

BEST RESTAURANTS
AND BAR GUIDES



NOW READERS' CHOICE 2017!
VOTING IS OPEN!



THIS WEEK IN PRINT



NEWS LIFESTYLE FOOD & DRINK MUSIC MOVIES STAGE ART & BOOKS EVENTS CLASSIFIEDS

HOME / ART & BOOKS /

Top 10 Art Shows

Best of 2012

DECEMBER 27, 2012 12:00 AM

Like 0

1 of 3



Yael Bartana probed themes of nationalism and displacement in a brilliant riff on the power of cinema.



Visual artists this year drew on a wide range of cultural and political movements, making powerful statements in almost every medium. But it was time itself that inspired NOW's number-one show.

1. CHRISTIAN MARCLAY

Power Plant, September 14 to November 25

One of the most important shows anywhere this year, The Clock's monumental 24-hour film collage, two years in the making, created a real-time clock out of time references lifted and stitched together from over 100 years of cinema. Mind-boggling, hypnotic and, most of all, unprecedented.

2. YAEL BARTANA

Art Gallery of Ontario, January 25 to April 1

Israeli artist Bartana's three-part riff on 20th-century propaganda filmmaking, ...And Europe Will Be Stunned, played with the simultaneously ludicrous and poignant notion of a contemporary movement exhorting Jews to return to Poland, where the videos were shot. Her brilliant fantasia touched on themes of nationalism, displacement, history's ghosts and the political power of cinema.

3. WILL MUNRO

Art Gallery of York University, January 11 to March 11

Munro's career, cut short by cancer at age 35, was celebrated by bringing together his remade Y-front underpants, fabric installations, documents of Vazaleen club nights and tributes from the queer/art community. History, Glamour, Magic made it clear why his fearless spirit and refusal to accept limiting definitions of homosexuality continue to inspire.

4. KENT MONKMAN

Centre Space, June 14 to August 11

Continuing to send up high- and lowbrow representations of aboriginal life, Monkman widened his satirical net in Miss America, a painting based on a Tiepolo ceiling, and videos featuring Shatterhand and Winnetou, the Lone Ranger and Tonto of Germany. His uncanny appropriation of styles from 19th-century landscape painting to disco music videos grounds his humour in history.

5. ANDY DECOLA AND ZACK WOOD

Neubacher Shor Contemporary, September 5 to October 6

It was fun to see two skilled painters take a similar approach in divergent and original directions. In The Boys From Nowhere, DeCola's eye-searing ice cream palette and opaque veils of imagery contrasted with Wood's dense and weirdly novel layering of photographic and graphic elements. Both were excitingly bold.

6. MUSEUM FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

Nathan Phillips Square, September 29

Nuit Blanche's most effective use so far of City Hall, 13 installations curated by Janine Marchessault and Michael Prokopow linked artistic creativity with end-time fears. Especially memorable were projects in the creepy underground parking garage like Douglas Coupland's apocalypse multiplex Museum Of The Rapture, Iris Haüssler's poetic evocation of a nuclear-obsessed survivalist's den and Sarah Beck's loon dipped in oil.

7. PUBLIC: COLLECTIVE IDENTITY/OCCUPIED SPACES

University of Toronto Art Centre, May 1 to June 30

This varied, gripping exploration of photography's role in documenting and understanding social change was one of Contact's best shows, with Tarek Abouamin's Tahrir Square videos, Ai Weiwei's middle finger to world monuments, Ariella Azoulay's pencil sketches of Palestinian eviction photos that the Red Cross denied her permission to use, Richard Mosse's stunning infrared images of African conflict zones and Sanaz Mazinani's ovoid kaleidoscope-like collages of news photos.

8. SOUTHER SALAZAR

Narwhal, June 15 to July 15

In You And Me (And The Mouse In The Moon), Salazar showed dream watercolours, deceptively sweet confections that were less naive than they appeared to be. His outlandish visual imagination, keen sense of composition and use of collage and Otaku elements helped give his gently off-kilter fantasy landscapes visual interest, balance and bite.

9. JON RAFMAN

Angell Gallery, May 3 to June 2

Rafman's The Nine Eyes Of Google Street View used screen captures culled from the mapping website, demonstrating that we now have eyes on pretty much every street on the globe in unprecedented ways and giving us odd, hilarious and occasionally disturbing snapshots from the frontiers of our panoptic society.

10. TASMAN RICHARDSON

MOCCA, February 4 to April 1

Richardson's image-haunted labyrinth snaked its way through a series of dark and disorienting stops. From the chilling twin videos of Heather O'Rourke and Naomi Watts at the beginning to the final digital maelstrom culled from Gaspar Noé's Enter The Void, Necropolis effectively used image and sound to explore the morbidity of media.

🔖 Tags **Special Issue, Year In Review**

Like 0

RELATED