Here they are, the shows we think you need to see, sorted by city. New Year, New Art — these are our picks for the best of the Spring. Enjoy!

AUSTIN

Out of Place at Lora Reynolds

This closely edited group show assembles literal and poetic documentation of the universal condition of exile in the specific language of Palestine. Writer and professor Noah Simblist takes his title from the controversial cultural critic Edward Said's memoir of his early life as the itinerant child of a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother — adding a welcome layer of complexity and ambivalence to a show that pledges to "[transcend] the limits of journalism."
Using video, sculpture, photographs and works on paper, Simblist’s half-dozen international rabble-rousers plumb dislocation as the counter to the ideal of mise en place. How do you create a meaningful whole from ingredients that can never be reassembled in one place? It features the American premier of Yael Bartana’s ‘Mur i Wieza (Wall and Tower),’ although what caught in our throat was the description of Jan Tichy’s ‘Dahania:’ “a miniature model of the short-lived Palestinian airport built in 1996 during the optimism and nation building that immediately followed the Oslo Accords. Dahania was later destroyed by the Israeli air force…” – Elaine Wolff

Out of Place
Lora Reynolds Gallery (http://www.lorareynolds.com/)
January 15 – March 5

Cached Curses, Video, 4:44 min, 2010

Eileen Maxson at testsite

Eileen Maxson (http://www.eileenmaxson.com/) always struck me as that woman who got more out of Buffalo Exchange (http://www.buffaloexchange.com/) than I did—whatever she came away with was way cooler and bought for less than she made on her trade. This time, the artist who applied a homemade chemical peel to the small screen’s false glamor (with liberating results) is cleaning out her psyche: 1993 to the curb. Online research led to the discovery that 2010 was a calendrical repeat of 1993, when Maxson was a tween and family tragedy unfolded against the backdrop of tangentially related political events. Inspired by an enigmatic craigslist offer, Maxson is engaging the (false, right?) religion of superstition—and the corresponding ritual power (true, yes?) of art—capping off a year-long “exorcism” with this installation, which will contain several works also shown at Domy (http://www.domystore.com/) in Houston and as part of her de Ateliers (http://www.de-ateliers.nl/) residency in Amsterdam. Show up ready to cart off some of Maxson’s baggage; maybe both of you will walk away a little lighter. – EW

Eileen Maxson: Cached Curses
testsite (http://www.fluentcollab.org/testsite/index.php/projects/index/21)
January 23 – February 27

Eugene Bulans Untitled, 1996 Oil and acrylic on canvas 35 3/4 x 55
Recovering Beauty at the Blanton

Expanding or re-envisioning art as we think we know it is the sort of thing that museums do best. The Blanton is doing just that this spring with a group of 1990s artists whose work responded to their own political and social circumstances rather than the late-'80s American art market, which labored under specters not named Basquiat and Haring. Recovering Beauty features work from Buenos Aires artists created in the wake of popular elections and reform that followed Argentina’s Dirty War (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dirty_War). The Centro Cultural Ricardo Rojas (http://www.rojas.uba.ar/) was founded in 1989, the same year the Berlin Wall was torn down, and the artists affiliated with it responded by exploring themes out of fashion up north—beauty, fantasy, the potential of individual autonomy—tempered by the knowledge that they are to a great degree illusions that can be easily shattered. Also: Consider attending “Recovering History,” April 28, a panel discussion exploring influential exhibitions and art world developments of the 1990s. – EW

Recovering Beauty: the 1990s in Buenos Aires
The Blanton (http://blantonmuseum.org/)
February 20-May 22

BEAUMONT

The Specious Instant at the Dishman Art Museum

“We respect each other; we love each other; we compete and cheerlead and criticize and steal blindly because we have established that there are no rules between us and that anything which makes for good art is valid,” says Jakob Christmas (http://jakobchristmas.blogspot.com/) about his collaborations with Justin Varner (http://justinvarner.blogspot.com/) and the late Steve Hodges (index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1203&Itemid=42), their mentor and former instructor. In Christmas’s words, Hodges was one of those rare art professors who was actively engaged in a unique cross-fertilization of ideas and mutual support with his students. It’s nice to see the university do a show that draws those connections. Plus, Christmas’s paintings are a hoot. —Rainey Knudson

The Specious Instant: Steve Hodges, Justin Varner, Jakob Christmas
Dishman Art Museum (http://dept.lamar.edu/cofac/deptart/dishman.asp) (Lamar University (http://www.lamar.edu/))
January 10 – February 18

Jakob Christmas, Rainbow Vomit (Beacon), 2010, Oil on canvas, 14 x 11 in.
BEEVILLE

Jaroslav Poncar, Porte St. Denis, Paris, 1976, c-print

Celebrating 10 Years of Art and Education at the Beeville Art Museum
This survey will be a jumble of various artists who’ve had solo shows at the historic museum in Beeville over the past decade. A hodgepodge, granted—but notable because the Beeville museum has been steadily showing good work for a decade now, in what might gently be described as “not an art hotspot.” Unlike similar organizations elsewhere in the state, Beeville has consistently solid programming of consistently solid artists (as opposed to an endless succession of landscape paintings and pottery from the local art club). The town itself sits on the edge of some of the most inhospitable, thorny, hog-infested wilderness in Texas. And yet it boasts an elegant and inviting house museum, showing the Carters (http://www.keithcarterphotographs.com/), Letschers (http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/books/letlan.html), Oliviers (http://www.tfaoi.com/aa/5aa/5aa175.htm) and Volchan O’Conors (http://www.hcggallery.com/bio_rosane.html) of Texas to a core of regional supporters (and legions of schoolchildren). Kudos to them for their ten-year labor of love. —RK
Beeville Art Museum: Celebrating 10 Years of Art and Education
Beeville Art Museum (http://bamtexas.org/)
January 15 – April 18

DALLAS/FORT WORTH

Frances Bagley, Beasts and Bunnies

Beasts and Bunnies at McKinney Avenue Contemporary
Artists Helen Altman (http://helenaltman.com/), Celia Eberle (index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&gsect=Articles&gcat=Review), Margaret Meehan (http://margaretmeehan.net/) and Frances Bagley (http://www.francesbagley.com/) join forces this January in a show called Beasts and Bunnies, which will explore this bevy of female artists’ often macabre considerations of animals. Through work in various media, from Margaret Meehan’s often furry, toothed bizarre humanoids to Frances Bagley’s shrouded, stunted or blind mystery beasts to Helen Altman’s precious tanks of pet-ables to Celia Eberle’s monstrous, mouthy creatures, each artist explores our own animal behavior in off-kilter notions of beasts. With results that are often haunting and repulsive, but always full of wonderment and wit, these artists forcibly push a viewer to reflect on the state of one’s own inner creatures. Grouping the four of these women together as a collective should prove a walk on the wild side, so be warned: one never walks away from work by these artists unbiten. – Lucia Simek
Beasts and Bunnies: An Investigation of Crossed Paths
McKinney Avenue Contemporary (http://www.the-mac.org/)
January 8 – February 12
M, Image courtesy of Rachel Cox

**M at Fort Worth Contemporary Arts**

One can hardly begin to conjecture what is in store for us in the artist known as “M”’s upcoming show at Fort Worth Contemporary Arts. Let’s imagine, though, as I now will, that it has to do with childhood, mythical and fantastical heroes, digitized worlds, safe places, scary places, on/off switches, plastic toys, cords and campiness—because most of M’s incredibly intelligent, multifarious work usually does.

While M has garnered some attention for himself with his beautifully articulated ink drawings, he also dabbles in all things new media, with heavy doses of something like Armageddon spiking everything he makes, but also affection, as curator of FWCA Christina Rees (http://www.newsevents.tcu.edu/1649.asp) is keen to note. Expect vast worlds of chaos and whimsy at this one, folks, as Rees has given the artist free reign of the space. – LS

*M: “Let’s Build a Fort! (Together We Can Shield Ourselves From the Fear and Worry Within the Blackness of One Hundred Million Nights)”*

Fort Worth Contemporary Arts (http://www.theartgalleries.tcu.edu/FWCApresent.html)

January 22 – March 6

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Response at Brazos Gallery, Richland College

Ryder Richards (http://www.ryderrichards.com/) is doing some interesting things in the Brazos Gallery at Richland College, bringing together a roster of shows that is challenging and imaginative. His upcoming show, Response, brings together twelve artists that will each respond with a work of art to one word in the phrase: “Nowadays we must distinguish between the superficially deep and the superficially superficial,” penned by the art critic Ben Lewis (http://www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/blogon/art_news/who_put_the_con_in_contemporary_art7_by_ben_lewis/4135) of Art Safari (http://www.benlewis.tv/films/art-safari-2), London. Each artist in Response, including Ryder Richards himself, is a member of Culture Laboratory Collective (http://culturelaboratory.wordpress.com/)—a group of American artists who all make work that...
considers social cohesion and aesthetic fragmentation. The artists will each be given four feet of horizontal space in which to consider their word, and the exhibit will read linearly around the gallery. The show should convey the varied and levied dynamics of Ben Lewis’ phrase as it relates to each artist’s particular modes, and also draw an interesting cross-section of contemporary art attitudes, but also pertinent social ones. – LS

Culture Lab: Response
Brazos Gallery (http://www.rc8.dccd.edu/gallery/?page_id=2), Richland College
February 3 – March 4

Hudson River School at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art
Beginning in the 1820s with the work of Thomas Cole (http://www.thomascole.org/biography-of-thomas-cole/), America’s first self-aware landscape painting movement began in the foothills and mountains of the Hudson Valley and New England, known as The Hudson River School (http://www.pbs.org/wnet/thas/icon/hudson.html). Maybe it was America’s only landscape painting school, when you get down to it, but it fostered our young republic’s ideals of liberty and enlightened culture through nature’s metaphors of power and majesty. The Amon Carter Museum of American Art will showcase a large number of these emblematic paintings, on loan from The New York Historical Society (https://www.nyhistory.org/web/), which is currently being renovated. The exhibition includes work by the likes of Thomas Cole, Frederic Edwin Church (http://www.museumsyndicate.com/artist.php?artist=421), John Frederick Kensett (http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/kens/hd_kens.htm), Jasper Francis Cropsey (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jasper_Francis_Cropsey) and George Inness (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Inness). Chief among the works on view, and very timely, will be The Course of Empire (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Course_of_Empire), a series of five paintings by Thomas Cole charting the rise of a fictitious empire and its eventual fall to ravages from its own excess and greed. – LS

Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision
Amon Carter Museum of American Art (http://www.cartermuseum.org/)
February 26 – June 19

HOUSTON

Adela Andea at Anya Tish
In 2009, Adela Andea (http://www.adelaandea.com/) lit up the Houston art scene with her fluorescent-light-filled installation at Lawndale Art Center (http://www.lawndaleartcenter.org/), The Green™ CyberWeb. Her new show at Anya Tish Gallery promises to be equally radiant. Pool noodles, cable sleeves, aquarium tubing and fluorescent lighting are some of Andea’s favorite things and in Bioluminescence she’s transforming her wholly manmade materials into sculptures that feel organic – in an eerie and alien way. A sneak peek before the show’s opening reveals the only drawback is that the gallery has nixed any sprawling installations in favor of more contained and salable works. A glowing accumulation in the back alcove, tiled with pool noodle slices that read like cells, is constrained into a rectilinear wall piece. It’s pretty great anyway but seeing it grow over the walls would be even better. Andea is one of Houston’s most interesting emerging artists and the
show is a must see. And if you’re pining for another over-the-top installation, word is she’s got an upcoming – and unfettered – solo show at the Art League. —Kelly Klaasmeyer

Adela Andea: Bioluminescence
Anya Tish Gallery
January 7 – February 5
Opening reception, January 7, 6:00 – 8:30

Patricia Hernandez, Stairway to Paradise, 2010, 18x24

Patricia Hernandez at DiverseWorks
Thomas Kinkade (http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/36637/light-sentence-painter-thomas-kinkade-thrown-in-jail-for-drunk-driving/): he’s such a parody of himself that he’s pretty hard to parody. But Patricia Hernandez (http://www.houstonpress.com/2001-10-25/culture/shiny-happy-people/), in Parody of Light at Diverseworks, will gleefully make the effort, and that should be both fun and enlightening. Hernandez’s in-depth research explores Kinkade’s vast wealth earned from cranking out treacle to the xenophobic masses, his painting-mill practices—which, in general, begin with inkjet prints that are then daubed with touches by minimally trained “official highlighters”—and his willingness to slap his images on just about anything that isn’t moving. She’s done the research; we can sit back and enjoy the skewer.

In a simulacrum of Kinkade’s crassly commercial empire, Hernandez will provide her own “official trained highlighters,” altered Kinkade canvases and products (such as toilet paper) bearing a corporate “logo.” The exhibition will feature a mock home interior and shopping mall, recalling the sites where Kinkade’s work is obtained and cherished. In Diverseworks’ Flickerlounge, the game continues with similarly-themed videos on commercialism, religion and media. Now who’s the Master of Light? — Laura Lark

Patricia Hernandez: Parody of Light
DiverseWorks (http://diverseworks.org/)
January 14 – February 26
Opening Reception: Friday, January 14, 6-9pm
Going out of Business Sale: Saturday, February 26, 12-6pm
John Wood and Paul Harrison at the CAMH
Curated by Toby Kamps (index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2648), formerly of the CAMH, now of the Menil (http://www.artdaily.com/section/news/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=39317&int_modo=1), Answers to Questions: John Wood and Paul Harrison is the first U.S. museum show for this duo of British video artists and it should be a riot. Wood and Harrison (http://www.faprojects.com/artists/view/38/Wood_%26_Harrison) explore, often hilariously, the dynamics between the human body and objects or architectural spaces. The pair’s video performances humorously illustrate the sometimes triumphant but often unsuccessful acts of making art and of merely existing. In one work, the couple is seated on rolling office chairs in a stark white space which is, in reality, the back of a van being driven about the city. The two slide around, often dangerously, but their expressions remain deadpan.

Their somber, melancholy demeanor, paired with the absurdity of their schtick, poignantly invokes the human effort – often clueless as to what is really going on – to navigate life and its random happenings. Weighty and hilarious at the same time, the video works of Wood and Harrison should prove to be some serious fun for those of us strong enough to laugh. —LL

Answers to Questions: John Wood and Paul Harrison
Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (http://www.camh.org/)
February 12 – April 24
Opening reception: February 11, 7-10PM

Man Bartlett, 24h #class action, photo by James Wagner, http://www.jameswagner.com

New Some at Skydive
Skydive, the artist-run space (founded by Sasha Dela and Ariane Roesch) once funikly housed in the office building across from the “Disco Kroger” (http://blogs.houstonpress.com/rocks/2008/05/disco_kroger_gets_sexyattacked.php) and below Scott Gertner (http://swamplot.com/why-scott-gertners-skybar-is-leaving-the-montrose-sky/2010-07-01/)’s Skybar (where do these people come from?), now has a new location, and programming still promises to be edgy and current.

New Some, an exhibition and performance by New York artist Man Bartlett (http://www.manbartlett.com/), is a good start toward fulfilling this promise. Curated by Skydive co-director Brian Piana (http://www.spillsomepaint.com/), New Some will feature Bartlett’s new collages, his delicate, obsessive drawings and a new performance piece. Skydive’s enlistment of Bartlett is rather a coup; he has shown and performed in New York’s apexart (http://www.apexart.org/) and P.P.O.W. (http://www.ppowgallery.com/) Although the specific nature of Man Bartlett’s performance is not determined, his past endeavors—converting an art space into a “laundromat”, stationing groups in a local Best Buy as non-consumers—have been compelling and, from the looks of them, pretty much of a good time. —LL

Opens on March 5

New Some
Skydive (http://www.theskydive.org/)
Opens on March 5
Texas Biennial 2011 at Box 13

The 2011 Texas Biennial (http://texasbiennial.org/) will be upon us this April 9- May 14, and although Houston artists have been fairly represented, the exhibition of Biennial artists usually takes place only in Austin and in one venue. In 2009 curator Michael Duncan (http://www.fluentcollab.org/mbg/index.php/interview/index/118/45), in conjunction with curator Risa Puleo (http://www.artlies.org/article.php?id=1311&issue=49&s=1), pushed the Biennial envelope by featuring a temporary exhibition of outdoor sculptures and a special performance, produced in collaboration with Austin’s “Art in Public Places (http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/aipp/)” program. This year the net will widen even further, and exhibitions will be shown not only in Austin, but in San Antonio (Women and Their Work (http://www.womenandtheirwork.org/), Blue Star Contemporary Art (http://www.bluestarart.org/)), and in Houston at our own artist-run space, Box 13.

2011 Biennial Curator Virginia Rutledge (http://creativecommons.org/press-releases/entry/7691) will organize the show. Unlike the other venues chosen, Box 13 is independent and far edgier than the other spaces. Showcasing Biennial artists’ work here should prove to be compelling, interesting, and will, most likely, provide a peek into the studios of other emerging Houston artists. —LL

Texas Biennial 2011
Special exhibition at Box 13 (http://www.box13artspace.com/)
April 9 – May 14

Upside Down: Arctic Realities at the Menil Collection

Edmund Carpenter (http://www.culturalequity.org/alanlomax/ce_alanlomax_profile_carpenter.php), curator of the quirky, fabulous Menil installation, Witnesses has conceived and brought into being, with the help of artist Douglas Wheeler (http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2008/10/doug-wheeler-re.html), the exhibition Upside Down: Arctic Realities, a show exploring the material culture of the Arctic and the Inuit people. Bringing together significant artifacts and masks from 1000 BC to the 1400’s AD, Wheeler plans to create a “totalized” environment by altering floors, walls and lighting in an effort to convey the manner in which native cultures experience their surroundings.

The curator’s extensive research allows us to appreciate how the artifacts in this exhibition—their form, function, materiality, and manner of creation—represent ways in which Arctic cultures developed physical and spiritual connections to their environment. This is the first time that such a collection of artifacts has been brought together in this way in Houston. Carpenter’s in depth
research and Wheeler’s ambitious recreation of an Arctic environment should thus provide us with a rare glimpse of a fascinating history. —LL

Upside down: Arctic Realities
Menil Collection (http://www.menil.org/)
April 15 – July 17

LUBBOCK

Bill McCullough: Technicolor Life: American Wedding at Landmark Arts, Texas Tech
Remarkably, the work of Austin wedding photographer Bill McCullough (http://www.depts.ttu.edu/art/soa/nav/landmark/currentprograms.php) is not staged. He brings in additional lighting to achieve his signature cinematic effects, but he says the “decisive moments,” when his seemingly carefully composed images come together, are the result of his own patience and optimism. Although he shoots digitally, his photographs are pure Kodachrome (http://www.depts.ttu.edu/art/soa/nav/landmark/currentprograms.php), with the saturated colors and everything-in-focus look of 70s photography. As he puts it, “there can be plenty of cinema and interesting characters if you pay attention.” Apparently so. —RK

Bill McCullough :: Technicolor Life: American Wedding
Landmark Arts at Texas Tech University
(http://www.depts.ttu.edu/art/soa/nav/landmark/currentprograms.php)
March 7 – April 10

MARFA

Skylar Fein, Louisiana Flag, 2008, Silkscreen on canvas, wood, 13 x 19 x 3.75 in.
The World According to New Orleans at Ballroom Marfa
As with everything else New Orleansian, the art scene there is wholly unique from the rest of the country. Although the city was never linked with any major postwar American art movement, this exhibit proposes that Katrina has washed the scales from our collective eyes and readied us to take another look at a city better known for music, food and abject corruption. The revisionist viewpoint is unsurprising, given the curator is Prospect New Orleans (http://www.prospectneworleans.org/) founder Dan Cameron (http://www.artinfo.com/news/story/27877/conversation-with-dan-cameron/). He seeks to put the city’s contemporary in context—of past New Orleans art, that is, emphasizing that even the historical lens through which we look at the Big Easy should be a specifically local one (no welded steel sculpture or lyrical abstraction here, thank you very much). Instead, expect lots of work at the intersection of folk and avant-garde. Worth a trip out west, and Marfa is always best in the springtime, n’est-ce pas? —RK

The World According to New Orleans
Ballroom Marfa (http://ballroommarfa.org/)
March 18 – August 14

SAN ANGELO/DALLAS

A Survey of Contemporary Korean Ceramics at the San Angelo Museum
and
Soaring Voices at The Crow Collection in Dallas
OK, fine: the object is dead, aesthetics don’t matter anymore and we’re all morphing into machines.

http://glasstire.com/2011/01/01/spring-preview-2011/
We know. But tell that to our lizard brains, which still find things pretty and touchable. Until the Singularity (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_singularity) arrives, we reserve the right to like stuff. And these are a pair of shows with pretty (albeit untouchable) stuff. — RK

A Survey of Contemporary Korean Ceramics
San Angelo Museum (http://www.samfa.org/)
April 15 – June 19

Soaring Voices: Recent Ceramics by Women from Japan
The Crow Collection (http://www.crowcollection.com/)
Dallas, Texas
January 22 – May 08, 2011

SAN ANTONIO

Andy Benavides, Am I What? (2010), detail, vinyl

Andy Benavides at Sala Diaz

Andy Benavides (http://andybenavides.com/) plays many roles in San Antonio’s art economy — framer, impresario, gallery owner — but there’s one problem: he doesn’t show his own work enough. Yet it’s hard to complain, because the skills that keep him busy and away from his studio are a real asset when he’s in the studio, where he brings marketing savvy and a Mad Men polish to a range of mediums, all produced with Judd-like perfectionism. In 2007 he showed a series of alumalite panels coated in a saturated, Disney fairytale palette that distracted the eye briefly from the elephants, kangaroos and other animal pairs coupling on each monochromatic field. More recently, Benavides’s recurring pink bunny manqué has appeared as a larger-than-life inflatable in San Antonio’s landmark Palacio del Rio hotel, where it silently interrogated the HemisFair era’s vision for San Antonio. He’s like Koons (http://www.jeffkoons.com/) without the starfuckery, or a Murakami (http://www.takashimurakami.com/) whose irony was shaped by one interminable neutron bomb that slowly evaporated American illusions in a cloud of good humor. Political Art Month (http://www.c-cyte.com/Political_ARt_Month/) wouldn’t be the right venue for him — more like Philosophical Art Month. “Am I What?” takes up identity just as the ubiquitous multimedia branding of the self runs smack into the stereotyping of immigration politics. – EW
Andy Benavides: Am I What?
Sala Diaz (http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=112627270940)
January 21 – February 27
Opening reception: 7 – 11 p.m., January 21


New Image Sculpture at the McNay

McNay Curator Rene Barilleaux (http://www.emvergeoning.com/?p=1446) explores the sleights of hand and mind at the core of one of contemporary sculpture’s most contagious developments — the fabrication of mundane objects from mundane (but impractical or illogical) materials. The practice has proven to be as malleable as painting, and Barilleaux’s selection of 13 divergent temperaments demonstrates his commitment to exploring rather than defining it. Margarita Cabrera (http://www.margaritacabrera.com/) has elegantly decried the iniquities and cultural cost of the U.S.-Mexico relationship with life-size vinyl sculptures of a VW Bug and a Hummer, a Monarch-butterfly maquiladora, and clay farming implements covered in delicate flora and fauna like traditional Mexican pottery. Conrad Bakker (http://www.untitledprojects.com/index3.php) skewers the self-deception and irrational hope that underlie our online 24/7 consumer culture with a photo-realism that acts as a cruel mirror. Dennis Harper (http://dennisharper.com/)'s fantastical toys — a skateboard shaped like an Egyptian funerary barge; an oversized gilded engine — tip the balance from make-do to can-do, and suggest that imagination might redeem idolatry. Austin stars Okay Mountain (http://okaymountain.com/) are also featured in the international lineup. You’ll want the cool catalog, with an essay by Eleanor Heartney (http://www.hardpresseditions.com/heartney/bioheartney.html), too. – EW

New Image Sculpture
McNay Art Museum (http://www.mcnayart.org/)
February 16 – May 8
Brian Jobe at Blue Star Contemporary Art Center

UTSA (http://www.utsa.edu/) MFA grad Brian Jobe (http://brianjobe.com/home.html) returns to Blue Star for Contemporary Art Month (http://contemporaryartmonth.com/), his romance with zip ties unrequited, we hope. His previous sculptures and installations have demonstrated his affection for their intransigence, their strength in numbers, their refusal to wilt. Since graduating in 2006, he’s exploited the way the mass-produced plastic restraints can be coaxed to mimic once-untamed organic phenomena — grass, waves, cilia — while sticking out like strip-mined Appalachian mountaintops. His installations are often pretty and nauseating at the same time. Indoors, he uses the starkness of his all-manmade sculptures to explore how we assign color values to function, pre-programming our emotional response to the job each tool is given, and ultimately to our personal experience in the environments defined by those objects. -EW

Brian Jobe: Contemporary Art Month at Blue Star
Blue Star Contemporary Art Center (http://www.bluestarart.org/)
March 3 – May 16
Opening reception: 6 – 9 p.m., March 3

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