



Roving Eye: Dan Cameron's Week in Review

by [dan cameron](#) 03/04/11

Sometimes art is most meaningful when you least expect. If you'd told me a month ago that the most engaging encounters I would soon have with art would be connected to institutions of higher learning, I might have just rolled my eyes. Yet a few days ago, I caught the last day of "The Jewel Thief" at the Tang Museum at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs and left impressed by this lesson in making economic challenges work to an institution's benefit.

Ostensibly based on work from the Tang's collection, it was really an Op Art-inspired fun house of a show curated by artist Jessica Stockholder. Working with Tang director Ian Berry and curator Susan Rabinowitz Malloy, Stockholder playfully shoehorned dozens of near-perfect examples of mostly recent abstractions into the museum's main gallery by way of a classic salon-style treatment gone a little bit sci-fi, like the interior of a spaceship or flight lab.



INSTALLATION VIEW OF "THE JEWEL THIEF." COURTESY TAN MUSEUM

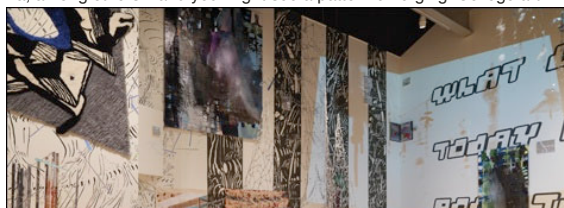
Featuring over 50 artists, with glowing examples by Joan Snyder, Carrie Moyer, Charles Long, Elana Herzog, Stephen Dean and Jessica Jackson Hutchins, "The Jewel Thief" had a light touch in its arrangement that made it easy to both linger and wander, and, more importantly, showed us superb works from artists whom we simply don't see enough of.

The Tang's galleries aren't expansive, yet while I was there they were also hosting a polished thematic survey of contemporary African art, "Environment and Object," as well as a meditative room-sized installation of trees and terrariums by Paula Hayes.

The high bar was set a week earlier in Los Angeles, at the Hammer Art Museum at UCLA, long a beacon of excellence in programming. The current Hammer roster of exhibitions ups the ante with a spirited group exhibition ("All of This and Nothing"), a mini-retrospective (for Richard Hawkins), the outstanding video *Parnassius Mnemosyne* (2010) by Kerry Tribe, and three other single-artist installations, including a tiny gem of an exhibition by Roberto Cuoghi.

Cut to my visit yesterday to RISD's Museum of Art in Providence, featuring the valiant but inordinately inexact group exhibition, "Collision"—a messier version of "The Jewel Thief," but featuring strong sculptural works by Lucky de Bellevue and Carl A'Alvia, among others—and you might see a pattern emerging: College art museums are becoming the new standard-bearers for making contemporary art exciting.

Anybody who believes critics and curators have measurable



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DECODING IMAGES

effect on the art market should run, not walk, to Judith Linhares current exhibition at Edward Thorp. Then explain why these formerly trailblazing "bad paintings" are almost never seen in museums or major private collections, despite how much Jerry Saltz and I both love them.



Nothing quite compares with witnessing an artist get long-overdue greater visibility. I first saw Ivan Navarro's work when he was a student of Eugenio Dittborn at the Universidad Catolica in Santiago, Chile, in the early 1990s. He moved to New York a few years after that and worked very hard on an increasingly compelling set of ideas about nomadism and dislocation. If his knockout display at the 2009 Venice Biennale is any guide, Navarro's current show at Paul Kasmin, "For Heaven or Las Vegas," is both eye-popping and completely cerebral. ABOVE: INSTALLATION VIEW OF "COLLISION." COURTESY THE MUSEUM OF ART IN PROVIDENCE.

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Nick van Woert, Haruspex, 2010

Born and raised in Reno, Nevada, a city with one museum and one major gallery, Nick Van Woert's mixed-media practice evolved from doodles, dra

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