

The Best Art of 2011



Nick Cave, *Speak Louder*, 2011. Courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery.

We asked a panel of collectors, patrons, and experts: what was the best art of 2011? They share their highlights from the year's gallery and museum exhibitions, performances, street art, and books.

Joanne Leonhardt Cassullo is on the Board of Trustees of the Whitney Museum and Creative Time.

Gallery Shows

- E.V. Day, [Butterfly](#) at Salomon Contemporary
- Tom Sachs, [Work](#) at Sperone Westwater (especially his new film [Color](#) with Van Neistat)
- Jason Middlebrook, [A Break from Content](#) at DODGE Gallery

Museum Exhibitions

- [Living as Form](#) by Creative Time in the Essex Street Marketplace
- [Glenn Ligon: AMERICA](#) at the Whitney

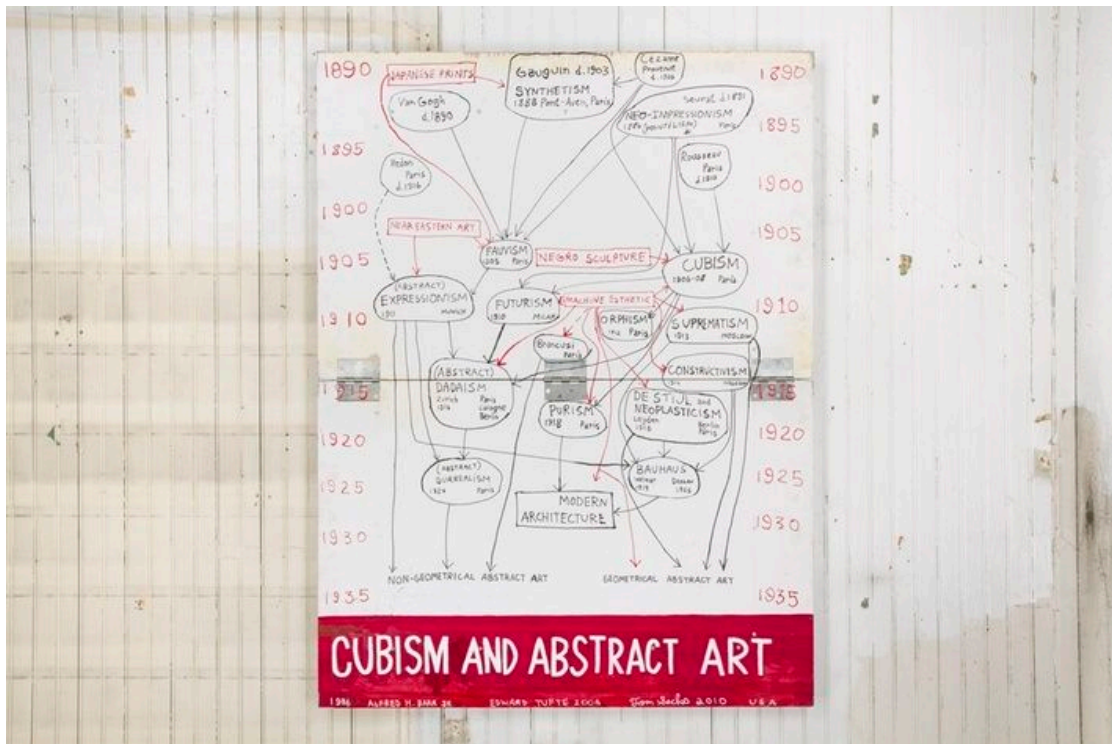
- [Real/Surreal](#) curated by Carter Foster at the Whitney
- [Carsten Höller: Experience](#) at the New Museum
- The Metropolitan Museum's reopened [Islamic Galleries](#)

Performances

- Liz Magic Laser's [I Feel Your Pain](#) at Performa
- Brennan Gerard and Ryan Kelly's [Reusable Parts/Endless Love](#) at Danspace in St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery

Events

- The Creative Time tribute video to Liz Swig, a riff on the LMFAO song "Shots," (directed by Paula Greif and starring board members) that premiered at the Creative Time [spring benefit](#).



Tom Sachs, *Cubism and Abstract Art*, 2010. Courtesy Sperone Westwater.

Barbara Lee is an art advisor and collector involved in numerous museums and non-profits.

- [Do-Ho Suh at Lehmann Maupin](#): The Western sense of home and family meets, or rather crashes, with the Eastern sensibility of home. Suh's attention to every minute detail is incomparable. His exhibition also recreated everyday items, from intercoms to fuse boxes, in a sheer fabric: at once both funny, technically excellent, and beautiful!



Do-Ho Suh, *Fallen Star 1/5*, 2009. Courtesy Lehmann Maupin.

Gregory R. Miller is the founder of [Gregory R. Miller & Co.](#), a publisher of contemporary art books, and President of the Board of White Columns.

Museum Show

- [Glenn Ligon: AMERICA](#) at the Whitney

Gallery Show

- [Sara Greenberger Rafferty](#) at Rachel Uffner

Event

- [NY Art Book Fair](#) at MoMA PS1

Book

- [Richard Prince: American Prayer](#), design by COMA, published by Bibliotheque Nationale de France and Gagosian Gallery (exhibition catalogue for Richard Prince's book collection at Bibliotheque Nationale de France)



Installation view of Sara Greenberger Rafferty's solo show *Remote* at Rachel Uffner

[Museum Nerd](#) is an anonymous (and mysteriously omnipresent) advocate of museums and social media. This article prompted an [expanded best-of list](#) on the Museum Nerd blog.

Luckily my [Foursquare](#) acts as a handy diary of everywhere I went this year. Since these lists always tend to skew towards more recent shows from the end of the year. All these picks are exhibits I visited before April 1, 2011. Here are four great ones, listed in chronological order of my first visit. I went to all of them more than once.

- Eric Doeringer's [I Like the Art World and the Art World Likes Me](#) at EFA Studios
- [The Making of Americans](#) at The James Gallery, Cuny Graduate Center
- [Bye Bye Kitty](#) at Japan Society
- [Alpine Desire](#) at Austrian Cultural Forum

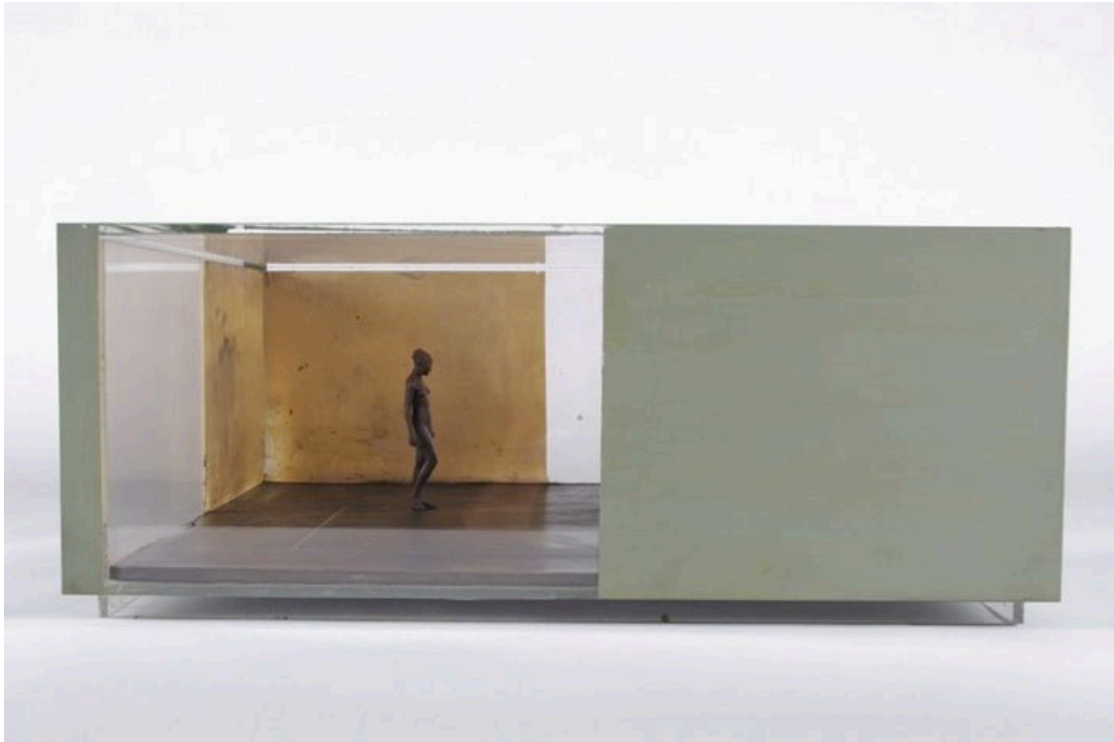


Hans Schabus, *Das letzte Land*, 2005. Courtesy Austrian Cultural Forum.

Beth Rudin DeWoody is a major patron of the arts, collector, and curator.

Gallery Shows

- [Rob Wynne](#) at Locks Gallery
- [Jim Hodges](#) at Gladstone Gallery
- [Robert Graham](#) at David Zwirner
- All of [Craig Starr's](#) shows
- [Late Medieval Panel Paintings](#) at Feigen Gallery
- Nick Cave at [Mary Boone](#) and [Jack Shainman](#)
- [Andy Warhol: Liz](#) at Gagosian
- [Robert Therrien](#) at Gagosian LA
- [Nicholas Krushenick](#) at Gary Snyder
- [Sterling Ruby / Lucio Fontana](#) at Andrea Rosen Gallery
- [Lee Mullican](#) at Marc Selwyn Fine Art



Robert Graham, *Untitled*, 1971. Courtesy David Zwirner.

[Nic Rad](#) is an artist living in Brooklyn, New York.

- [Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine](#): This print and graphic works show at the Met was either accidentally topical or a nicely played academic nod to the rumbling currents of present class warfare. When visual artists aim to cartoon their present culture, the result is sometimes impotent, sometimes powerful, and often hilarious. The show was a survey of sketchings and scrawlings sampling the satirical sensuality of social skewering. See what I did there? Sweet.
- [Anna Betze at Kate Werble](#): Big ole carpets torn up, abused, dyed, and hung like carcass – looming between disused wreckage and the abstract sublime. Made me think of all the times I'd woke up on some strange rug, choking on a hair ball, having just glimpsed the outer banks of consciousness, not sure if I'd met Oz, or remembered to get her number.
- [Kristofer Porter and Christopher Davison at Fred Torres Collaborations](#): Maybe it was me but September of 2011 was a woefully depressing month and year and point in epoch history. I swear to the Boson Higgs particle, the whole universe felt tired. And then one day I staggered into this show at Fred Torres Collaborations, where these two visual poets traded pictures and spoke to each other in an intimate, hallucinatory cadence. Ink, watercolor, acrylic works on paper, just tossed back and forth from their deep vocabularies of line, shape, mass, and rhythm. I don't think I told anyone about this show when it was up—I harbored it, I was so jealous and moved and in love. But now I miss it and I want it back. Please oh please Chris and Kris, let me back into your inner sanctum!
- [POWHIDA: Marlborough Chelsea](#): Earlier this month I wrote about something I'm calling [Art Pop](#) – the inversion of Pop Art, not a celebration of the Art World, but an indictment of it. William Powhida's show-within-a-show at Marlborough Chelsea was deep in the Art Pop stew. An actor played the alter ego of the artist, sometimes black-out drunk, always careening towards shameless exploitation of his imaginary "success." The concept was loaded, and the result was intentionally overrated. Still, as I reflect on "this year in art," the weird stink of the thing lingers. Perhaps it's because the POWHIDA character spit on me during the poker game I hosted at the conclusion of the show. Goddamn it Rick, I was supposed to be an insider. When talking to "the real Powhida," who was on a fellowship drawing senior citizens or something honorable like that, he was literally "phoning in" his ideas for how the performance and show would play out. He told me, "I'm just shocked that it's happening. Fuck it." At the shows end, everyone involved felt used, dirty, covered in bullshit. By the standards of Art Pop, it was a smashing success!
- [De Kooning at MoMA](#): Laugh at the long lines and blockbuster presentation. Tremble before the majestic slapdashery. Weep for the many slaughtered tubes of oil paint. Cheer for the heroic victory of painting as it dances across decades, centuries, and malignant alcoholism.



Anna Betzeze, *Sphinx*, 2011, wool, acid dyes, watercolor, 120 × 120". Courtesy Kate Werble Gallery.

[Julie Novakoff](#) is a Los Angeles-based art advisor and the principal of Nova Fine Art, LLC, a full-service art advisory firm specializing in post-war and contemporary art.

Artist

- Leslie Vance exhibited a new body of work inspired by 17th century Spanish still-life painting at the [David Kordansky Gallery](#). Her experimentation with colors, shapes and various forms to create the illusion of light and its reflections captures the power of the brushstroke to seduce the eye.

Art Fair

- Art Platform Los Angeles 2011 was the inaugural Los Angeles fair by MMPI, producer of internationally renowned art shows including The Armory Show, Art Chicago, Art Toronto, VOLTA, VOLTA NY and NEXT. With the onset of [Pacific Standard Time](#), many galleries at Art Platform showcased a selection of postwar Los Angeles art (1945-1980). Highlights included: photographic landscapes of California by Lynn Davis; California hard-edge paintings by Karl Benjamin, Helen Lundeberg, and John McLaughlin; and polyester resin sculpture by Peter Alexander. For more information on the artists and movements, check out the [Pacific Standard Time](#) website.

Street Art Installation

- *HK Sideshow*, the first solo exhibition from Dustin Grabiner, the street artist and man behind [Hermosa Kustoms](#), was a jolt to my system. The exhibition occupied the Linda Vista Hospital, an abandoned and reportedly haunted hospital in East Los Angeles. Nurses roamed the halls with drinks as the crowd took in an installation of glass window paintings, video art, prints on skateboards, and assemblage sculpture.

Gallery Show

- Jason Martin's [Near By Far](#) at L.A. Louver in Venice. This series of monochromatic works took on a more sculptural approach.

Canvases were richly saturated with pigment to form highly textured surfaces.



Lesley Vance, *Untitled (52)*, 2011, oil on linen, 16.5 × 12.5". Courtesy David Kordansky Gallery.

Carrie Vik is an art collector and patron based in Greenwich, CT. She is also the co-founder of boutique hotels [Estancia Vik Jose Ignacio](#) and [Playa Vik Jose Ignacio](#) in Uruguay.

- [Pablo Atchugarry at Hollis Taggart Gallery](#): Pablo Atchugarry has an exhibition that began at the end of November at the Hollis Taggart Gallery at 958 Madison Ave in NYC. He is a wonderful Uruguayan sculptor who also works in Italy.
- [Diego Rivera show at MoMA](#): The Diego Rivera show at MoMA was outstanding! The combination of beautiful images (medium, color tones, compositions) combined with the history and social commentary really struck me. I didn't know that he was such a sensation in New York at the time. I was lucky enough to have a private tour with the exhibition curator, Leah Dickerman.