

ART

EXHIBIT

'Plastic' is fantastic concept

By Molly Glentzer

What would our world be without polyethylene, polystyrene, polypropylene and polyurethane?

Cleaner, perhaps, but also less colorful, as an exhibit at Deborah Colton Gallery suggests.

"Plastic Fantastic" was curated by PaperCity's Catherine D. Ansporn, one of Houston's most colorful personalities, as an ode to her 94-year old father, chemist Harry D. Ansporn, who holds about 70 patents for improvements to plastics developed during a long career.

Bless him, he's still going. He speaks on a recently made 10-minute video near the exhibit's entry; a touch that gives context to the playful work of the show's five featured artists.

Although polys were first synthesized in the 19th century, a go-getter, post-World War II generation of scientists made them indispensable to human culture.

Inevitably, plastics also became useful to artists. The exhibit illustrates a few of the myriad ways they're being employed.

Fittingly, the main room is dominated by a house made of clear plastic sheeting, a walk-in installation that was artist Karen Arzamand's master's thesis project at the University of North Texas. The walls are

like a 3-D quilt, made of hundreds of Baggies stuffed with little doodads and other domestic residue, much of it plastic. A "time line" of stuffed Baggies also snakes across the room's outer walls. You could spend hours examining it all and reminiscing about stuff you once owned.

Selven O'Keef Jarmon, better known as a fashion designer, is equally meticulous, but his material of choice is machine-made plastic buttons, strung together intriguingly to create "canvases" encased in glass frames. With the buttons' contrasting colors, he "paints" the word "STOCKS" — a thoughtful commentary on mass-produced society.

"No one ever puts him in a show because of the medium he uses — plastic," Colton said.

Billy Zinser, an up-and-comer from Dallas, doesn't seem to have that issue. His hard, shiny biomorphic sculptures, crude figures that also show up in his paintings and as giant inflatable pieces, look like toys that have started to melt and lost their heads. They make me think about the nature of ugliness.

Andrea Morganstern, a Connecticut artist, forms resin into prettier hybrid creatures — part human, part animal — then places them into natural settings



Deborah Colton Gallery

Artist Paul Horn's "Paul-Mart" is a retail installation of objects created by him and other artists.

and photographs them. Her large C-prints have a magical quality.

Paul Horn, however, may encapsulate the plastic spirit best with his riotous installation, "Paul-Mart," a small retail space where visitors can buy multiples by about 20 artists priced democratically from \$4.99 to \$99.99.

They include toys by Zinser as well as Bill Davenport and Daniel Johnston. Solomon Kane collaborated with Horn on packaging that makes these little geegaws

mighty collectible. Don't take a tween, or you'll be there all day.

It's crazy, fun and, yes, cheap. Long live "Paul-Mart." We're told that one well-known Houston collector has already pinned his "Paul-Mart" purchase up beside a painting by Damien Hirst.

See "Plastic Fantastic" at Deborah Colton Gallery, 2445 North Blvd., through October; 713-869-5151, www.deborahcoltongallery.com.

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Art Notes

Besides **Houston Fine Art Fair 2012** (check out our Special Section within these pages), here are 11 shows that matter and why:

1. Aaron Parazette—curated “In Plain Sight,” at **McClain Gallery**. Is this “Fresh Paint Two?”

Don’t miss the most significant roundup of Houston painting talent in double decades — a survey that needs to lead to a Museum of Fine Arts, Houston blockbuster (September 8 – October 20).

2. Art League Houston’s Texas Artist of the Year exhibition for cool-school abstractionist **Aaron Parazette** (September 7 – November 2). A former Core Fellow and current U of H painting professor, he is deservedly showcased as a top talent and a community leader.

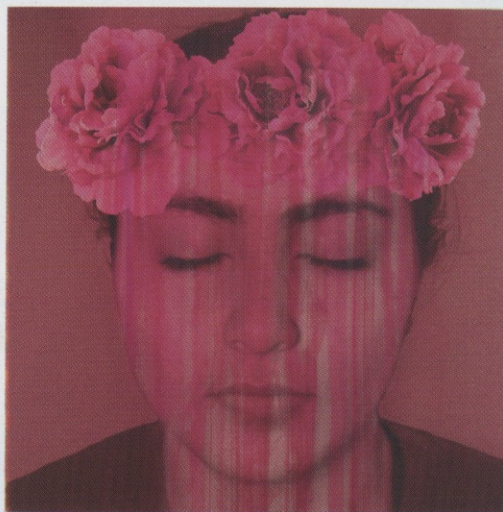
3. What’s on the **Front** burner? Parazette’s Mrs., former Core Fellow **Sharon Engelstein** curates her bungalow front room with a husband-and-wife duo: **Hilary Harnischfeger’s** gorgeous painted sculptures embedded with gems and minerals and **Tommy White’s** understated graphite drawings that suggest nature (opening reception Saturday, September 22; September 24 – October 27).

4. Nazar Yahya, an Iraqi artist transplanted to Texas, creates important nuanced mixed-media works on rice paper applied to canvas. In the collection of the British Museum and the Met, the Station Museum—exhibited Yahya has an important solo opening at **Wade Wilson Art** (September 7 – October 20).

5. For years, **Betty Moody Gallery** has been the principal dealer for Venice Biennale—exhibited **James Drake**. Now he’s the gallery’s season opener, complete with a book signing Saturday, September 8 (through October 6). We’re intrigued by Drake’s drawing of flies buzzing upon a lacy sheet of cut paper.

6. Leave it to **G Gallery** to concoct “Dog Park,” a canine manifesto of sorts co-curated by owner **Wayne Gilbert** and director **Diane Barber** (September 1 – 30).

7. Plastic is *the* word — just ask my father, chemist/plastics pioneer **Dr. Harry D. Ansporn**; in his honor, the group show “Plastic Fantastic” came about at **Deborah Colton Gallery**,



Nazar Yahya's *Face from Ur*, 2012, at Wade Wilson Art

COURTESY THE ARTIST AND WADE WILSON ART

including the strange retail experience of **Paul Horn** and **Solomon Kane’s** Paul-Mart (September 8 – October 27).

8. Like a phoenix, **DiverseWorks** rises again, with a significant video show for Israeli artist **Keren Cyttter**, marking her first big institutional survey in America, at dual DW’s: the about-to-be-closed 1113

East Freeway locale (September 8 – October 20) and the new Midtown digs at 4102 Fannin (September 8 – November 3).

9. Contemplate “The Great Outdoors” at **Meredith Long & Company**, a gem of a view including a late wildlife master, watercolorist **John P. Cowan** (whose granddaughter is *PaperCity’s* fashion editor, **Kate Stukenberg**).

Aaron Parazette's *Color Key #55*, 2012, at McClain Gallery



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND MCCLAIN GALLERY

10. Catch one of the most successful intersections of art and commerce in Texas at **Laura Rathe Fine Art’s** solo for **Christopher Martin** (September 8 – October 13).

11. Gaze upon the enticing, edgy post-Pop canvases of British kingpin **Danny Rolph** in the “Duke of Burgundy” at **Barbara Davis Gallery** (September 7 – October 5).

See you art and about! *Catherine D. Ansporn*

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Move Over, Crystal Bridges



Catherine D. Anspen

Posted: August 30, 2012

We know Walmart heiress Alice Walton created a museum — the extraordinary Crystal Bridges in Bentonville, Arkansas — but what would she think of Paul-Mart, we wonder? Madcap collaborative provocateur Houston artist Paul Horn takes the Walmart experience as a starting point, then reprises it for the white cube (Deborah Colton Gallery, that is) to concoct a shopping extravaganza/art-world happening. More than 20 local talents, including store designer Solomon Kane, are stocked at Paul-Mart, all using the media of plastic and selling for a mass-marketed \$99.99 or less. The interactive installation is one component of the "Plastic Fantastic" group show inspired by my own father, scientist/inventor/plastic pioneer Dr. Harry D. Anspen, and even features the retailer's trademark greeters, special end-cap displays and branded Paul-Mart packaging. *Paul-Mart in "Plastic Fantastic," September 8 through October 27, at Deborah Colton Gallery.*



Paul-Mart packaging, at Deborah Colton Gallery

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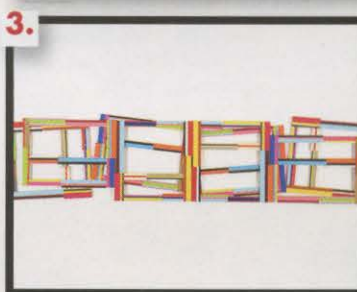
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Art Hearts Science:

"Plastic" was a "Fantastic" exhibition.

CATHERINE D. ANSPON REPORTS FROM THE LAB. PHOTOGRAPHY SHAU LIN HON.

Nothing's more intriguing — or topical — than the interplay between art and science, which began during the days of Leonardo, was carried forth with aplomb by Rauschenberg, then landed in the Houston art scene with the recent show at **Deborah Colton** Gallery entitled **"Plastic Fantastic"** — an engaging group roundup inspired by scientist/plastic pioneer **Harry D. Anspón** (my dad), curated by yours truly. The madcap yet important survey of contemporary talents working with the polys — polyethylene to polystyrene — included provocateurs **Karen Arzamendi**, **Scott Burns**, **Billy Zinser**, **Andrea Morganstern**, and the fabled **Paul Horn**. The latter enacted "Paul-Mart," a curious retail experience stocked with goodies by **Bill Davenport**, **Amerimou\$**, **Jonathan Rosenstein**, **Solomon Kane** and more. Needless to say, the opening night, complete with Zinser's mammoth multi-story *Macrodon* inflatable, was a blow out. Just ask **Thedra Cullar-Ledford**, **Ken Mazzu**, **Tatiana** and **Craig Massey**, **Rahul Mitra**, **McKay Otto**, **Bob Ackerley**, and **Janice Thomas** (acquiring a droll little resin creature by sculptress Morganstern), as well as performing puppeteers **Justin Dunford** and **Camella Clements** ... Weeks later, Houston Young Professionals Society concocted a launch-party mixer for the gallery's DCG Society, crafting a high-voltage evening that drew more than 300 young and restless to clink cocktails and confront the plastic creations, while raising funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters. Among the celebrants: organizer **Jennifer Nguyen**, **Frederick Goerges**, **Andrea Duarte**, **Jessica Crute**, **Chelsea Coffey**, **Tamara Nelson**, **Christina Gilbreath**, and **Theresa Escobedo**.



Paul Horn

Ina Honke



Karen Arzamendi with her creation



Christy Karl

Selven O'Keefe Jarmon



Jessica Crute

Leanne Cecilia



Ramona Mehrmann

Amber Livingston



Janice Thomas

McKay Otto



Seth Vaughan



Taylor Collard

Tyler Reichert

Carmen Sermeno



Amerimou\$ greets the inventor.



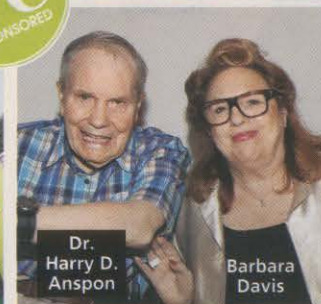
Deborah Colton

Fred Hofheinz

Linda Hofheinz



Billy Zinser's *Macrodon* towers over all.



Dr. Harry D. Anspón

Barbara Davis



Jennifer Nguyen



Theresa Escobedo



Kimberly Rivers

Fred Goerges



Rahul Mitra

Catherine Anspón

Lesters Marks



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