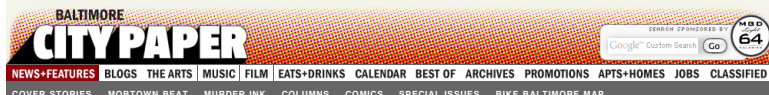


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TOP TEN

The Year in Art



COURTESY THE ARTIST

Andrew Liang's

PUBLISHED: DECEMBER 8, 2010

Unlike last year's Laure Droogul: Follies, Predicaments and Other Condrumdras at the Maryland Institute College of Art or 2008's Franz West, To Build a House You Start With the Roof: Work 1972-2008 at the Baltimore Museum of Art, there wasn't one exhibition this year that stood head and shoulders above everything else. Which is great, because it made 2010 a year featuring a wealth of solid individual, group, and DIY exhibitions that continue to make Baltimore's visual art community the organically growing force that it is. And it doesn't show any signs of letting up—with the Current Gallery reopening on North Howard Street mere blocks from the H&H building hub of galleries, Maryland Art Place moving back to its west side location on Saratoga Street, and another forward-thinking

curator moving into the Contemporary Museum's executive director chair, hopefully 2011 can turn out to be just as densely packed with quality art happenings and why-not? curatorial activity. (Bret McCabe)

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1 Finishing School Go (Contemporary Museum)

Sometimes art obviously captures the zeitgeist, and sometimes it takes you a little while to recognize just what it's trying to do. When the Los Angeles-based collective Finishing School installed its crowd-sourced documentary project Go as part of the Contemporary Museum's Participation Nation back in January, it at first felt a little wan. Inviting people to borrow digital cameras and/or send in photos/text messages/tweets for a continuous loop slide and text feed that kinda/sorta mapped Baltimore? Really? Go slowly gained its critical mass of items and images over the exhibition's run, and it will felt quite a bit taking it in even after repeated visits. And then it left, the year continued on its merry way, "social" emerged as a financial-world metric that sprawled its way into mediating every type of business-to-consumer relationship, activities of Facebook and Google precipitated an ongoing online privacy debate, WikiLeaks info-dumps dominated the newswycle, and you kind of started to realize that the idea of omnipotent, constant, anonymous, indiscriminate surveillance isn't just an imminent reality—it's already here. (BM)

2 Suspended Moment (Open Space)

Open Space's summer group show curated by Neil Reinolda presented a thoughtful selection of works that dealt with the idea of the fleeting moment through technology, communication, and everyday mundanities. Experimental combinations of hardware and electronics, the analog examination of digital communication, and meticulous preservation of those intangible aspects of our daily lives defined this exhibition. A simultaneous playfulness and poignancy was perhaps best presented in works such as Lauren Brick's screen-printed poem made up of subtitles from classic black-and-white movies or Iia Ovechkin's oversized physical manifestations of e-mail attachments between him and his girlfriend. Young artists, part of a generation that continually adapts to and discards information with the pace of technology, collectively dug in their heels to hold onto the now. (Alex Elstein)

3 Andy Warhol: The Last Decade (Baltimore Museum of Art)

The assumption about Andy Warhol is that after his thunderbolt arrival in the 1960s, he became merely a name brand producing work that didn't entirely hold up against his earlier output. The Last Decade smartly and selectively organizes Warhol works from the 1970s and '80s that allow you to realize that his painting brain was just as impish and active, and in many ways operating at an even higher caliber than it had in the years of Pop Art's explosion. And given the still visceral effect of some of his self-portraits from this era, the exhibition offers an invaluable opportunity to witness a celebrity artist known for his affectless detachment quietly illustrate just how fearlessly vulnerable he could be. (BM)

4 Hermione Only Big Deal (Pent House)

Hermione Only's ambitious exhibition, which is both unambalant and expectant in its Big Deal title, is the first (and maybe last) physical exhibition the Pent House gallery has undertaken. Drastically refining the space with tall gallery walls, lighting, and a fresh coat of white paint, Big Deal, while a solo show, was an equal effort on the part of Only and Andrew Laumann, resident curator. Only demonstrated her ability to coolly construct and arrange ritualistic, supremacist props on a shifting scale. Commanding a quiet power similar to a religious sanctuary, objects felt placed for ceremony, in a specific and meaningful arrangement. Impressive black geometric forms loomed in the center of the gallery. Forest landscapes washed with red led into an altar-like collection of objects on low shelves. Red, upside-down crosses leaned along the back wall, toward the three-dimensional works "Sex God" in the back corner of the space. Humor, design sensibility, and a nod to the occult made Big Deal one of the most memorable shows of the year. (AE)

5 Andrew Liang Double Dribble (Windup Space)

A first response to this Visual show inside a bar/club was a little cute overload. Current Gallery member Andrew Liang covered the Windup Space's long west wall with an orgy of colorful, cartoonish people, animals, fish, aliens, karate dudes, floating heads, rotund cats, flying horses, Buddha-like bugs, ping-pong-playing octopuses, surfboard-riding doughnuts, skateboarding archers, and other wild-child creations. And while standing there wondering what in the living hell was going on here, you noticed you were grinning ear to ear like a kid with a blank check at a toy store, and you slowly began to realize that Liang had effortlessly transported you to a ridiculously happy place. (BM)

6 DUOX The Museum of Modern Twink (the former Lambda Rising)

This collaborative pop-up exhibition by DUOX (Daniel Wickerham and Malcolm Lomas) during Pride week is an example of artist initiative and opportunism as it should be happening in Baltimore. Hosted in the former GLEET bookstore Lambda Rising, a now-empty storefront, the recent MICA graduates negotiated the takeover and transformation of the space into a sophisticated exhibition and momentous opening event, which included performances. Drawing inspiration from museums' customary function of preserving cultural artifacts, Wickerham and Lomas both fabricated and gathered a set of contemporary relics of gay and art culture. Preserving and displaying everything from Hostess snack cakes. Fruit of the Loom paintings, fashion and lifestyle magazines, and an Elizabeth Peyton-style Justin Bieber portrait, MoMT confronted institutional art practices and Pride culture with a feund, satirical mirror. (AE)

7 After Image (School 33)

This Jamillah James-curated group exhibition wasn't entirely successful, but it packed more nerve and ambition into it than most group shows in Baltimore usually muster. A loose, Inception-like exploration of the permeable membranes between memory and reality, After Image's works—such as Keren Cytter's "Dreamtalk" and Wu Ingrid Tsang's "The Shape of a Right Statement"—aimed to short circuit the usual way we read visual language. Such a mission didn't always work, but when it did—as in Joseph Ernst's "One Page Magazine" series—it was an intelligent success. That James didn't just call works from the usual local suspects was also a huge plus. (BM)

8 Drawing Out (Hexagon)

This exhibition curated by Lexie Marcelli (an erstwhile City Paper contributor) made the list for its admirable showcasing of local, illustrative talent. Mounted as a part of Artspace's satellite programming, Drawing Out brought together familiar favorites such as Andrew Liang, Lu Zhang, and Xavier Schjapani, as well as debuting the works of Sarah, Ahlecki and "Junior" David Spelce. Loosely themed yet tightly curated, the Hexagon's small, intimate space expanded into the 2D landscapes, comics, portraits, animations, and psychedelic patterns that filled the walls. Drawing Out delivered a reminder that good drawing is awesome, in case you forgot. (AE)

9 Rene Trevino Battle Cry (C. Grimaldis Gallery)

In which local artist Rene Trevino proves just how potentially rich his ongoing portraits of "great men" may be. The exhibition convincingly showed how the meticulous Trevino works with one foot in the distant past, one foot in the recent past, one eye on the future, and one eye self-critically considering the right now. Battle Cry is noteworthy not for what it shows Trevino creating at the moment, but for how it hints at just where he might be going next. (BM)

10 Authorship and Appropriation: The Artist and the Found (Annex)

With seven curators organizing 11 artists, this Artscape satellite exhibition should have been an instance of too many cooks absolutely spilling just about everything. As it turned out, that lack of a unified throughline or singular curatorial vision is what gave the exhibition its insouciant strength. Authorship and Appropriation: The Artist and the Found delivered about 10,000 middle fingers to the boring "but is it art?" question by practically hijacking authorial intent right out of the picture: On impish display was Duchampian theft taken to an absurd edge, leaving viewers to navigate the hilarious chasm between artist intent and the art itself. (BM)

Top Ten 2010 Contents

VIEW ALL

- The Year in News It was the year of the "enthusiasm gap," and not just as applied to the long-over honeymoon between President Obama and all but his most ardent admirers. | 12/8/2010
The Year in Film Though only one cracked into City Paper's Top 10 list, 2010's cinematic cup runneth over with top-notch documentaries—and not just the Michael Moore, Errol Morris, An Inconvenient Truth sort of zeitgeist-baling nonfiction. Instead, smaller, more intimate | 12/8/2010
The Year in DVD: Max Oshurk's 1955 Luis Morones endured many of the same heartbreaks and indignities as its title character: misunderstood, manipulated, abused, and abandoned. | 12/14/2010

BALTIMORE WEEKLY

Calendar grid for December 2010 with date 24 highlighted and 'Showing events from Jan. 24. Click for more.'

Odyssey's SHIPWRECK! Pirates and Treasures

Dive into a multi-media exhibition that lets visitors to discover and explore shipwrecks and sunken treasure.

Works by Maria Cavacos

Includes collages, watercolors, and cards.

3rd Annual High School Juried Art Show

Inspired by the Freedom's Sisters exhibition, this year's art show recognizes women leaders that have impacted communities. In partnership with the Maryland State Education Association (MSEA).

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Rick Honestly, City Paper already has excellent coverage of local events, news, and arts. An additional 3/4 (or so) of one side of one page doesn't amount to a hill of beans. It doesn't even amount to...

- The Court Says "Falsely" - 6 hours ago
Bobgotahoesse I had a few barfood-sit items there and they were outstanding. And yes, the beer selection is terrific as well.
Alewife - 6 hours ago
Antoine .rogers Das wussup yo das my bruva and I miss him yo thaxx
Murder Ink I Baltimore City Paper - 7 hours ago
Antoine .rogers Rest in peace big bruva buckleye! big mannae
Murder Ink I Baltimore City Paper - 7 hours ago
LarryE Like Howard Winlow, I assume the "organization" in question is the Roman Catholic Church. Um, just what makes you think that the Catholic Worker movement gets money from the Church? What, you...
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1 comment - 6 hours ago
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24 comments - 9 hours ago
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Another Guilty Plea in Maryland-Based Money-Laundering Probe | 1/21/2011
Alewife A Big beer selection and ambitious food make this tavern stand out | 1/19/2011
Murder Ink Murders this Week 2: Murders this Year: 9 | 1/19/2011
Inside Jokes A comedy workshop prepares inmates for startup at the Brookbridge Correctional Facility's "talent night" | 1/19/2011
Union Busted Ex-cons, and some current ones, find a home in troubled Local 333 of the International Longshoremen's Association | 1/12/2010

The Year in Television I watch the Hawaii Five-O remake on CBS. There, I said it. Now, don't get me wrong—it's awful. | 12/8/2010

The Year in Music In years past, City Paper has looked to its freelance contributors to vote in its annual Top 10 records poll. This year, we looked to Baltimore instead. | 12/8/2010

The Year in Local Music The record label Thrill Jockey is not based in Baltimore. Nor is City Paper on the Thrill Jockey payroll. | 12/8/2010

The Year in Books In years past we polled City Paper's book reviewers for their 10 favorite books of the year and treaded a list together from their input. | 12/8/2010

The Year in Art Unlike last year's Laure Drogoul: Follies, Predicaments and Other Conundrums at the Maryland Institute College of Art or 2008's Franz West, To Build a House You Start With the Roof: Work 1972-2008 at the Baltimore Museum of Art, there wasn't one exhibit! | 12/8/2010

The Year in Stage The year in local stage is bookended by a pair of DIY transitions. | 12/8/2010

The Year in Food When we try to count our blessings in precarious years, we invariably include good health in our shortened list. | 12/8/2010

The Year In... City Paper's writers go beyond the categories and pick even more top tens | 12/8/2010

Domenic Romeo A389 Records owner talks about the heavy music scene and the endurance of LPs | 11/9/2011

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