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10 Must-See Exhibits

Fall Guide: Visual Arts

by Gerald Mead



"Gas Tractor" by Scott Bye, at NCCC

"Highway to Heaven" by Jason Rhoades, at AKAG

The region's galleries & museums prepare for a brisk fall

While summer winds down, the art season winds up with new exhibitions opening up all over town in the coming months. The following are some upcoming presentations I'd recommend seeing as well as a few that you still have time (and ought) to see.

Jason D'Aquino at Karpeles

You have until September 30 to view the exquisitely rendered, idiosyncratic drawings of Jason D'Aquino, a tattoo artist by trade, at the Karpeles Manuscript Museum at 220 North Street. The most amazing works in this artist's Buffalo debut exhibition are undoubtedly his miniature, often quirky or macabre images meticulously drawn inside the covers of old matchbooks. In the coming year, some of these same works will be part of solo exhibitions of D'Aquino's work in Belgium and New York. Thankfully, we get to examine them (with helpfully provided magnifying glasses) here in Buffalo first.

Bad Habits at AKAG

Bad Habits, an astute, thoughtfully organized exhibition at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery on view through October 4—provocatively described as “a selection of the more subversive and deliciously naughty art in the Gallery's collection”—is noteworthy for multiple reasons. First of all, it provides an opportunity to see the gallery's recent, significant acquisitions—such as the Matthew Barney's video *Drawing Restraint 9* and related sculpture/construction, and Jason Rhoades' irreverent neon sculpture *Highway to Heaven*—and how those new additions intersect with other works in the museum's iconic collection. Secondly, this exhibition is the first organized for the Gallery by Heather Pesanti, the new curator who came to Buffalo last fall from her curatorial position at Pittsburgh's Carnegie Museum of Art. If the strength of *Bad Habits* indicates the innovation and insightful contemporary perspective that Pesanti will contribute to future collection exhibitions—and I believe it does—then her addition to the curatorial staff bodes well for us all and continues/enhances a legacy of keen curatorial vision at the AKAG.



Polaroid portrait of Princess Farah Pahlavi of Iran by Andy Warhol, at the Castellani

Craft Art at Burchfield-Penney

Now entering its third decade, the Burchfield-Penney Art Center's popular biennial craft art exhibition (newly renamed *Art in Craft Media*), which opens September 12 and closes January 3, is even more highly anticipated this year since museum construction delayed it by a year. Presented in the Burchfield's commodious main exhibition space and Sylvia L. Rosen Gallery (named after the benefactor of the biennial), the exhibition this year will include work by 17 invited "veterans"—artists who have been in at least four previous exhibitions—as well as artists selected by juror Margaret Carney, curator at the Blair Museum of Lithophanes in Toledo, Ohio. This intentional mix of established and emerging clay, glass, metal, wood and fiber artisans should ensure an exceptional exhibition.

Brian A. Kavanaugh at Artspace

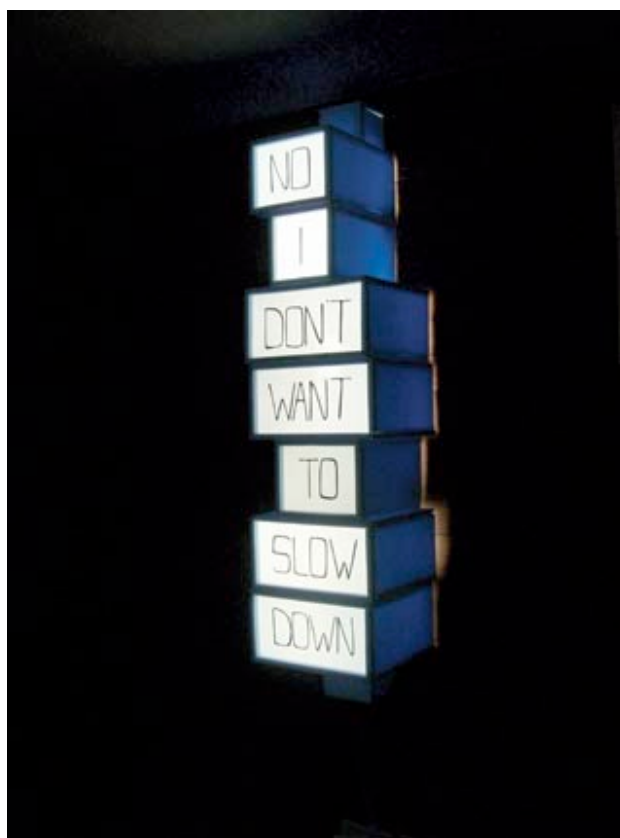
A monumental, image-profuse collage measuring seven by nine feet that Brian A. Kavanaugh has been creating for almost two years will be the centerpiece of his first ever solo exhibition, *Rumors and Folktales*, in the Artspace Buffalo Gallery from September 18 to October 19.

Ecologies of Decay at Artspace

Concurrent with Kavanaugh's exhibition, the large vacant commercial space adjacent to the Artspace gallery becomes a blank slate for individual installations by three artists whose names/work alone promise that this is a short-term show not to miss: Dennis Maher, creator of large assemblages of demolished house components; Julian Montague, famed classifier of shopping carts who has recently turned his attention to variously documenting found arachnids; and Jean-Michael Reed, longtime photographer of structure fires. Titled *Ecologies of Decay* and organized by art consultant Joanna Gillespie, a periodic Artspace Buffalo Gallery resident curator, the timely thesis of the exhibition is multi-dimensional interpretation of the degradation of housing stock in Western New York.

Tom Hughes at Castellani

Tom Hughes' low-tech light box sculptures are potentially emblazoned with personal affirmations and motivational phrases such as "Now You're Good" and "Bask in the Glow." They are appealing, empowering works that give back to the viewers more than they ask of them, and the TopSpin Gallery at the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University where they will be installed will be suitably darkened to show them off to maximum advantage. *Tom Hughes: We Know All the Words* will be on view September 27 through January 17.



"Slow Down" by Tom Hughes, at Castellani

Warhol at Castellani

While you are at the Castellani, make sure to see their permanent collection exhibition of Andy Warhol's

work organized by curator Michael Beam to showcase a recent museum coup—being selected by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts to receive a gift (part of their Photographic Legacy Program) of 158 of the artist’s original Polaroid photographs and gelatin silver prints. These powerful documents of Warhol’s era were also frequently source material for the artist’s emblematic silk-screened portraits of the rich and famous. Accordingly, viewing the exhibition is like flipping through the artist’s sketchbook and in the process discovering “a wealth of information about Warhol’s process and his interactions with his sitters.”

Scott Bye at NCCC Gallery

Compelling found-object assemblages by sculptor Scott Bye have cropped up here and there in the past three years while he has been working out of a space at Buffalo Arts Studio. Having only glimpsed the oeuvre of his inventive hybrids that artfully hover between purpose and whimsy, I was glad to discover that a major showing of his work (his first in the area) will take place at the Fine Arts Gallery at Niagara County Community College in Sanborn, from October 8 through November 14. Curator Kathy Sherin has paired him with Doug Bauer, a seasoned architectural model-maker who creates elaborate, meticulously crafted constructions that are illuminated from within, in a two-person exhibition titled *Mixed Messages*.



Charles Rand Penney is selling some of his famed collection on October 4.

Penney Collection at Marriott

Finally, a meteoric art event will take place at the Buffalo/Niagara Marriott Hotel on October 4: a one-day show and sale titled *The Private Collection of Charles Rand Penney’s Western New York Art*. More detail on this opportunity to acquire pedigreed regional art will come in a future article, or visit twentiethcenturyfinest.com.

—gerald mead