

KQED Arts

Woody De Othello Believes in the Secret Life of Objects

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Woody De Othello, Installation view of 'Living Room,' 2018. (Courtesy of Jessica Silverman Gallery)

After hours, when the bright fluorescent lights of Jessica Silverman Gallery are turned off, and when the security gates are rolled shut, I like to imagine that Woody De Othello's ceramics slowly, stiffly come to life. Then, the figures in his paintings shake off the positions they've held during gallery hours, crack their backs and mill about.

It's not a stretch. In the show called *Living Room* (like the room in a house, but also like the room's *alive*, get it?), everyday household objects sprout lips and fingers, ears and tongues. Othello's appliances and furniture, created with hand-built clay and layers of luscious glaze, are wobbly and cartoonish. Picture the hard, glossy cousins of the anthropomorphic set pieces from *Pee Wee's Playhouse*.

But we cannot visit the gallery after dark. So during the day, under the fluorescent lights, such movements and expressions of character remain frozen in place, all the better for visitors to get up close, nose around (puns abound in this show and it's catching) and imagine their own home populated by benevolent—but independent—objects.