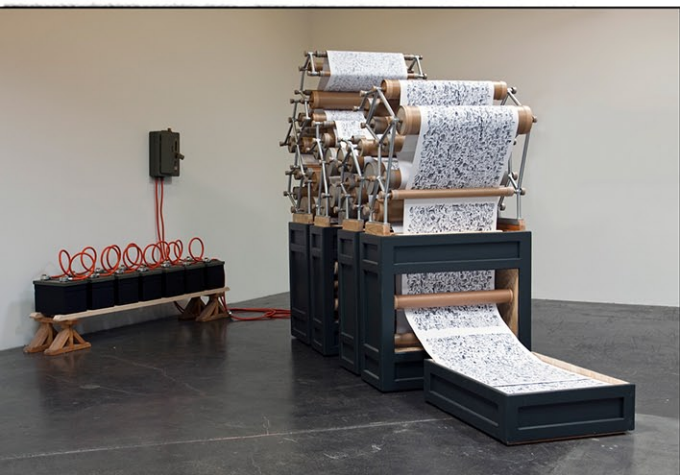


## ART

## AROUND THE GALLERIES

LEAH OLLMAN



Mark Moore Gallery

**'PUBLISH OR PERISH':** Kiel Johnson's elaborate, DIY take on a printing press is at Mark Moore Gallery.

## Crafty with his craftsmanship

**Kiel Johnson** is crafty in the best senses of the word — both clever and great with his hands. In his amusing and gently provocative show at Mark Moore, he counters our current infatuation with devices small, sleek and hi-tech with contraptions that are cartoonishly large, insistently handmade and powered by nothing but rollicking ingenuity.

Cardboard, chipboard, tape and glue are the L.A. artist's sculptural materials of choice, and with them, he builds likenesses of mechanical objects whose vintage designs correlate to his homespun, analog sensibility. His double-sided boombox (more than 3 feet high and 4 feet wide) stands in a puddle of cardboard cassette tapes.

A "Twin Lens Reflex Camera" (5 feet from top to bottom) hangs from a homemade strap. Unwieldy and uncalibrated, the camera does function: a group of blurry landscape photographs made with it hangs nearby. "Publish or Perish," the artist's elaborate, DIY take on a printing press, spits out sheets of paper dense with tiny renderings of all of Johnson's belongings, from hangers<sup>1</sup> to houseplants.

There is charm in Johnson's tinkering, as well as a wistfulness, a slight despair reverberating beneath the humor. Proliferation is vexed, he seems to be saying. We've made ourselves captive to a self-perpetuating process that yields endless amounts of stuff. In one of his marvelous ink drawings, an orb consisting of continuous machinery floats in space, a metaphor for our planet, where the wheels we've set in motion keep turning for their own sake, a hive of industrial busywork. We'd be better off taking things back into our own hands (literally) and shaping them with something like Johnson's idiosyncratic care.

**Mark Moore Gallery**, Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Santa Monica, (310) 453-3031, through Nov. 14. Closed Sunday and Monday. [www.markmooregallery.com](http://www.markmooregallery.com)



Mark Moore Gallery

**SMILE:** Kiel Johnson's assembled "Twin Lens Reflex Camera, 2009."