

SHE'S GOT LEGS
Houston's John Cleary Gallery just wrapped a well-received exhibit of Henry Horenstein's work called *Show*, which included documentary burlesque images such as "Tip in Fishnets," at left, and "Amber Ray (Eye)," below. Horenstein prints and books remain popular at the gallery.



The Naked City

As Helmut hits MFA, H-Town emerges as a capital of provocative photography. | By Troy Schulze |

Houston summers inspire us to show more skin, but this season the city's art world is taking it rather far. Next month the **Museum of Fine Arts** presents an exhibition of nudes and other images by the late fashion and fine-art photographer Helmut Newton, whose work was described by *Vogue* editor Anna Wintour as "synonymous with *Vogue* at its most glamorous and mythic."

The 205 photos, which span the complete contents of Newton's first three books—1976's *White Women*, 1978's *Sleepless Nights* and 1982's *Big Nudes*—will be blown up into big prints, some as large as 8 feet by 8 feet. The MFA has also acquired a complete set of the prints for its permanent collection.

As a fashionable art form, the nude is back. Especially in Houston, which boasts not only this first-of-its-kind-anywhere-on-earth Newton retrospective, but also a separate private collection of fine-art photos that must rank among the world's best and biggest. There's also a healthy gallery market here for nude and "burlesque" art photos, both by Houston artists and others. **Neiman Marcus**, of all places, plays host this month to the work of one such local photographer, **Jay Rusovich**.

The trend has been developing for a few years. In 2008, the MFA displayed the controversial photography of Nan Goldin, whose work contains both male and female nudity, and contemporary nude painting **CONTINUED...**



PLAYING HORSE
 Newton's "Saddle 1"
 from his mid-'70s
Sleepless Nights series,
 is among 205 of his
 classic images set for
 display at MFA next
 month. Meanwhile,
 local artist Jay
 Rusovich's "Restive,"
 below, and others from
 his *Beautiful* series
 are featured in display
 windows at Neiman
 Marcus now.



"They're unique. They're stylish. They have a life of their own," says Helmut Newton collector Don Sanders. "I don't know whether you'd say it was sensuous or just classic. It's different, and it's very identifiable."

...CONTINUED has been exhibited at both the MFA and **The Menil** in recent years. Just last month **John Cleary Gallery** (2635 Colquitt St., 713.524.5070) presented *Show*, an exhibit of Boston-based documentary photographer Henry Horenstein's stunning black-and-white images of sometimes cross-dressing burlesque performers.

"Burlesque is a fun world," says John Cleary owner-director Catherine Couturier, explaining the popularity of the genre, and noting that prints and books by Horenstein continue to be available at the gallery. "It has elements of danger and sex and art, but in an overall safe environment. There's a freedom in that world. Men can be women, and women can be men. Everyone is accepted. Anything goes."

And sometimes it goes into rather unexpected places. Three prints by local photographer Rusovich, whose provocative fine-art nudes show regularly at Houston's **Colton & Farb Gallery** (2445 North Blvd., 713.869.1551), will be featured in window displays at the Galleria's Neiman Marcus this month. Shoppers will encounter three of the more tame shots of women from his recent *Beautiful* series, in which both male and female dancers from the city's **Dominic Walsh Dance Theater** appear as models.

"They're fashion-y without being fashion statements," Rusovich says of the images, taken in grand River Oaks foyers. "They're sort of like muses. I think for Neiman Marcus it works beautifully. The dreaminess is there; the fantasy is there. It's how you sell clothing."

The photographer, who says he uses nude models as "a vehicle for communication... to communicate an idea," bends gender roles. A male model may appear in high heels, a female may have rippling muscles and exude power and dominance. "People respond to beauty, and then they look at the message."

Gallerist Couturier and artist Rusovich both say the city's progressive response to contemporary fine-art nudes and burlesque is probably simply a factor of its growth in size and stature. "The city is becoming more and more urban by the minute," says Rusovich. "There's no question that Houston is celebrating its growth, and part of that is a sort of social or cultural maturity. It's a sophistication that was not here before. I think that [previously] people felt more self-conscious about this sort of thing; they wouldn't exhibit it. People are starting to celebrate, more than ever before, this new big-city urban identity."

Houston biz titan **Don Sanders**—former part-owner of the Houston Astros and an avid collector of contemporary art, especially nude photography—is definitely celebrating the genre. "I've just always enjoyed looking at nude photographs," he says. Sanders' collection is massive. There's an entire room at his River Oaks penthouse devoted to it—not only to displaying various prints but also to meticulously archiving and preserving thousands of stored-away photographs.

His holdings include works by masters like Richard Avedon and Ralph Gibson, and he also owns pieces he commissioned by Inez

CONTINUED ON PAGE 134...



and Lucien Clergue, all beautifully executed prints in fine detail. But Sanders—whose non-nudes treasures include driftwood horse sculptures by Deborah Butterfield and a wall-length mirror by Robert Rauschenberg with images of the space shuttle Discovery—is most proud of his Helmut Newton collection, especially a series of what he calls “the best 102 photographs Newton ever did,” all originals and signed with handwritten descriptions by Newton.

“They’re unique. They’re stylish. They have a life of their own,” says Sanders. “If you or I tried to set up one and copy it, we could never do it. I don’t know whether you’d say it was sensuous or just classic. It’s different, and it’s very identifiable.”

The late Newton has long been a favorite of the city’s fashion-forward society set. Lynn Wyatt even has a small collection of his images on display in her powder room. But that doesn’t mean that showing his work at the MFA isn’t without the threat of controversy.



Sanders thumbs through a Newton tome.

While museum-goers are no strangers to the nude form, often represented in masterworks of painting, nude photography has been a difficult subject for major museums, with many people unable to distinguish the line between art and pornography. Newton’s nude photos, while erotically charged, are not intended to inspire sexual excitement, say the art pros. They display powerful, glamorous women in private, often decadent, environments. They are secret narratives played out against a backdrop of high society and fashion.

“[Newton] worked at the edge of what would shock, but not alienate, a certain sophisticated, international readership,” writes Anne Wilkes Tucker, MFA’s curator of photography and co-organizer of the July exhibit with Newton family friend Manfred Heiting, making remarks in the exhibition’s catalog. “His career was not without controversy, and magazines experienced canceled subscriptions from some of his spreads, many of which now seem tame by contemporary standards.

“His women are confident, which some perceive as aggressive, more muscular than anemic,” adds the curator. “They are not demure.”

For his part, Sanders, a big supporter of the MFA and Tucker’s efforts specifically, can’t wait to see the Newton show himself. (He says, surrounded by his own astonishing collection, that he has volunteered to help hang the pictures at the museum.) He expects Houston to turn out in full force for the exhibit.

“Everybody looks at [nudes], women as much as men,” says Sanders, recalling a story that makes him laugh at the telling. “Year and a half, two years ago, there was a group from New Orleans, from a Catholic church, coming over to see my art collection. And they were elderly; they were in their 60s or 70s, and there was about 35 of them. Thirty of them were women, and four or five men.

“They wanted me to say a few words of welcome, and I did,” he goes on. “And then I said, ‘I gotta mention one other thing: You’re welcome to go [all over the house], but upstairs, in one room, is a huge collection of nude photography. So anyone opposed to nudes probably shouldn’t go up there.’ And then I said, ‘Thanks for being here.’

“God almighty! As soon as I said it, they were running over each other to come up here. And, hell, this is where they stayed most of the time.” ■

HOT

TON

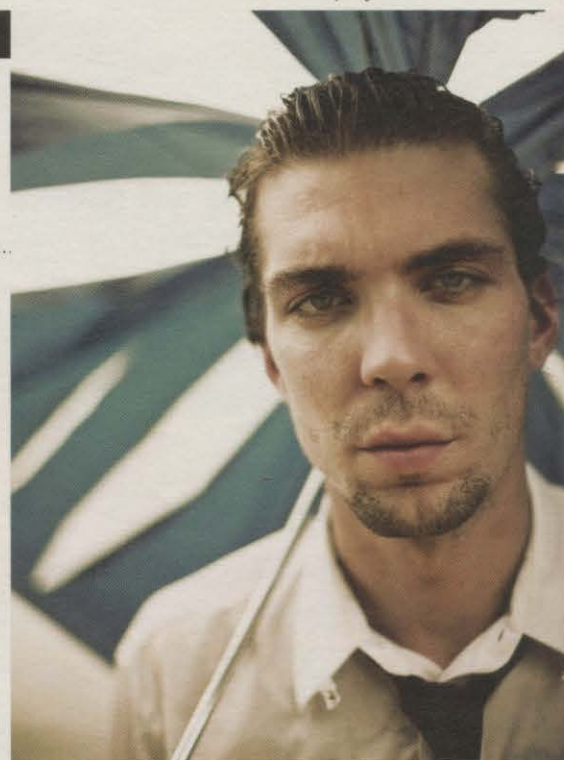
CALENDAR | December 2010

| By Chris Henderson |

TOP TEN

1 JUSTIN TOWNES EARLE

Son of country outlaw Steve Earle, Justin's Americana hit *Harlem River Blues* continues to climb the indie charts. **Dec. 2, 9PM.** Tickets \$15. *Fitzgerald's*, 2706 White Oak Dr., 713.862.3838, fitzlivemusic.com



2 'MUSEUM OF DYSFUNCTION III'

Mildred's Umbrella theater company takes the audience on a guided tour through the humorous and horrifying aspects of relationships with short plays and monologues. **Dec. 2-4, 9-11, 8PM.** *Obsidian Art Space*, 3522 White Oak Dr., 832.418.0585, mildredumbrella.com

3 VERNON FISHER

The Fort Worth multimedia artist paints illusion-rich abstracts. Opening reception Dec. 4, 11AM. Exhibit **through Jan. 12.** *Devin Borden Hiram Butler Gallery*, 4520 Blossom St., 713.863.7097, dbhbg.com

4 ANDREA BOCELLI

Celebrated Italian tenor Bocelli makes his Houston Symphony debut with his latest album, *My Christmas*. **Dec. 8, 7:30PM.** Tickets \$75. *Toyota Center*, 1510 Polk St., 866.446.8849, houstontoyotacenter.com

5 TONY SMITH: DRAWINGS

Though he's known as a preeminent 20th century sculpture artist, these '50s drawings show Smith working with brilliant colors and an abstract

7 SHEN YUN

Brilliant backdrops, ornate costumes and precision choreography define this internationally acclaimed exhibition of Chinese dance. **Dec. 21-24**, see website for ticketing and schedule. *Jones Hall*, 615 Louisiana St., 713.629.3700, ticketmaster.com

8 'THE NUTCRACKER'

Tchaikovsky's timeless score and the Houston Ballet's iconographic imagery have become synonymous with the season classic. **Through Dec. 26**, see website for schedule. Tickets \$19. *Wortham Theater Center*, 501 Texas St., 713.237.1439, houstonballet.org

9 COLTON & FARB

This group show comprises Indiana-born Terence La Noue's earthy tributaries, as well as works by veteran feminist artist Mary Beth Edelson and part-time Houstonian Molly Gochman, edgy local photographer Jay Rusovich and Polish multimedia artist Christian Tomaszewski. **Through Jan. 29.** *Colton & Farb Gallery*, 2445 North Blvd., 713.869.5151, coltonfarbgallery.com



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Colton & Farb Gallery

November 17, 2010 by Assistant Editor
Filed under Events

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November 20th, 2010 – January 29th, 2011

Public Opening Reception: Saturday, November 20, 2010, 6:00 to 9:00 PM

Terence La Noue, *Tributaries*

Terence La Noue was a Fulbright Meister Student at Hochschule für Bildende Künste and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from Cornell University. La Noue has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has had an extensive teaching experience at Trinity College, City University of New York and New York University. Terence La Noue's unique approach to painting and printmaking has achieved worldwide recognition. Beginning in Berlin in 1965, he has had over a hundred and thirty acclaimed solo exhibitions. His work is represented in the permanent collections of major museums including The Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Tate Modern in London and others in Japan, Singapore, France and Australia. His work is also included in numerous university and city art museums throughout the U.S. as well as major corporate collections. Terence La Noue's exhibitions have been reviewed by some of the most significant critics of our time. An extensive monograph entitled *Terence La Noue* by the renowned critic and art historian Dore Ashton relates his travels, influences and life's work.

Excerpts from the MAC – Dallas: Mary Beth Edelson and Molly Gochman

Excerpts from the McKinney Avenue Contemporary's more comprehensive exhibitions, *There is Never Only One Game in Town*, work by Mary Beth Edelson and *Other Stories*, work by Molly Gochman, on view at the MAC through December 11th. Mary Beth Edelson, emerged in the 1960s on New York's SoHo scene as a groundbreaking feminist artist. Noted in most art history books, her conceptually-based work activates a variety of women's and human rights issues. She has worked in collaborative and/or political environments, participating in the early exhibitions at A.I.R. Gallery (founded in 1972), taking part in the Heresies Collective, and helping to lead the Women's Action Coalition, 1992–1994. Her work has been exhibited around the world and she is represented in major collections such as MoMA and the Guggenheim Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington DC and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Molly Gochman, a Houston- and New York-based younger artist, formulates ideas of community and subjective interconnectedness in her growing oeuvre, characterized by fluid visually and the use of multiple media. From her dual bases in Houston and New York, Molly Gochman has created a diverse portfolio of work that is both personal and philosophical – a contemplation on concepts of interest, like time and change, value, love relationships, and balance. Since 2002, Gochman has exhibited widely in galleries and public spaces such as the Lincoln Center and the Emily Harvey Foundation in New York, the Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Deborah Colton Gallery, and DiverseWorks in Houston, and the Sara Roney Gallery in Sydney, Australia. Molly Gochman was well received at the Colton & Farb Gallery Dallas Art Fair Exhibition and is in many important collections.

Christian Tomaszewski, *Highlights of Two Projects*

Christian Tomaszewski was born in Gdansk, Poland, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland and currently lives and teaches from his home base in New York City now. His multi-media installations explore various modes of narrative and critique, often based on themes from cinema or architecture. He has exhibited widely in the US and Europe, in venues such as the Sculpture Center and The Bronx Museum in New York, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw, Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, the National Gallery in Prague, Tufts University Art Gallery and the Bureau for Open Culture at Columbus College of Art & Design. His work was included in the First Biennale of Polish Art in Lodz and the Second Athens Biennial in Greece. Tomaszewski has participated in several prestigious residency programs, including the American Academy in Rome, the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York City and recently Artpace in San Antonio, Texas. He has received numerous grants and awards, including support from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, a 2008 fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and a 2009 Travel Grant from the Jerome Foundation.

Jay Rusovich, *Beautiful*

Jay Rusovich was born in New Orleans. He received his degrees from Tulane University in English and Theater, and also attended Oxford University in England, The University of Arizona and Loyola University in New Orleans in various humanitarian disciplines. After graduating, he moved to New York City where he studied Method Acting at The Lee Strasberg Institute. Rusovich also attended The Actor's Institute for Shakespearean Studies and TV Actors Studio in NYC. For the next 20 years, Rusovich traveled the world, photographing people for institutions, principally in New York and Los Angeles. He debuted his provocative fine arts photography, titled "INSIDE OUT" at Deborah Colton Gallery the spring of 2005. An artist with great potential and one of the stars of the Colton & Farb Gallery 2010 Dallas Art Fair exhibition, Jay is known for his controversial style, which can be described as "intuitive, engaging, intense, direct, quick-witted...and sometimes tinged with irony."

Colton & Farb Gallery is part of Deborah Colton Gallery, which is founded on being an innovative showcase for ongoing presentation and promotion of strong historical and visionary contemporary artists world-wide, whose diverse practices include painting, works on paper, sculpture, video, photography, performance and conceptual future media installations.

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