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NIGHT COURT AT ISABELLA & MAIN

Art's New Guard arrives in Midtown

BY STEVEN THOMSON 1.20.10 | 10:33 am

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Prada sheathed in parkas was the assumed attire for Friday's drizzly evening of openings at the Isabella Court's row of art galleries. Assuming his new throne at the Court, recent Austin transplant Arturo Palacios triumphed over the treacherous weather with the unveiling of his relocated gallery, Art Palace.

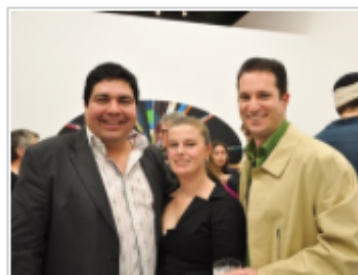
Following a five-year run in the state capital, Palacios decided he could reach a broader audience based in Houston. The epic work of Jonathan Marshall, featured in Art Palace's current show, *Doubled Vision*, was largely overshadowed by the hordes of art lovers and lovers of art lovers. Nevertheless, the art – presumed artifacts from a post-catastrophic landscape – left the gallery-goer eager for more eye candy at Palacios' future exhibitions.

Among the most captivating aspects of the show is Marshall's multimedia approach; visitors are treated to standalone sculpture, photography, painting and a video installation, all meditating on the artist's DIY folk mythology. Sci-fi fans might catch a hint of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but don't be fooled – Marshall's man vs. nature conversation is one for the new decade.

As party favors, guests snagged packs of baseball cards featuring Palacios' represented artists, all bundled with an authentic piece of bubble gum inside pastry paper printed with an early '90s Nintendo aesthetic. Among the Palace partiers: Clint Wilhour of Galveston Art Center, artist Sterling Allen, Dave Bryant, Austin patron Ann Daughety and sound artist Travis Austin. Architect Karen Lantz and spouse Andrew Farkas made claim to the show's centerpiece panel, *Nike, Adidas, Reebok, or Little Bangs in a Big Bang*.

The Art Palace hubbub left the three other art spaces poised to peacefully welcome visitors to their opening nights with a decidedly more contemplative atmosphere. For gallery owner Kerry Inman, whose spaces sandwich both ends of the Court, the arrival of Art Palace embodies the fulfillment of her dream of bringing an art corridor to Midtown, adopting Upper Kirby's Colquitt Street model, but bringing part of the contemporary art discourse to the center of the city.

In a word, Kerry characterizes the new show at Inman Gallery of Dana Frankfort's *PICTURES* as "urgent." Frankfort humanizes her palette of Pop Day Glo hues with a painterly nod to abstract expressionists the likes of Franz Kline with her brash brushstrokes, while also taking a conceptual bent with the depiction of capitalized linguistic forms. Picture Ed Ruscha on his day off with flashes of the female gaze. On the other end of the block, Inman Annex launched a new group show, *Cantilever*, featuring large-scale works by David Aylsworth, Nina Bovasso, Tommy Fitzpatrick, Katrina Moorhead, Demetrius Oliver, Brent Steen and Brad Tucker. While *Cantilever* teeters on the schizophrenic, it thrives on juxtapositions: an array of figurative forms, landscape images and abstract elements with architectural impulses propose a provocative set of stylistic relationships.



Arturo Palacios, left, Karen Lantz and Andrew Farkas. Palacios recently left sleepy Austin to open Art Palace at Isabella Court. Photo by Megan McIntire Courtesy of Art Palace



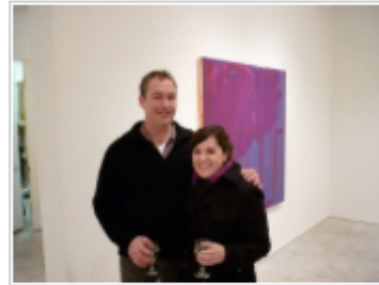
Painting conservator and collector Jill Whitten in front of Dana Frankfort's "LIFE" at Inman Gallery. Photo by Will Henry



Glasstire founder/director Rainey Knudson and her son Tennessee standing match the colors of Dana Frankfort's "FITNESS" at Inman Gallery. Photo by Katie Inman

In contrast to the blazing scene of Art Palace and bright canvases at Inman Gallery, CTRL simmered with its aptly named group show, *Nothing to see here. Move along*. The obvious draws are the prismatic portraits of bleeding post-Soviet youth by Alexander Teinei and Ry Fyan's collage commentary on cross-cultural consumerism and psychic narratives. Nevertheless, the most captivating set of work of the show – and perhaps the entire evening – is Alexis Granwell's collection of wall-mounted sculptures. Granwell's nests of paper, laser cut wood, waxed thread and wire take the form of quietly intricate compositions – the “hatched” manifestation of her equally subtle drawings.

Following the openings, visitors ducked out of the Spanish Renaissance Revival compound and rambled across the corner to mingle over mojitos at Julia's Bistro. As the lively banter bouncing between the bistro's crimson walls may attest, Friday's art unfurling confirms the arrival of a new guard in Midtown.



Hayden Garrett and Menil curator Michelle White *Photo by Will Henry*