to open new meanings in LeDray's Lilliputian world.—*Joshua Mack*