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OF AESTHETIC RESEARCH

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NEW ENGLAND ART AWARDS

NEW ENGLAND LAND ART AWARDS 2010 NOMINATE

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England Art Awards.



PHOTOS



« MCC grant deadline approaches
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NEJAR's picks for best art of 2010



Randy Regier was the star of the “2010 DeCordova Biennial,” with his “lifesize” spacecraft (pictured above), spacesuit, and ephemera that combined boyish wonder with questions about how 1950s American Dreams had devolved into today’s dreary reality. For the biennial, moreover, curator Dina Deitsch rebooted the DeCordova Sculpture Park + Museum’s regular local-talent search with a vital selection of familiar faces (Otto Piene, Paul Laffoley) and emerging artists, demonstrating that local round-ups don’t need to be stuffy or square. Regier’s year also included his amazing NuPenny installations, Twilight Zone toy stores installed in three successive storefronts across Maine, as well as an installation at Wentworth Institute of Technology that looked like a ’60s living room with a lamp tumbled over and an electric “shocking” robot singeing the carpet. Something had gone horribly awry. Using his unique craftsmanship to suggest pulpy, poignant tales, the Portland sculptor demonstrated once again why he is one of the best artists in the country.



TALKS FROM OUR ARCHIVES



Lynda Barry, Oct. 2, 2008.

Eleanor Callahan and Barbara, Nov.
11, 2008.

Nick Cave, Oct. 8, 2007.

Brian Chippendale, May 16, 2008,
part one and two.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Sept.
23, 2008.

Chuck Close, Nov. 1, 2007.

Gregory Crewdson, Oct. 29, 2008.

Lynda Hartigan of the Peabody
Essex Museum, Salem, July 16,
2008.

Anish Kapoor, May 27, 2008.

Dennis Kois, director of DeCordova
Museum, June 9, 2008.

Ernest Morin, July 21, 2008.

Dan Moynihan, Brookline cartoonist
and illustrator Oct. 8, 2009.

Damian Ortega, Sept. 15, 2009.

Gary Panter, April 11, 2008, and
Sept. 20, 2006.

Martha Rosler, Nov. 21, 2008.

Stefan Sagmeister, April 25, 2008.

Neil Salley of the Musée

Patamécanique in Bristol, Rhode
Island, Aug. 16, 2007.

Jon Sarkin, July 31, 2008.

Peter Schumann of Bread and
Puppet Theater (pictured above),
Aug. 12, 2008, part one, two and
three; Jan 23, 2008, part one and
two.

Richard Serra, June 1, 2008.

Rachel Whiteread, Oct. 14, 2008.

NEWS TO US

Order photos by [The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research](#) of the Honk Parade, Boston Caribbean Carnival (above), Salem's Haunted Happenings Grand Parade, Bread and Puppet Theater, St. Peter's Fiesta in Gloucester, and more.

YOKELISM



Yokelist Manifesto Number 1:
[Boston lacks alternative spaces?](#)

Yokelism at the [2008 Boston Art Awards](#).

Yokelist Manifesto Number 2:
[Montreal case study](#).

Yokelist Manifesto Number 3:
[Hire locally](#).

Yokelist Manifesto Number 4:
[We need coverage of our living artists](#).

Yokelist Manifesto Number 5:
[We need local retrospectives](#).

Yokelism update: Coverage of our living artists: [Sebastian Smees](#) responds.

Yokelism update: [Dangers of Provincialism](#).

Yokelism update: [Re: Dangers of Provincialism](#).

Yokelist Manifesto Number 6:
[Could the CIA help?](#)

Yokelism at the [2009 New England Art Awards](#).

NEW ENGLAND TREASURES

[Fawcett's Antique Toy & Art Museum](#), Waldoboro, Maine.

[Gropius House](#) in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

[Frank Lloyd Wright's Zimmerman House](#) in Manchester, New Hampshire.

SEEING ART FOR FREE

Always free:
[Addison Gallery](#), Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

Washington Street in Boston, between Stuart Street and Downtown Crossing, was long the city's officially sanctioned area for adult bookstores, clubs, and movie houses — as well as not-so-sanctioned prostitution. It was mostly cleaned up in the 1990s, but this year Howard Yezerksi Gallery revisited our sordid past in its exhibit ["The Combat Zone: 1969–1978."](#) "The Combat Zone: 1969–1978." Gritty vintage photos by Roswell Angier of Cambridge, Jerry Berndt of Paris (pictured above: Jerry Berndt, "The Combat Zone, Washington St., Boston," 1968), and John Goodman of Wellesley documented the strip clubs, hookers, and sketchy street denizens. The show was a model of local history and local art (plus sex) that our museums could learn from. Nicest curatorial touch: in the gallery's window hung the blinking neon sign from the Naked i strip club, which was demolished in 1996.

In a notch in a three-story-tall cliff in Boston's Franklin Park, [Brandon Nastanski](#) erected his officially unapproved hermit hut. Dubbed the "Unofficial Franklin Park Research Outpost," it was a sort of ramshackle clubhouse built from sticks and junk the Jamaica Plain artist had scavenged from the park — but it was also a haunted witch shack, a voodoo shrine, and a meditative homage to Thoreau's Walden cabin. In other words, the kind of surprise you might happen upon or hear about and never find — a brand new legend.

In his installation "The West is Now Closed" at Montserrat College of Art's 301 Gallery, John Osorio-Buck of Cambridge constructed an outpost that seemed like contemporary survivalist version of Thoreau's Walden shack. He assembled a cord of firewood, a picnic table, shipping container, pickup truck cap, boxes of instant noodles, and a porta-potty (most of these constructed from scratch) into a squatter's camp. With these raw materials, he pondered living on the edge — as well as the end-of-the-19th-century idea that Americans had pushed so far into the West that the frontier — that defining element of our national psyche — was extinct.

Boston artist [Cristi Rinklin](#)'s painting "The Weight of the World" at Steven Zevitas Gallery in Boston featured swirling scarves and curtains and lumpy clouds. In the background, rose trees and mountains. All in a symphony of antifreeze blue. It was a continuation of Rinklin's exploration of the meeting point of painted and digital representations, and the junction of realism and abstraction. Plus a shout out to 19th century Hudson River School landscapes. It was a tour de force of

Boston Globe: [The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research](#) is one of ["The best of the \(local\) web."](#)

Edgar Allen Beem of Yankee Magazine: ["Indispensable ... Probably the best regional art site in the country."](#)

Art Connect: ["Cook covers so much ground that you get the feeling that he must be aware of everything that goes on in the New England art scene."](#)

Wikipedia: One of the ["Notable art blogs."](#)

Drawn & Quarterly blog: [The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research](#) is ["the best coverage of the New England area art scene out there."](#)

Modern Kicks: ["When it comes to art in New England, the man sees everything. I don't even want to know what the mileage on his car is."](#)

Joel Brown of HubArts: ["Cook has been a veritable Woodward and Bernstein on the Rose."](#)

Art Fag City: ["The most detailed report \[on the Rose Art Museum that\] I've read thus far."](#)

Online University Reviews: One of the ["100 Best Scholarly Art Blogs."](#)

Sara Agniel: ["The Journal is worth adding to your regular reading list."](#)

Caleb Neelon: ["The best regional arts news source out there."](#)

Yankee Magazine blog: [The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research](#) is one of the ["Best Art Blogs in New England."](#)

Ethan Ham: ["Excellent."](#)

Thomas Garvey of The Hub Review: ["Thoughtful."](#)

Geoff Edgers of the Exhibitionist: ["Always compelling."](#)

Boston Photography Focus: ["Excellent overview and coverage of the breaking gallery news since the spring as it happened."](#)

ArtSake: ["Incisive analysis of the New England art scene."](#)

AS220, Providence, Rhode Island.

Boston Athenaeum.

Boston Center for the Arts.

Boston College's McMullen Museum.

Brown University's Bell Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island.

Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Harvard's Carpenter Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

MassArt Galleries, Boston, Massachusetts.

MIT's List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Montserrat College of Art, Beverly, Massachusetts.

Musee Patamecanique, Bristol, Rhode Island.

National Heritage Museum, Lexington, Massachusetts.

Rhode Island College's Bannister Gallery, Providence, Rhode Island.

Simmons College's Trustman Art Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts.

Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, Massachusetts.

Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Most commercial galleries are also always free.

Sometimes free:

Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts, daily from Nov. 1 to May 31.

Harvard Art Museum, Cambridge, 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, after 4:30 p.m. everyday (but they're only open until 5 p.m.).

Harvard's Peabody Museum, Cambridge, free to Massachusetts residents from

perception and painterly technique. And fun.

Perhaps what you noticed first about [Charles LeDray's](#) 25-year survey “workworkworkworkwork” — which was organized by Randi Hopkins at Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art — was that the New York artist had managed to fill half the museum’s galleries with doll-sized clothes. But his marvelously hand-tailored Lilliputian ensembles asked big, soulful, heartbreaking questions about whether men can still be protectors, fixers, and providers in Great Recession America. The ICA followed this up with another hit: the Wexner Center for the Arts’ 10-year survey of the giant, brooding, urban-archæology collages of Los Angeles artist and MacArthur “genius” grant winner [Mark Bradford](#).



[Deb Todd Wheeler's](#) exhibit “Blew” at Miller Block Gallery in Boston was full of magical special effects, but her masterpiece was the 11-foot-wide photographic image “High Sea” (detail pictured above), which looked like an angry rogue wave thundering across a blue-black sea. In fact, it was an image of several temporary sculptures — blue plastic bags that the Newton artist had rippled atop her computer’s scanner. Which made it also a commentary about global pollution and its karma.

Although he’s best known as the creator of “Shrek!,” [“William Steig: Love & Laughter”](#) at the Norman Rockwell Museum demonstrated the range of this artist’s brilliance via more than 200 works from the 1950s to 2001. The late Boston kids’-book creator and New Yorker cartoonist took inspirations from Picasso, Freudian psychology, children’s drawings, and fairy-tale fantasy and combined them with his own curmudgeonly humanism and talent for drawing funny to create one of the great 20th-century meditations on our everyday victories and stumbles.

In his “Other People’s Clothes” series, [Caleb Cole](#) adopts

Modern Kicks: "Greg Cook has continued to be [on top of the story](#)."

Anne Elizabeth Moore: "Has excellent taste, and is [tracking the SHIT outta the local arts scene](#)."

Boston Lowbrow: "Who would've thought Cook's unrivalled thoroughness of local gallery coverage would translate so well to [investigative journalism](#)."

Newcritics: "Cook [gets it right](#)."

Robert Castagna: Cook and The New England Journal of Aesthetic Research are the [cause of, and solution to](#), all of Boston art criticism's problems.

Jon Petro: "Cook's review reads like a [sophomoric attempt at art criticism](#)."

Also our favorite footnote ([see 32](#)).

9 a.m. to noon every Sunday, and from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays from September to May.

[Institute of Contemporary Art](#), Boston, 5 to 8 p.m. every Thursday; free to families (meaning children accompanied by as many as two adults) the last Saturday of each month.

[Museum of Fine Arts](#), Boston, 4 to 9:45 p.m. Wednesdays (but charge for special exhibitions).

[New Bedford Art Museum](#), 5 to 9 p.m. second Thursday of each month. Also 5 to 7 p.m. Thursdays "donate what you can."

[Photographic Resource Center](#), Boston University, Thursdays and the last weekend of each month.

[Portland Museum of Art](#), Maine, 5 to 9 p.m. Fridays.

[RISD Museum](#), Providence, 12 to 1:30 p.m. Fridays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays, 5 to 9 p.m. third Thursday of each month, all day of the last Saturday of each month.

[Worcester Art Museum](#), 10 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

Note: Public libraries often have [free passes](#) to museums.

ADDITIONAL SITES OF NEW ENGLAND INQUIRY

[Zoom](#), Cambridge.

[Vermont Art Zine](#), Vermont.

[Truth and Beauty](#), Beverly, Mass.

[Tiny Showcase](#), Providence.

[The Steel Yard Blog](#), Providence.

[Speak Clearly](#), Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.

[School of the Museum of Fine Arts Animation crew blog](#), Boston.

[Rhode Island State Council on the Arts](#), Rhode Island.

[Portland Museum of Art blog](#),

other personalities as if he'd dropped into their lives Quantum Leap-style. For his photographs in the "Artadia Boston" exhibit at the Boston Center for the Arts, the Somerville artist assembled costumes (big glasses, flowered housecoats, cardigans) and scoured locations to channel lives of quiet desperation: a stooped old woman squinting in her backyard, a bewildered man on a sidewalk bench scratching a lottery ticket. The exhibit's round-up of local Artadia grant winners also included more of Somerville artist Raúl González's pointed folksy, cartoony Injun drawings, which made my "Best of 2009" list when they debuted that year..

[Alison Owen](#) stood out among the talented crowd in the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts' sharp "2010 Fellowship Exhibit" at Imago with her installation of picture frames and walls decorated with fleur de lis patterns. The lovely rococo designs were charged by the fact that Owen made them with dirty mop water and lint collected from cleaning the gallery. Which prompted pointed questions about beauty and femininity in art and life.

Cranston artist [Salvatore Mancini](#)'s photographs of sacred sites and Arizona granite dells at Gallery Z in Providence demonstrated once again the Cranston master's striking, sensual command of black and white as he seeks awe-inspiring metaphysical connections with the ancient, the sacred, the eternal.



Sculptor [Jon Laustsen](#) of Woonsocket had a breakout performance with his lobby-filling installation (pictured above) — his largest yet — in the group show "Voice Over" at Brown University's Bell Gallery. Construction in redeveloping Providence has been a major theme in local art in recent years. Laustsen channels the look and language of building with installations that resemble construction sites — alternating between actual sized and model scale — that have taken on mutant lives of their own.

Maine.
Our RISD, Providence.
North Shore Art Throb, greater Boston.
New Urban Arts, Providence.
New Bodgea, Boston, etc.
My Love for You Is a Stampede of Horses, Boston and national.
Modern Kicks, undisclosed location in southern New England.
Mass MoCA Blog, western Massachusetts.
Making the Art Seen, Malden, Mass.
Maine College of Art, Maine.
Maine Arts Commission, Maine.
Maine Art Scene, Maine.
Keepers of Tradition, Massachusetts.
Just Looking, Maine.
The Hub Review, Boston.
HubArts, Boston.
The Girl in the Green Dress, Boston.
A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Internet, New Hampshire.
Exhibitionist, Boston.
Cultural Productions, greater Boston.
Connecticut Art Scene, Connecticut.
Leslie K. Brown, Boston.
Boston Photography Focus, Boston.
Blog Addison, greater Boston.
Big Red & Shiny, Boston.
The Big Picture, Boston.
The Biggest Little, Providence.
The Berkshire Review, western Massachusetts.
Berkshire Fine Arts, western Massachusetts.
The Arts Fuse, Massachusetts.
Artsake, Massachusetts.
Art in Ruins, Providence.
Art Spirit, New Hampshire.
Artblog.net, Boston.

The Peabody Essex Museum in Salem scored two major curatorial coups this year. In “The Emperor’s Private Paradise,” curator Nancy Berliner put on public view for the first time 90 treasures commissioned by an 18th-century Chinese emperor for his private Forbidden City retreat. In “Fiery Pool,” Brown University professor Stephen Houston and PEM curator Daniel Finamore assembled 90 Maya artifacts that tapped recent scholarship to argue the hitherto unrecognized centrality of the sea to ancient Yucatán Peninsula civilization. The only other institution in the region that borrows on this level is the Museum of Fine Arts, as it did for its 2009 “Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese” show. But beginning with its landmark Joseph Cornell retrospective in 2007, the Salem museum has made the getting of major loans a habit.

The strange wanderings of post-1960s abstraction were the focus of two major shows at the RISD Museum in Providence. Last spring’s Pat Steir drawing retrospective, organized in part by RISD’s Jan Howard, traced Steir’s steps leading up to her rapturous waterfall paintings and drawings of the ’80s. This fall’s Lynda Benglis survey, organized in part by RISD’s Judith Tannenbaum, showcased Benglis’s groundbreaking poured paintings and lumpy drip sculptures of the 1960s and ’70s, plus her still notorious naked self-promotional broadsides. Both artists were feminist activists in the ’70s, pushing for greater roles for women in art and life. These well-deserved retrospectives honor that legacy.



Providence artists Mickey Zacchilli and Natalja Kent — right after being featured with Dirt Palace pals in the Museum of Modern Art’s “Modern Women” book, a survey of great art by women over the past century — filled AS220’s Project Space with “Day for Night” (pictured above), an installation of giant heads, balloons,



drawings of slinky ladies and bloody monsters, and strobe lights for a manic, feral, punk, goth spectacular.

C.W. Roelle of Providence, who was also on my best of '09 list, continued to wow by spinning out his singular, marvelous wire sculptures that tease the line between 2D and 3D. At Craftland's gallery in Providence, they looked like drawings of, say, a birdcage overrun by koalas that had wandered off pages and into the air.

Nick Hollibaugh's wooden sculptures of miniature barns, oil tanks, and farm fields at Cade Tompkins Projects in Providence mulled the vernacular architecture of farming to ask open-ended questions about what rural life means to America. But what stuck with you was the Massachusetts artist's spare, precise woodcraft.

The biggest art news in the region this year was the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' opening of its new Norman Foster-designed [Art of the Americas Wing](#) in November. The project, which increased the museum's size by 28 percent, was the brainchild of MFA director Malcolm Rogers, and it cements his legacy. The architecture is dully sufficient, but the art in the new galleries, as overseen by Art of the Americas department chair Elliot Bostwick Davis, showcases the MFA's strengths: ravishing Maya burial urns, Colonial New England art, Revolutionary-era Boston portraiture, 19th-century landscapes, John Singer Sargent. And Mr. Rogers isn't done yet: next September, the MFA is scheduled to open its renovated Linde Family Wing, which promises to offer more space for contemporary art than the ICA does.

Honorable mentions:

Organized by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, "[Selections from 'Who Shot Rock & Roll'](#)" at the Worcester Art Museum was a massive, glitzy survey of pop-music photos from Elvis to Tupac, with an emphasis on the baby-boomer '60s and '70s. Its best moments were records of change, as when Jimi Hendrix transformed from Wilson Pickett's background guitarist in a 1966 shot into the rock god photographed at the Monterey Pop Festival the following year setting his guitar on fire.

Cranston photographer [Corey Grayhorse's](#) show at AS220 featured deadpan pop surreal portraits of people in animal masks and sweaters as well as luxurious staged photographs, like one of a scantily clad lady in a pink Marie Antoinette wig kicking back at a tea party, that plumbed America's plastic, superficial heart.

In "[Abstraction in Providence](#)" at Rhode Island College's

Bannister Gallery, curator James Montford assembled Lloyd Martin's rusty, rundown urban geometries, Irene Lawrence's hovering fields of dashes, Ruth Dealy's expressionist self-portraits, Donna Bruton's biomorphic visions, and Mahler Ryder's assemblages for a snapshot of the vitality of abstract painting in Rhode Island.

[Jo Dery](#) of Providence filled 5 Traverse in Providence with cartoony screenprints, animation, stuffed fabric heads, and a faux fireplace to tell an allegory about a curious raccoon and a chimney sweep haunted by turtles. The installation spoke of mystical connections between living things.

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