

I call it ORANGES

Art Reviews, Cultural Bric a Brac

By Ed Schad

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Thoughts on a Year of Art

Before I begin my top ten, I want to say that 2008, for me, will always be the year Robert Rauschenberg died. We lost someone special. Rest in Peace.

1. Louise Bourgeois, The Guggenheim and MOCA: Her forms seemed to grow on the Guggenheim's Modernist, reasoned interiors. Razors and flesh, trauma and tumbling bursts of creative energy, I became a Bourgeois convert instantly. I admit I want to write about every single cell she's done.
2. Francis Alys' Fabiola at LACMA: Archive projects are usually awful – aesthetically mute, didactic, and boring. This exhibition proved that that does not have to be the case. Human, smart, and full of wonder, it was basically everything I need from art.
3. Sterling Ruby at MOCA, PDC: I cannot help but think that nothing less than everything is stake in Ruby's work – who we are, where we are going, and how, most importantly, we view ourselves. The work drips with experiences so protean and raw that it scared me. That, to me, means it's working.
4. Miles Coolidge. Acme Gallery: Coolidge simply turned furniture on its side and photographed it as if it was right side up, leaving the world askew. Such a simple inversion, but I legitimately started to think about I how align myself in the world, how the familiar determines how I see.
5. Diane Landry, Solway Jones (Old Location): Not many saw this show, but I can think of no other moment this year in art that was as charming, kinectic umbrellas opening and closing casting a patchwork of shadow and color. The tiny machines played a sad melody as accompaniment.
6. Michael Muller, Chung King Project: Muller seems as at ease thinking about the New York School of painting as he is with Tibetan meditation. Such an elegant, quiet show, one drawing of a night sky took him four months to complete.
7. **Max Jansons**, Christopher Grimes: I am a sucker for the well executed small painting. I am bewitched by Tomma Abts, Jeni Spota, and Maureen Gallace. I may like Jansons the best of the bunch – they feel old and crusty on the surface but have a devilish wit to them, as if Morandi gave up his life long project to flirt with pop.

8. Oranges and Sardines, The Hammer Museum: The humble return of inspiration, the show had wonderful examples of great painting by great painters as well as enough idiosyncrasies to keep you wondering about the choices that were made.

9. Alexandra Grant, Honor Fraser: Grant works primarily in a metaphoric fashion, using certain systems of color, architectural formations, and patterns to begin her paintings but she intuitively adjusts the systems in order to creating a disjoint between seeing and perceiving, short circuiting her depicted words to a certain extent.

10. Cathy Opie, Regen Projects: Not many gave Opie's high school football photographs the credit they deserve. To me, they were accurate and heartening portrayals of boys becoming men inside a theater that will become their lives.

Other great moments (not quite on the list but memorable nonetheless) were: Diana Thater at 1301 PE, Vishal Jugdeo and Kori Newkirk at LAX, Drew Dominick and Lisa Tchakmakian at Sandroni Rey, and the group show No Room at Christopher Grimes.