



**Above:** Jedediah Caesar, *//////* *//////*, 2010. Resin and mixed media, 31 panels, 35.9 x 26.7 x .6 cm. each. **Below:** Rashid Johnson, *Sweet Sweet Runner*, 2010. MDF, wax, plants, mirror, shea butter, rocks, and video, dimensions variable.

Forty-four artists, some but not all local, had placed maritime-themed objects and murals when I visited, and two more pieces were under construction. The idea, according to curators from UrbanArts, is that the work will change and rotate but be a permanent presence in the shipyard.

—Marty Carlock

#### NEW YORK

##### Jedediah Caesar D'Amelio Terras

Los Angeles-based Jedediah Caesar, in his second solo show at D'Amelio Terras, has taken a step away from projects that overtly demonstrate their “process-oriented” approach, moving simultaneously toward and away from the intellectual precision of Minimalism and the masculine romanticizations of Land Art. Seductive in their material physicality, these are undeniably beautiful works—six resin-panel sculptures and one “horizon mound” that force viewers to engage aesthetically and physically.

Caesar manufactures the panels from a concoction of resin, dust, pigment, detritus, and found materials, then industrially cuts and polishes them into perfect tiles. They appear to consist of either a sponge-like material or something hard and indestructible like marble (or, interesting-

ly, both at once). Each element contains random forms, perhaps a round shape embedded in the resin that appears and disappears (reminiscent of a moonrise, an interplanetary journey, or perhaps an otherworldly passage of time), or great swaths of secondary color that carry on beyond the borders, seeming to fill the empty spaces in the grids with their sweeping forms. Though the accumulations that compose the individual pieces may seem directly related to serendipity and the act of gathering, the perfection of the finished forms lays much at the feet of predecessors such as Andre and Judd. Caesar organizes the panels in relationships that mirror each other or progress along what may be seen as a narrative path. We find ourselves bending to investigate more closely, then walking along the panel-path, physically enacting the visual storyline, even pulling back to locate similar effects as they appear across the gallery.

But how do these panels relate to the horizon-mound that bears witness to an opposing type of imagery, one of dirt and decay, almost a post-apocalyptic landscape? This earthen cast, created from a dig at Socrates Sculpture Park, responds to the Great American Land Art tradition, but instead of hailing the land as utopian purity, site of endless progress, or symbol of the idealized American male, it presents a historical record of the remnants tossed aside by our disposable culture. The cast is doubly intriguing given Socrates' history as a former illegal trash dump. Both the partially dis-

integrated material and the socio-political history of the original site become part of the work's reading and reception. As with the resin panels, the elements of chance and the traces of history inherent in the process of creation transform the mound into more than a purely formal structure. With these works, Caesar opens up an alternately beautiful and anti-utopian space in which to reconsider form, history, and even humanity itself.

—Audrey Walen

#### NEW YORK

##### Rashid Johnson Salon 94

Rashid Johnson's “Our Kind of People” presented two facing installations—*Sweet Sweet Runner* and *Watch Out*—and two competing narratives. The first story, in the Afrocentric *Sweet Sweet Runner*, suggested achievement, domestic order, and upward mobility. Keenly crafted, black-painted metal frames formed a triptych whose shelves held books, house plants, a large



mirror, gold rocks (wealth), a small oriental rug, a large black painting, and a video of the artist jogging around the upscale neighborhood of Salon 94—townhouses, the Guggenheim, Central Park. Everything seemed familiar, normal. The two side panels, which fold like a traditional religious triptych, formed a central open trapezoid 16 feet across and eight feet deep. Carefully chosen books spoke to African American upward mobility. Across the gallery, the second installation, *Watch Out*, consisted of a large mirror covered with white graffiti, a suggestion that someone white is spying on, possibly damaging, the black family's home.

On closer inspection, the narrative became more complicated. The mirror on the innermost side panel was made from see-through glass—one could stand behind it and spy on anyone in the area. The gold rocks suggested exploitation in Africa's gold mines. The dominant black hues, the green houseplants, and the bright red jacket that Johnson wears in the video alluded to the colors of the Pan-African movement. The red, green, and gold of Rasta (and Ethiopia's national colors) were also prominent. The most subversive symbol in the triptych was a large metal circle quartered by a horizontal and a vertical shelf—an eyepiece with crosshairs.

Even though the objects in the two installations were ordinary, the possible narratives were not. The homeowners could be on the lookout for terrorists—or be terrorists. Johnson's ability to condense and compound questions of art history, African American history, American culture, and more into installations that seem simple and direct is an aesthetic turn that deserves applause.

—Jan Garden Castro



Jay Kelly, *Untitled #222*, 2009. Metal, wood, gesso, and acrylic, 6.75 x 3.75 x 1.5 in.

## NEW YORK

### Jay Kelly

#### Jim Kempner Fine Art

Anyone familiar with Jay Kelly's photorealist paintings of rusting cars and trucks, used tires, and industrial waste sites will be startled by the transformation in his recent sculptures and drawings. He has left verisimilitude behind, as if he had achieved all that he wanted in the field of realism and is now content to explore a new world notable for its delicacy of expression, small size, and ongoing conversation with spiritual matters. The two perceptions of form could not be further apart from each other. The gap between Kelly's industrial realism and metaphysical abstraction makes it hard to believe that both bodies of work were done by the same person, but this is indeed the case, and viewers will have to see him in an entirely different light. Not the least important attribute of the recent work is Kelly's appreciation of the miniature; like the German artist Julius Bissier, he uses small dimensions in both his drawings and sculptures.

The small size makes for close, even intimate, relations between viewer and work. Kelly demonstrates an exquisite sensibility: organic in shape

and minute in articulation, his sculptures remind me of Noguchi's works writ small. Yet one hastens to add that these sculptures are done within Kelly's own aesthetic, which allows him to gain large effects from minuscule forms (the largest piece is only 10 inches high and four inches wide).

Kelly often works with wire and wood, in a classically Modernist vocabulary that emphasizes the mysterious *suchness* of the object. That he refuses to title his works also underscores their essentially enigmatic origins. In *Untitled #202* (all sculptures are from 2009), a woven network of wire, much like a screen, is supported by three tiny wires driven into the wooden base; a single wire rises above the mesh and is attached to each side like a basket. In *Untitled #206*, three small columns rise from a small, dark pedestal. Part public work, part private dream, the sculpture is echoed in *Untitled #214's* three protruding columns rising from a rectangular form with a rounded blue bottom. Playful and serious at the same time, these works show us how Kelly's whimsicality belies a nearly classical sense of proportion.

One of Kelly's virtues is that he does not repeat himself—while joined by a common lightness of

being, his sculptures do not duplicate forms. In *Untitled #228*, a rounded, flask-like oval rests on top of a dark pedestal; close to the base, the sculpture extrudes a short tube, which ends abruptly in the air, while the top is bulbous, supported by a thin neck. *Untitled #222* consists of six thin rods painted in different colors and topped with white; they rise from a dark triangle of wood, which sits on a white pedestal. *Untitled #227*, a rounded, partial sphere with short vertical branches placed at its center, sits on legs that raise it a bit from the ground. All of these works have a Klee-like sense of spiritual play; though engaging and enjoyable, they never lose their essential seriousness. Diminutiveness makes Kelly's work a bit idiosyncratic, but that only adds to his remarkable forms.

—Jonathan Goodman

## CLEVELAND

### Willard Tucker

#### The Sculpture Center

A tangle of camera tripods, copper rods, and jerry-rigged, crackling electrical connections presides over one side of a windowless gallery, like a lightning-blasted tree. This strange hybrid stands sentry amid rows of cotton bolls, picked at historic plantations in Tennessee and now sprouting from the ends of rusty welded steel stalks. The "plants" rise from a ground of black plastic sheeting, which glimmers dully like the dead surface of an Appalachian tarn. Two dark smears streak down a back wall, leaking into the pristine white box.

*Blackdamp*—Willard Tucker's nightmarish installation—is a sketch of latent violence, like a stylized crime scene, where evocations of slavery and mountain top removal mines join together in a kind of horrific rebus. Tucker meditates on the emo-