designed (albeit somewhat quixotically) to make the town the center of the contemporary art world. To that end, he has not only produced his own sculptures, but has also urged the entire populace to become involved: from putting blue lights in the front windows of houses to installing his large blue ART signs, to suggesting that nearby suburbanites keep their swimming pool lights on at night (to be seen from the that seemed halfway between a retail store and a carnival fun house. A metal colander sat on a stand next to an African-esque bowl. A gilded head of Michelangelo’s David, draped with a blue garland, glanced down from a high shelf, and blue banners from the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s Eakins and Van Gogh blockbusters hung backwards (to conceal the lettering) as window curtains.

light bulbs, hung off the back extension of the building. The storefront itself was open for several hours each evening, and those who entered found themselves in a fantasy environment that could only be described as otherworldly.

Blue Streak was the latest in a series of similar installations by local artist Randy Dalton. For at least the past decade, Dalton has been on a “blue kick”—all of his work has incorporated the color somehow, whether through applied pigment, the innate hue of the materials used, or light. “Do blue” has become his mantra, part of his Philadelphia Arts Initiative, air, naturally), to curating thematic shows (such as his “Rue du Blu” in Old City, Philadelphia’s SoHo equivalent), to organizing “blue” parades through the city streets.

This recent installation was a testament to his efforts. As an early member of a group called The Dumpster Divers, Dalton has been gathering junk for years. In Blue Streak, his collection was transformed into nearly 100 sculptural lamps, chandeliers, and things that have no name. Incorporating the original fixtures of the turn-of-the-century pharmacy, such as old wooden display cases and countertops, this potpourri was displayed in a manner

a year ago and extradited back to Philadelphia. Einhorn lived down the block from the Blue Streak venue, and Maddox worked in this very building (it had been transformed into a food coop during the 1970s). Dalton knew them both.

It’s difficult to characterize Dalton and his art. Consciously or not, he freely mixes allusions to the lamps of Harry Anderson and the Italian design group, Memphis; Duchamp (the largest collection of whose work is in the Philadelphia Museum); Jessica Stockholder’s manic installations; the movie Brazil; and, of course, Yves Klein.

Dalton’s “blue,” however, is far from “international.” It is adamantly “local.” And it is not linked to any PMS standard, any blue will do. What makes Dalton’s blue light special is the sheer craziness of it.

—Virginia Maksymowicz

Randy Dalton, Blue Streak, 2002. Mixed media and found objects, installation view.

Many of the “lamps” were titled with a descriptive mix of puns: Art 7 Days a Week, Kitchen Lamp, Brazilian Blue Jesus, or Toast to Art. Others made more serious political and social connections. Caged Unicorn referred to the neighborhood’s infamous former resident, Ira Einhorn. Einhorn was convicted in absentia of murdering his girlfriend, Holly Maddox, and storing her body inside a trunk in his apartment. He was arrested in France a little over