Returning a second later, he held his hands in a way that made me think he had captured a butterfly or small bird. But when he opened them, it was only a bright yellow bottle cap resting on his palm. 'Now that's a gem,' he said, polishing the plastic cap on his sleeve like a beggar in a Brecht play might polish a coin. His eyes misted over in an inexplicable reverie and our conversation was utterly forgotten.

In an era characterised by a feverish interrogation of 'the real', and a concomitant manifestation of an obsessive commodity-and-trash aesthetic, it might be tempting to consider Feher's art as ephemeral were it not for its obstinacy, implacability, and longevity. Preceding current dime-store-cultists such as Sarah Sze and Jason Rhoades by a generation, in the early 1990s Feher was associated with the short-lived 'scatter art' movement. Yet his work has never been about materialism or the object. Closer in sensibility to André Breton's 'Poem-Objects' than, say, Paul McCarthy's ketchup-encrusted props, Feher's work is scatter art without the scat. Even at its loosest and funkiest, it exhibits a noteworthy restraint – the by-product of an exacting and rigorous process of distillation that endows even the most mundane drawing-pin with a palpable charge.

Bottle caps and bottles, discarded polystyrene packaging and plastic tubing, cigarette boxes and coins, crisp packets and milk crates, marbles, plastic flowers, paper cups, refrigerator magnets, gaskets, straws, light-bulbs, bits of clothesline, ribbon, and wire are all collected and categorised, arranged, and obsessed over. It is a passion, not a neurosis, a conscious attempt to rub elbows with the real, to locate it in the realm of the abandoned (all the taken-for-granted things we lose or throw away). Feher makes us a gift of our own debris. It's a gift that comes at a price, however: an exhortation to observe ever more closely...
If the post-Modernist end-game was to abolish absolute meaning in favour of numerous, possible meanings, Feher positions himself at its crossroads. Eschewing the easily-spun web of juxtapositions and smug irony that characterises most appropriation art, Feher seeks to build a language outside the symbolic order – one that favours listening over speaking. Take Feher’s garden, for instance. A splinterly flower-box on the fire-escape of his seventh floor walk-up, it embodies all his main concerns: the reclamation of ‘low’ or lost things, a preference for the ready-made, and a wilful expansiveness. Feher’s garden is a riot of weeds, clover, crab-grass, thistle – all manner of nasty, spindly-looking plants getting us to lower our guard. Simple and elegant, the grid into which one hundred small glass jars are arranged in Glass Square (1997), for example, becomes a stage upon which a disappearing act is performed. Vacant and seemingly innocuous, Glass Square exists at the threshold of both invisibility and insignificance. The transparency and emptiness of the jars seems to confirm a greater emptiness at the heart of the piece. Surely, its undeniable indulgence surpasses even the laziest of slacker art? Yet this is also the point: ridding his work of any aspects of craft or even effort – to the extent that the use of glue or tape is strictly forbidden – Feher’s purposeful passivity is, in reality, a brave acquiescence to the power of the ready-made.

Eschewing the irony of most appropriation art, Feher seeks a language that favours listening over speaking.

Thus, courting dismissal, the work nevertheless sticks with you in a strangely disconcerting way. The more you ponder it, the more opaque its initial transparency becomes. Beneath a facile exterior, Feher’s is an art which mines an ontological space between perception and consciousness. Its sly foregrounding of the real is accomplished via a stratagem of fluidity and emptiness; fragility and fatuousness. Indeed, almost all of Feher’s works orientate themselves in this way: as a momentary integration of disparate elements resigned to their own inevitable falling apart. Like Buster Keaton, their prat-falls are both poignant and hilarious.