

10

TO SEE NOW

By CATE MCQUAID



FOR DECADES, Boston was a backwater when it came to contemporary art. Now, however, some local museums are beefing up their collections of 21st-century works and others are staging more ambitious exhibits. What makes art contemporary? It's not simply a matter of timing. Today's art reflects today's society. Here are 10 of the best new works on view in these parts this summer.



JUNGLE HEADACHE

BY GARY WEBB
"MR. JEANS" EXHIBITION AT THE DECORDOVA SCULPTURE PARK AND MUSEUM, LINCOLN THROUGH AUGUST 12
decorдова.org

This British sculptor is a virtuoso with materials, giddily crafting works from anything he can get his hands on—steel, brick, fabrics, spray paint, mirrors—to fashion snazzy objects that look like big toys. He draws on furniture design and the glitz of retail displays, but also taps Modernist abstraction. His sculptures are dense with associations, but come across as objects of pure whimsy.



EMPIRE 2009-2012

BY STEVE LOCKE
"YOU DON'T DESERVE ME"
EXHIBITION AT
SAMSON GALLERY, BOSTON
THROUGH JULY 21
samsonprojects.com

Locke, a Boston artist, examines the complexity of desire, painting men who respond to the viewer's gaze, often by sticking their tongues out. Now he raises the stakes, entering a new realm: Placing his paintings on poles, the artist marries painting with sculpture and installation. That ratchets up the perceived response of his subjects to the viewer. And vice versa.





"NAVIGATING THE PERSONAL BUBBLE" (INSTALLATION VIEW)

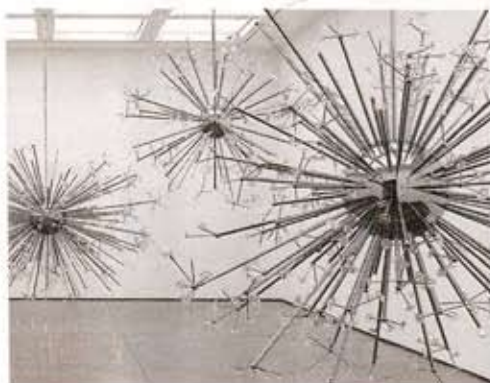
BY WENDY RICHMOND
AT THE MUSEUM OF ART, RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN, PROVIDENCE
THROUGH NOVEMBER 4
risdmuseum.org

As technology evolves, artists grapple with our new tools and toys and their implications in society. Richmond's three-channel video installation surrounds viewers with people working on laptops in cafes and libraries; the footage was taped by their computers' cameras. These people are out in the world, making their own privacy.



ISLAND UNIVERSE

BY JOSIAH MCELHENY
"SOME PICTURES OF THE INFINITE"
EXHIBITION AT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART, BOSTON
FRIDAY THROUGH OCTOBER 14
icaboston.org

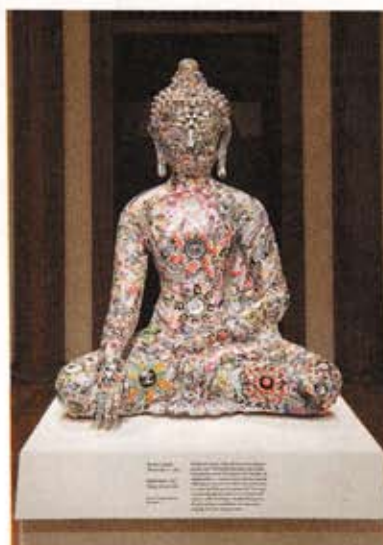


As life grows increasingly virtual, many artists turn to handcraft to keep a grip on the tangle. Boston-born McElheny is a stellar glass blower, but his work doesn't rest on the sheer beauty of his medium. This conceptual artist deploys transparency, mirrors, and the gleam of glass to contemplate astronomy, philosophy, infinity, history, and the churning passage of time.



RADIOACTIVE

BY GONKAR GYATSO
"SEEKING SHAMBHALA" EXHIBITION
AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON
THROUGH OCTOBER 21
mfa.org



Just as Buddhists strive to dissolve dualities, contemporary art often melds polar opposites. This Tibetan artist performs a mash-up of highbrow and lowbrow, spiritual and commercial, detached and grasping. He has covered his cast-resin Buddha with garish decals – hearts, information about condoms, and, at his third eye (beware!), the symbol for radioactivity.



DILUVIAL

BY CRISTI RINKLIN
AT THE CURRIER MUSEUM OF ART
MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
THROUGH SEPTEMBER 9
currier.org

Rinklin, a Boston painter, has covered floor-to-ceiling windows and adjoining walls with a translucent installation inspired by the Currier's 19th-century American landscapes. She combines painting with digital techniques in a work that draws on the tools of visual storytelling over the centuries, addressing depth and surface, representation and abstraction, paint and pixels.

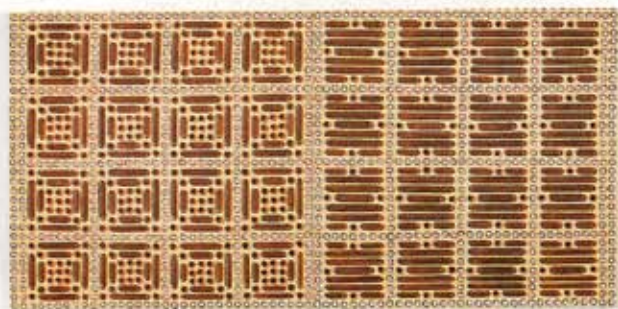


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SIGNAL

BY DAN WALSH
"UNCOMMON GROUND"
 EXHIBITION AT THE MUSEUM
 OF ART, RHODE ISLAND
 SCHOOL OF DESIGN
 THROUGH OCTOBER 21
risdmuseum.org



For centuries, artists strove to portray space and volume expertly. These days, they aim to bollix up expectations. Walsh's paintings blend minimalist grids with a handmade aesthetic and luminous tones. He hangs them in relation to lines of black tape on the wall, toying with viewers' perceptions of the museum's space.



BIKING IN BERLIN #37

BY NANCY MURPHY SPICER
"BIKING IN BERLIN" EXHIBITION
 AT CARROLL AND SONS GALLERY, BOSTON
 JULY 4 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1
carrollandsons.net

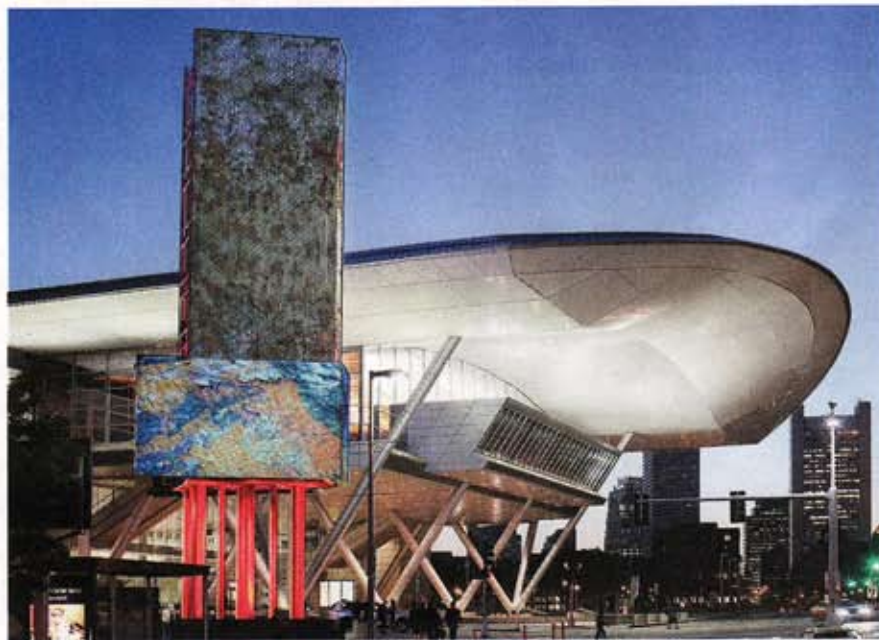
Blame it on the GPS. As artists attempt to preserve a part of the brain that may become vestigial, mapping in art has burgeoned. Murphy Spicer's lyrical works on pages from a guidebook trace her travels by bike around Berlin. Her responses to the terrain sport big blocks of color, with collaged bits and cutouts adding texture to the abstracted cityscapes.



CANADA DE FANTASIE

BY BGL (JASMIN BILODEAU,
 SEBASTIEN GIGUERE, AND
 NICOLAS LAVERDIERE)
"OH, CANADA" EXHIBITION
 AT MASS MOCA, NORTH ADAMS
 THROUGH APRIL 1
massmoca.org

"Do it yourself" may seem inherent to making art, but the DIY viewpoint is hot these days, and this scrappy self-propelled carousel fits the bill. Pulled together out of old, rusted temporary barricades, it looks like something your kids might try to erect in the backyard—except it's bigger and better executed. It has another contemporary edge: interactivity. Adults are as eager to play as children.



AXIOM #3: TERRITORY

BY FRANCOIS DE COSTERD
 AND TODD ANTONELLIS
"ART ON THE MARQUEE" EXHIBITION
 AT THE BOSTON CONVENTION
 & EXHIBITION CENTER
 ONGOING
artonthemarquee.com

When it comes to public art, Boston still lags. Here's an exception, in a fast-growing frontier for public art: video. The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority's 80-foot-tall, seven-screen marquee is showing multiple videos by local artists, curated by Boston Cyberarts. The videos, crafted to the marquee's odd shape, are short and silent, smart and funny, and range from animation to meditations on landscape. ■

Cate McQuaid is a Providence-based writer who frequently covers art for the Globe. Send comments to magazine@globe.com.

*"SIGNAL" PHOTOGRAPH FROM PAULA COOPER GALLERY, NEW YORK, AND RISD MUSEUM OF ART; "CANADA" PHOTOGRAPH BY A. ELIZABETH BERG; "AXIOM" PHOTOGRAPH BY EVAN RICHMAN