10 Best Art & Design shows of 2010 in no particular order

By Lauren Weinberg
December 16-29, 2010 Issue

Dan Gunn: Multistable Picture Fable,” Lloyd Dobler Gallery, Sept 11–Oct 16. TOC contributor Candice Weber wrote, “Gunn simultaneously makes a case for painting’s relevancy and acknowledges its ambiguous role in 21st-century art.”

“Felipe Dulzaides: Utopía Posible,” Graham Foundation, Apr 30–Jul 17. We were moved to tears by Dulzaides’s multimedia portrait of Cuba’s National Art Schools—a breathtaking campus abandoned in the 1960s before its completion.


“La Frontera: The Cultural Impact of Mexican Migration,” Museum of Contemporary Photography, Oct 8–Dec 22. Photographs from both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border suggest it’s silly and dangerous for Americans to believe that we can differentiate “us” from “them.”

“Modern in America: Works on Paper, 1900–50s,” Art Institute of Chicago, Jan 30–May 2. Candice called this exhibition of prints, drawings and watercolors from the Art Institute’s permanent collection, which featured iconic American artists such as Georgia O’Keeffe and Jacob Lawrence, “a perfect introduction to its subject.”


“The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Museum Collections and Deaccessioning,” DePaul University Museum, Jan 14–Mar 19. The art in this exhibition was awful, but that was the point: DePaul’s timely show presented works that the museum intended to remove from its collection to demystify the process of deaccessioning.

“Roger Brown: Calif USA,” Hyde Park Art Center, Jun 20–Oct 3. Guest curator Nick Lowe found the best possible way to display late works by our favorite Imagist: alongside the collections of vernacular art and knickknacks that inspired Brown (1941–97) when he lived in California.

“Translating Revolution U.S. Artists Interpret Mexican Muralists,” National Museum of Mexican Art, Feb 12–Aug 1. We didn’t know how much Diego Rivera and other Mexican artists had influenced Americans such as Jackson Pollock, Elizabeth Catlett and Margaret Burroughs until we saw this illuminating exhibition of 20th-century art.
“William Eggleston: Democratic Camera, Photographs and Video, 1961–2008,” Art Institute of Chicago, Feb 27–May 23. Don't tell anyone, but we had much more fun at this retrospective of Eggleston's pioneering color photos than we did at the Art Institute’s “Matisse: Radical Invention, 1913–17.”