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## Exhibit comes to life in print, in person

### G Gallery show also featured in New American Paintings

By DOUGLAS BRITT Copyright 2010 Houston Chronicle  
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Courtesy of the artist

Howard Sherman, Bloodthirsty animal on two legs (2009)

The bimonthly publication New American Paintings bills itself as a juried exhibition-in-print. Don't let that stop you from heading to the Heights for an exhibition-in-the-flesh featuring Houston artists chosen for an upcoming volume by one of the city's most prominent curators.

Toby Kamps, the Menil Collection's new curator of modern and contemporary art who just wrapped up a three-and-a-half year stint at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, juried the upcoming issue, the journal's 90th volume. It focuses on artists from Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. (Each issue highlights painters from one of six regions.)

Ten of the 40 artists to be included in volume No. 90 are based in Houston. Each is represented by one or more piece in the exhibit New American Paintings Volume #90, which goes on view with a reception tonight at G Gallery.

Thanks to a blind process, Kamps received no information about the artists who submitted images for the competition. But even a semi-frequent gallery visitor, let alone someone with Kamps' experience, would probably have little problem picking some of these artists' work out of a lineup. I'd know Howard Sherman's fusion of tumultuous brushwork, cartoonish draftsmanship and Cy Twombly-like graffiti anywhere. *Bloodthirsty animal on two legs* is a fine example of the give and take between painting and drawing that characterizes much of his work.

Similarly, Joseph Cohen, recently named one of the co-winners of this year's The Big Show at the Lawndale Art Center, has developed a recognizable style that draws both from Robert Ryman's explorations of white paint on a variety of supports and Joseph Marioni's use of layers of dripping paint. All his materials, including the paint, which he got after it had been returned to home-improvement stores — presumably because it was the wrong tint for the original buyer's purposes - are found objects. Cohen emphasizes paint's sheer physicality over all else, layering to the point that *Proposition 24a* seems to occupy a status somewhere between painting and sculpture.

Sculpture isn't eligible for inclusion in New American Paintings, leading me to wonder whether Garland Fielder's contribution to the show, a cube that seems to emerge from the wall on which it hangs, will be included in the upcoming volume. Perhaps it will if Kamps and the editors consider the piece a "three-dimensional construction that involves the activity of painting" - which is allowed - since it's painted a solid dark color. At any rate, since I prefer Fielder's 3-D work to his paintings, I'm glad this piece is in the exhibit.

I have nothing to add to my most recent take on Jonathan Leach's work, which I wrote last year "combines a keen eye for architecture and urban landscape with dazzling opticality, bold directional

patterns and beyond-vibrant color." Except this: Each time I see a new Leach painting, it both fits that description and manages to utterly surprise me.

Works by Mark Aguhar, Michael Bise, Gregory Michael Carter, Marcelyn McNeil and Joseph Wooten round out the list of winning entries. But Kamps also had the prerogative of including an artist who didn't submit work for consideration, and he surprised G Gallery owner Wayne Gilbert by giving him the nod. Gilbert's painting *Isolation*

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### NEW AMERICAN PAINTINGS VOLUME #90

- **When:** Reception 6-8 tonight, exhibit through Oct. 2
- **Where:** G Gallery, 301 E. 11th; 713-802-9466

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may look like a more textured cousin of minimalism, but its materials - cremated human remains - are integral to its meaning. Its inclusion rounds out Kamps' snapshot of Houston painting nicely.

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