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## Dead zone

*¡Día de los Muertos está aquí!* Throw back some mezcal and pay tribute at these local "alterna-altars." There isn't a sugar skull or dead ancestor in sight.

### Loss of Innocence



Artist Diego Medina's shrine at El Museo del Barrio (1230 Fifth Ave at 104th St, 212-831-7272) laments the devastating effects of negative media and junk food on kids. Pokémon and the Mexican soap Corazón Salvaje flicker on two TVs, while tables overflow with Jarritos, Milky Ways, Frosted Flakes and Cheetos. Clippings of news articles about domestic violence, rape and murder dress the altar walls. Says Medina, "These are the things that cause the death of children's innocence." —Nina Christensen

Article continues

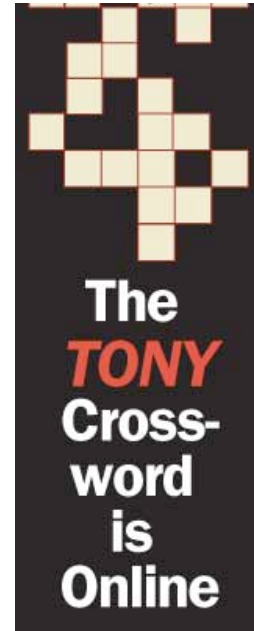
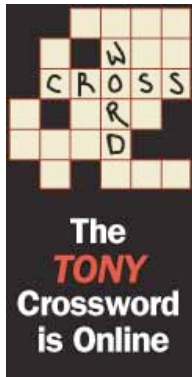


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### Dolly, Elvis, Cher and...Nelly?



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Mosaic shrines to pop culture deities (Dolly Parton, Elvis Presley, Cher and Nelly) take up entire walls in the four restrooms at Vynl (754 Ninth Ave between 50th and 51st Sts, 212-974-2003). Fashioned from thousands of colorful glass shards, each altar took a month for the Mixed-Up Mosaics' team to complete. Details include Elvis's famous lip curl, Cher's fishnet stockings, Nelly's bling and Dolly's signature talons. "Viva Las Vegas," "Hot in Herre" and other customized chart toppers serenade squatters, and are accompanied by shadow boxes featuring the stars' action figures. "I think Dolly is the most popular," says manager Joe Casey. "Diners will wait to use her. Cher is a close second." Other Vynl locations display shrines to Elton John, Madonna, the Beatles and Boy George. —Kate Phillips

**Libertad Poblano**



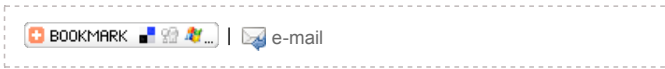
Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders executive director Emily Socolov's altar celebrates culture and movement. "Bags," she says, "are used by people traveling across all borders and terrains." Here, she reimagines the Statue of Liberty as the Virgin of Guadalupe, represented by a rose. The folklorist keeps Lady Lib true to her NYC roots, though, placing her in an aluminum challah dish purchased at a Chinatown dollar store. The shrine is on display through November at Rocking Horse Cafe (182 Eighth Ave between 19th and 20th Sts, 212-463-9511). —Mimi Wong

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