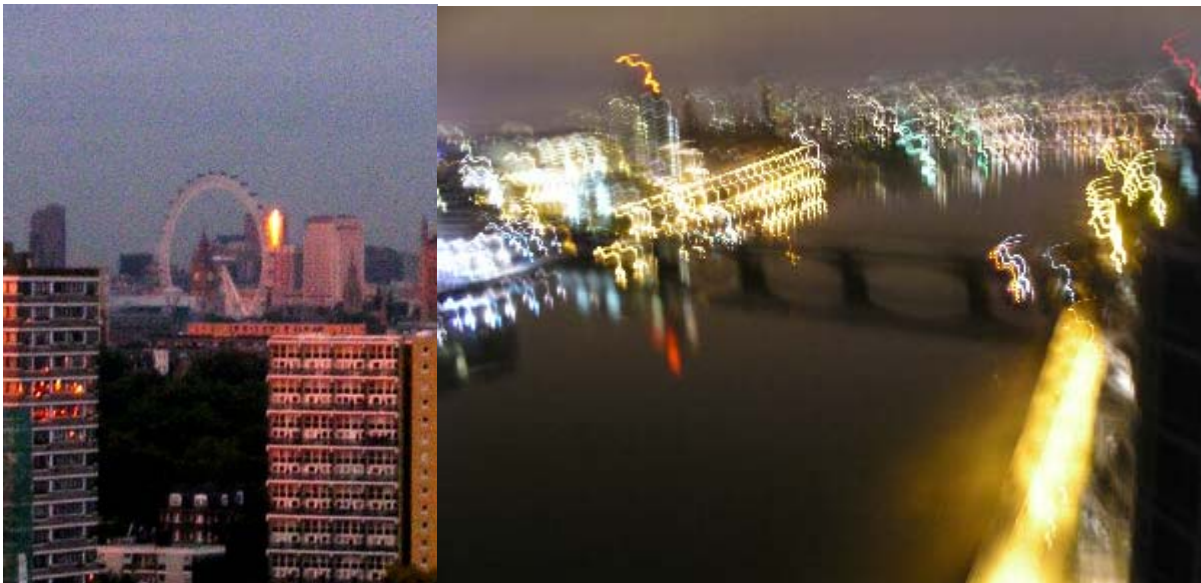


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Patricia Frischer London and Venice October, 2009 London

Week one of our trip was spent in the English country side, visiting with friends, eating amazing food and getting over jet lag. During this time we went to Milton Keynes to see Fi and Les, [Boyd and Evans](#). It was a lovely sunny, cool day and the countryside at its best with leaves changing color and partridges and pheasants hiding around every curve. Two of those pheasants or their relatives made it to our plates for dinner, another classy meal as only the English who are trained early, can deliver. This time it was the conversation about the art world and not food that was center stage. We talked about everything from the shrinking money for grants and from collectors to new techniques in photography printing. It has never been enough for these two great artists to let us see what they see, they are determined to allow us to notice what they notice as spectacularly as the original experience was for them. They worked for years using photography to aid their painting and now they are coming full circle and using painting in their photography as well as actual photography in their painting. They push the boundaries of their art and are constantly aware that this may be confusing the audience with changes in subject matter and technique, but anyone who has studied their work can see the consistency of their very personal vision. Their very latest work, which we were privileged to see, makes you truly understand the word "awesome" as we were in awe of it all.



Big Ben in the Middle of the London Eye

A real workhorse of a day. We moved into a new digs with all modern conveniences and a great sense of modernity. Falcon Wharf is one of the new high rises built along the River Thames. We have a view from our glassed in balcony of the river and the heliport so there is a constant show to watch VIP's arrive and depart with great blasts of noise. From the 17th story roof terrace we have views of London as good as those from the London Eye. Today was magnificent sunshine and we could see Big Ben encircled by the London Eye...odd how the river bends and angles make this possible from on high.

I was so excited to finally go to the Saatchi Gallery as I have been waiting for three years to see the new space having visited Saatchi's past two venues. [Abstract America: New Painting and Sculpture](#) was fascinating to me on many levels. First, it was great see an art gallery of this scope in Chelsea which is mainly the domain for Hurrah Henrys and Jolly Hockey Stick Slone Rangers, English aristocracy with money and not much interest in contemporary art. How will this change the art buying habits of those residents is yet to be seen.

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Watching Saatchi manipulate a market is always a lesson in arts management. This huge temple to art is free to the public because of an arrangement of support he made with Phillips auction house which merged with de Pury. The top gallery is showing the work of a private collection and part of that collection (not on view) will shortly be for sale with that auction firm. You see artists from the Saatchi stable in exhibitions and museums all over the country. One must remember that Saatchi went from being a collector to a dealer to a museum and now is on the forefront of promotion of art over the internet.

Finally, I do not get to New York to see art as regularly as I go to London, hell, I don't see art in LA as regularly as I go to London. So for me to see these American artists was a real education in what is happening in my own country. I know it is just one man's view, but it is still a man with undoubtedly a good eye, which is well seasoned. I have made a selection but I encourage you to go to the links where you can see the work in more details and read about them as well.



[Kristin Baker](#), *The Raft Of Perseus*, was a work made with collaged hand painted torn paper on canvas. These works really stuck with me and reminded me of [Allison Renshaw](#), who is local painter and has a stunning work in the Quint show at CCAE. Here is a solution to those who say they can not afford the art that they see in big galleries. You can buy local which might be more affordable.



[Peter Coffin](#), (left) *Untitled (Spiral Staircase)*. This large scale work of spiral staircases in a circle was very impressive and there was a balcony so that you could stand above it and look down on it.

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Jedediah Caesar, (right) *Dry Stock* were pieces you have to see in person as they are slabs cut from a block which the artists had constructed himself using a huge variety of objects. Like matched grain you can see them side by side and how the patterns are repeated. Great art but also I would love to have kitchen counters or a new floor of these wonderful compositions.



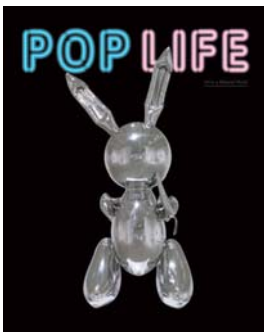
Matt Johnson, (left) *The Pianist* is such a clever use of blue tarps, eyelet holes and all, folded like origami to make this full scale sized piano and player.



Guerra de la Paz, (middle) *Nine* was just so wonderfully attractive. This mass of fabric seemed to hang in space and it was only when you go close that you realized the lower hanging pieces were actually legs with shoes. A short step to image the rest of the figures having a deep conversation in the interior of this hive.

Paul Lee, Untitled (Can Sculpture right) created this series of cans with faces and lens and I immediately thought of **Tom Driscoll**'s smashed bottles on show at the [L Street Gallery](#) for the [SD Art Prize](#). You can also see Tom's work at CCAE and even buy for \$8 one of his fridge magnets, which is not a reproduction of a work but a real miniature work of art.

Chris Martin, **Francesca DiMattio** where just two of the other artists we saw on view and so, again, I encourage you to take a look at the show yourself online.



On to the **Tate Modern** to see the [Pop Life: Art in a Material World](#). Only heavy hitters were included but they were all there. Damien Hirst with side by side gold glass display cases of diamonds, whole rooms of Warhol and Keith Herring including wall papered images covering every square inch floor to ceiling, a naughty adults only room for Jeff Koons did stick out. But you can't see any of this on the website but only by going yourself or buying the expensive catalog, There are now THREE shops on the premises. Shops, remember, that are selling reproductions. I guess that is what struck me. The work on view in the museum...the originals, all looked like reproductions as well. The symposia [Good Business is the Best Art](#) might or might not address these issues but we

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missed it, unfortunately. One of the disadvantages of only being a visitor and no longer living in London. Another that we had to go on a Saturday and it was so packed I felt I could not breath. John Baldessari, our National City treasure, is opening with an exhibition here and is also featured as a speaker at the Frieze fair.



Photo credit Pam Kent



[Peter Logan](#) (left) installed 6 site specific sculptures at [Fulham Palace Gardens](#). The gardens are in the summer estate of what was once the Bishop of London whose church is St. Paul's Cathedral. They were used from the 11th century until 1975 when they were in such a derelict condition that they were given to the council on a 100 year lease. Now the rooms are a museum and a lovely café and the grounds are being brought back to life. It is an amazing act of vision to include these wonderful sculptures, which take advantage of ancient tree stumps as pedestals for kinetic works which are moved by the wind and solar power. The group is called Drawing on the Wind and that is exactly what these mainly linear works accomplish. Graceful combinations of a variety of metals with a range of finishes interplay with the sky and landscape. A series of graduating sized ladders dances to form a square or an escalator to the gods. A leafy branch tumbles to the ground or is raised on high. The works are always graceful, never heavy or ponderous and the land welcomes and even embraces them as they do the land, with the lightest of touches.

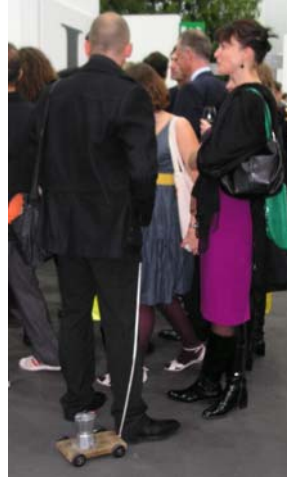
[Maharaja: the Spendor of the Royal Indian Court](#) (right above) at the Victoria and Albert Museum was fabulous and we learned a lot, but mainly how much we did not know about the history of India. Wow, lots of battles and power shifts and the English entering in and even they were split. But of course it was also the size of the jewels in the show that was dazzling. My favorite portraits were two side by side of the Raj in traditional dress and as a dashing Fred Astair rake in black tails. See the slide show presentation of the [Royal Palaces](#) to give you a bit of an idea as the web site is not great for this in terms of images. Of course, we had to go out for Indian food after that and found a tiny bolt hole of a place next to our flat called [Battersea Spice](#). You would not go out of your way to find it on a trip, but it was organic, no preservatives or added color and just terrific. What is not to like about tandori duck breast with a honey glaze and the best lady fingers (ochra) we have ever had.

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[Greyson Perry](#)



Coffee Pot Walker

The champagne was flowing already when Pam Kent and I arrived for the preview of [Frieze Art Fair](#) in Regents Park at 5:30...evidently the most exclusive collectors came early in the morning, followed by a 2 pm crowd and finally us normal VIPs came in the evening. There was no shortage of free drink including my favorite new tippie, bourbon and sparkling apple juice (called [Appletizer](#) in the UK). Just as Dave Hicky told us in San Diego, I heard that works under \$100,000 were selling rather well (of course, still well down from the high, but better than last year.) The tent was huge and the spaces for each display were very large. With over 150 galleries participating this was a marathon but we managed it all. I was pleasantly surprised to feel that the art in the Beyond the Borders International Art Fair would have held its own in comparison to the art at Frieze.



Tal R, [Victoria Miro Gallery](#) (also showing Grayson Perry) and Aristarkh Chernyshev, [XL Gallery](#)

This year's special projects included [Stephanie Syjuco: Copystand, an Autonomous Manufacturing Zone](#) where they choose works on view and then were working live to reproduce these works at reasonable prices. Frieze is for living artists only and this year included **Frame** where featured solo shows by 29 young galleries. [Zoo Art Fair](#) in the East End shows art institutes and galleries under 6 years old so Frame rather stole the thunder from Zoo. I like the displays of only one artist or one theme best and this is definitely the way forward for these art fairs instead of showing a general variety. The best thing about these fairs is that you can walk from Moscow to Korea to Glasgow in 20 minutes and see work from all around the world just strolling around a big tent.

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Work by **Farhad Moshiri** is on view at Frieze but also included for sale in [Contemporary Art including Arab and Iranian Art](#) at Sotheby's and you can click the link and listen to a fascinating explanation of these incredibly decorative technique he uses and see a close up. Moshiri was educated in California and the impasto rich works almost look like sugar and is all about excess. It was estimated for up to 200,000 pounds and went for almost double that figure. The three at the Frieze fair were huge rubber ducks. You can learn about other Arab and Iranian artists at the same time with this well done video. I was also able to access the catalog with the sales figures in the evening of the same day after of the sale finished. Amazing resource.



[Origin](#) is a two part fine craft fair held at Somerset House and I went to the second part with Lesley Silver who tells me this was better than part one. There were lovely things like scarves by [Annemieke Broenink](#) from the Netherland trimmed in rubberlace.

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[Fenella Elms](#) (left) makes these impossibly delicate porcelain images on the left and [Michelle McKinney](#) (middle and both from England) uses fine woven metal screen to form birds and leaves like these ginkgos. [Grant McCaig](#) of Edinburgh had some fine oval spoon bowls fixed on to interesting natural twigs with slim fittings but I was not allowed to photograph those for you. You can see similar but not such fine work on his website. And he did turn me on to [Extreme Craft](#) (A compendium of craft masquerading as art, art masquerading as craft, and craft extending its middle finger.) This blogger [Garth Johnson](#) has written a book [1000 Idea for Creative Reuse](#) and he hails from Eureka, CA. I was looking for interesting display possibilities but didn't see anything revolutionary. But the cross over from Fine Craft to Fine Art was evident in this show. Over 22,000 people visited Origin and estimated sales total at the close of the fair was £1.5 million (\$3 million), with this figure expected to rise with post-show sales and commissions. I think it is time we had a similar fair in San Diego and we intend to encourage that at SDVAN.

[SHOWstudio: Fashion Revolution](#) (left) at Somerset House was the most amazing eye opener for me. This project is the brain child of Nick Knight who is mainly concerned with showing fashion shoots as a process deserving of film documentation. In this exhibition, he has done much more. He shows the process of creation, he allows us to see the actual performance of the shot and he encourages participation in many inventive ways. In the photo above you see Naomi Campbell times three and three times as large as real life. I was able to go to a computer board, choose my color and size of pen and my drawings were projected on this huge colossus. The sculpture was made with the latest technology from triple exposure photo converted in to 3-D data and digitally carved. I got so many ideas from this show and hope we can utilize much of what is happening in London for our **Art Meets Fashion** project in 2010/11. I loved the lipped prints on glass that were signed and displayed.....maybe our VIP's can do a similar stunt at the next [Movers and Shakers](#) show.

[September Issue](#) is a movie documentary of the production of a five pound Vogue magazine from last year, which follows Anna Wintour around as she creates the issue. This is the behind the scenes story and is basically about power and how to use it. It is a more subtle story than one expects...almost boring except for the lovely photos of lovely clothes on lovely women styled by Grace Coddington. It could be that Grace is the star of the show and stole the thunder here. I can't imagine why Wintour would allowed the film to be made except that she wanted to justify her existence to her family and make a certain place for herself in the history of the all too fleeting world of fashion.

We are now featuring [Philly Joe Swendoza's Raging Art Bull](#) internet broadcasts. One of the concepts that Swendoza puts forward is that artists should be paid to show their work and savvy gallery owners should buy the art and not borrow it on consignment. But if we are imagining such a utopian world, why not go all the way. At the end of the week long [Free Art Fair](#) at London's Barbican in Oct 2009 (now in its third and final year) all the works

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are given away for free. Does this undermine the market price of an artist's life work? If people get it for free, will they start to expect all art to be free all the time? Or is this a clever strategy to build audience by helping future patrons to imagine owning the works? The Free Art Fair works like this. At the end of the show, the people who want free art fill in an application and put their first two choices. You only get two choices and no guarantee that you will get anything. The applications are pulled out of a hat until all the works are gone. They only want people to have work that they really want, so if both of your works are gone already you get nothing. No one finds out until the end, who has gotten what. You have to be there on the day to turn in your application and stay to see what, if anything, you are given. The Barbican is a very prestigious venue but these works were badly displayed in the lobby area and even the good works were difficult to locate. In fact, I almost felt like I was on a scavenger hunt. But this is a 100% volunteer effort and knowing how difficult it is to put on such a show, I see why this is the last year. The most interesting work was the Bob and Roberta Smith jars of sperm or was it orange marmalade? The funky little catalog made everything look good but some bizarre choice was made to put the captions over the images....well why not. Maybe having it free means no one has to answer to any of these criticisms.

I decided not to waste the trip to the Barbican and although dog tired by now, I soldiered through the [Radical Nature](#) show at the Barbican Gallery. I was rewarded by a viewing of the latest work of **Anya Gallaccio** called *Birch Reassembled*. Rather like a rough and very large Roman de Salvo, Gallaccio separated the tree and used metal rods to reconnect it together. It is tall and the leaves through brown are still intact. Gallaccio live in both London and San Diego. This was a historical show and included many of the greats including Diller Scofidio's 1979 Blur House which has it's own weather system of fog and from 1982 and Anges Danes who grew a wheat field in the middle of downtown New York.



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[Anish Kapoor](#) at Royal Academy was by far my favorite exhibition on this trip. Make sure and click the link “view exhibition photos” and take a look at the [firing of the cannon video](#). By the end of the show the room will be filled with wax and I found this both a strangely exciting and silly experience. Kapoor gives us a once in a life time sensuous experience including cherry red lacquer, gooey oil and wax, and ultra shiny surfaces that distorted the room and those in it. It is monumental in scale especially a large H.G. Wells type construction of massive rusted steel which might have been a cross between a time machine and submarine hull with lovely curves and seductive opening. I don’t think I can do justice to describing the giant train-like object that ran on rails blocking five huge gallery spaces and appearing to squeeze through three doorways leaving trails of red wax and oil everywhere. The giant depression in the wall which was a very pure yellow was phenomenal...a Zen experience which was on a level with his first powdered pigment pieces. A few of these were on show and were very disappointing. I don’t know if they were just bad versions or if he has moved on so far from these that they just seemed rather pathetic. I think it might be my first impression of the mirror balls as you come into the courtyard of the Royal Academy that will stick with me (and is the new wallpaper on my cell phone). I was most impressed with the Royal Academy for letting him do major construction and destruction to their rooms. No photo can do them justice. You have to experience them to feel their grandeur. London is all a buzz about this show and it is the one thing everyone agrees you should not miss. Plan a trip to London by Dec 10 if you possibly can.



[Henry Darger](#)



[Judith Scott](#)

We visited the [Museum of Everything](#) right after Anish Kapoor and it was such a change of pace that it took me awhile to adjust. These are outsider art works by people who are compelled to create. Many are mentally “challenged” and some were even institutionalized. The Museum is temporary (I imagine unless funding is forthcoming). You go up very steep stairs to a series of tiny rooms with labels explanations hung very low and written mainly by artists, curators and cultural figures that have discovered the works of their counter parts outside the art system. Gradually the rooms get larger but are very raw. You see through holes into further rooms and you

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get the feeling these are the sort of spaces these artists existed in. The website has no images, but you can use Google Images to see more of these works. I knew of Henry Darger and his Vivian girls but discovered Judith Scott while there.



Carpenter Workshop Gallery [Vincent Dubourg](#)



Carpenter Workshop Gallery [rAndom International Mirror](#)



[Barry Friedman](#) in NY [Yoichi Ohira](#)



Didier Antiques [Artist's Jewels](#)

[Pavilion of Art & Design London](#) at Berkeley Square gave us a wonderful opportunity to visit shops and galleries in London, Paris, New York and Milan mainly. I really enjoyed seeing the artist jewelry at **Didier Antiques** and **Louisa Guinness Gallery** because of the Little & Large show. Take a look at the jewelry by [Anish Kapoor](#) that she is showing. The mirror above scanned your face as you stood in front of it and presented a ghostly image which faded...very effective and rather moody. I loved **Vincent Dubourg** deconstructed cabinet...click the link to see other works by him. I also discovered wonderful benches by [Pablo Reinoso](#) while visiting the Carpenter Workshop Gallery site. The Victoria and Albert Museum choose to acquire one of **Yoichi Ohira's** glass vessels with a grant from the champagne sponsor of the event.

Venice

Sometimes I forget how difficult travel can be. I strongly recommend that you find a detailed map book for Venice if you ever go. The smaller fold up maps are confusing as they leave out so many streets and canals that it is easy to get lost, which we did repeatable. Venice is a hard city to navigate and it seems best to wander and accidentally find things. But we have an agenda full of assignations and so I knew we would be lucky to meet them all.

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We actually got lost for an hour trying to find the dedication ceremony for Victoria Nathanson's mother Lady Thorneycroft at [Church Of S. Maria Del Rosario](#) but we were able to visit it the next day. You see us here with the little statue that had been restored in her memory as she was a contributor of note to the Venice in Peril fund. There is a giant wood rosary hung over the door of the church and this very ornate Virgin and child to the left of the entrance.

A few notes about the [Biennial](#) before I begin with the art. The website is a bit confusing but once on the real estate it is easier to understand how the Biennial works. There are two main areas of viewing. The entire Arsenale is large because the original islands of Venice were made from swamp land to help the citizens avoid the marauding bands. With all the canals, shipping building was vastly important. But the art is mainly in a long building which was originally used to make rope called the [Corderie](#). There we found a curated show [53rd International Art Exhibition – Fare Mondi/Making Worlds](#) with works from all over the world and then some of the country pavilions including the [Italian Pavilion](#). Near to the Arsenale are some lovely gardens that house about half of the 77 country pavilions called the [Giardini](#). These are important to see just for the individual architecture of the pavilions as well as the art. The [Palazzo delle Esposizioni](#) is a pavilion within the garden with a group exhibition and a café and book shop..

There is a shuttle bus between the two, but it is not a long walk. However, seeing all the art is so exhausting, that you might want to take two days which is what we did. Luckily our ticket allowed for this. But that was not easy to figure out. It appeared that there is a pass for 60 euros, which we did not buy which allows for unlimited entry, but our less expensive ticket (18 euros for regular and 15 for over 65) seems to allow the same thing. It is probably just another of the Italian floating interpretations. We noted at the American pavilion, it was posted not to take photos, but everyone was happy snapping away even with the guards watching. And when the ticket booth was closed, we rode on the vaporetta without paying one time. No one seems to blink. But yes, I found out there is a large fine if you get caught in spot checks...which I never saw happening.

Finally, there are 44 exhibition scattered throughout the city. We didn't attempt to find any of these and just preferred to come across them randomly on our travels. There were well marked with signs and flags and banners and I think this was my favorite part of the Biennale.

If you are like me and have known about the Biennial all your adult life, you have certain expectations of the quality of the work being of the highest. But over the years, this has become just one more semi annual art venue so I had to get over my disappointment quickly and realize that this is a mixed bag of art. Some are outstanding; others are lack luster and even seemed unfocused. We speculated that the great number of videos might be due to financial

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considerations...but they did seem to be the most difficult to enjoy....you were tired and few of them had seats and most were slow and not particularly visual.



At the **Giardini**, we were all immediately impressed with the work of the Spanish artist **Miguel Barcelo**. There was an excellent demonstration video revealing the vigor that was used to slash and gouge the clay for some of the sculptures. The work above shows the great textures used in all the work. The donkey on the right is actually pierced with a rock which becomes the load it is carrying. I learned more about this artist and he is a wild man and worth checking out.



When we reached Making World pavilion it was *Galaxies forming along filaments, like droplets along the strands of a spider's web (left)* by **Tomas Saraceno** which was a show stopper. It filled an entire large room and I felt like a thief crossing a laser protected safe room getting from one side to the other. A long series of turntables with a very odd assortment of found objects (right) was made very special because of the lighting, shadows and motion created. Take a look at the video of **Hans-Peter Feldman's Shadow Play**.

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Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset curated the Denmark and Nordic Countries (Finland, Norway, Sweden) pavilions for a show called [The Collectors](#). (left) It looked like a modern open plan home with a conversation pit, a bedroom, etc and filled with “designer” art chosen by a certain type of stereotypical collector of contemporary art. The surprise came when one went to the pool area and saw the figure floating face down.

The Russian [Andrei Molodkin](#) (middle) uses the Victory of Samothrace for his sculpture *Le Rouge et Le Noir*. This work is much more than what you see above. It has a motor that squirts some sort of dark red liquid in pulses to the inside of the work which is transparent. A camera focused on the work then projects a close up onto a wall in front of the work of the colors as they surge and flow. When you walk into the room you are encompassed by the sight and sound. All of the works in this pavilion were installations and site specific. Even the outside exhibit, [Sergei Shekhovtsov](#)'s (right) motorcycle surprisingly made of foam rubber appears to crash right through the wall.



[Bruce Nauman](#): *Topological Gardens*, (left) in the USA pavilion was awarded the Golden Lion for the Best National Participation. This is the first time the US has won the award since 1990. There was neon and fountains and mobiles but the hands (fifteen in all) were old and new at the same time. This was a mini retrospective of his work.

The **Arsenale** was impressive and a bit more manageable in size. [Michelangelo Pistoletto](#), *Seventeen less One*, (right) is a regular contributor to the Biennale in 1966, 1968, 1976, 1978, 1984, 1986, 1993, 1995, 2003 and 2005 and now 2009 with this performance work. Watch the video clip and see him break the glass in the mirrors which filled up an entire large space. Yes, those black areas are holes in the glass and all those mirrors reflected each other. The next two works are also all about the reflections and spatial tricks.

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[Ivan Navarro](#), *Threshold* (left) and *The Opening of the Barrel* (right) at the Chilean Pavilion were a delight. [Chu Yun](#)'s installation *Constellation* (not illustrated) appeared to be a very dark space filled with tiny colored light. How cool was it to discover those light were simply the power on indicators for a mass of electronic equipment. Clever and effective.



The photo (left) is just to give you an idea of why you should watch the video link to [Paul Chan's](#) sexy, funny shadows projected on the rough brick wall of the space. I like contrasting that to the little prairie home (right) built in the lagoon and looking so out of place which was [Mike Bouchet's](#) *Suburban Home*.

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[Giacomo Costa](#)'s photo montage *Private Garden* (left) engulfs you on both sides of a walk way of light boxes, but it is only on close observation that you see these digital masterpiece is all collaged and not a natural setting at all. [Nicola Verlati](#) gives us the same hyper realistic view in paint with the portrait of James Dean on a bull ride spinning through the air.



The shows we discovered on our walk about the city, were some of the most special because they were discoveries not planned so with no expectation. Many were free and thus available to all tourist and residents. Most were in wonderful buildings that you would never be able to discover otherwise. Of these exhibitions my favorite was the one curator by Tang Fu Kuen which included Berlin-based Ming Wong who collaborated with Neo Chon Teck. Teck is Singapore's last cinema billboard artist and the Singapore exhibition showed paintings that look like movie posters as well as the video's made by Tang Fu Kuen. The video was on three screens slightly out of synch with three different subtitled languages. One actor played both the male and female role and some times it appeared to be two actors and sometimes the female and a male director trying to get the most out of the take. At first glance, you really believed it was a 50s film and there was a rhythm created. I found myself watching it twice.

THE SAN DIEGO VISUAL ARTS NETWORK

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I have included video links to guided tours of the following shows so you get more an idea of the environment. [Martin Boyce's](#) *No Reflections* from Scotland showed at the top floor of the Palazzo Pisane and was fairly thin. But the guy from Iceland [Roger Kjartanssen](#), had it tapped. He put up a multi-screen record video of a band playing in the snow and proceeded to sit in these wonderful rooms with a canal deck and drink beer and paint masses of pictures of a guy in a swim suit. His team looked like they were really enjoying themselves. The show was called *The End*. Maybe it was just nice to get out of Iceland for a couple of months. [Frances Upritchard](#) (New Zealand) showed strange figures in a show called *Save Yourself* and was lucky to have some of the most beautiful rooms we saw.

We only had time to go to two museums in Venice and it was hard to choose, but I opted for those which had interesting changing exhibitions as apposed to those with impressive permanent collections. At the **Fortuny** we saw [Infinitum](#) which is part three of an extended project. It was so refreshing to see mainly minimum work in four floors of a very large impressive home of the fabric designer who was also a brilliant collector. We were not allowed to take photos but anyway, you could never capture the effect of the **James Turrell** work which I adored. He creates a space with no limits. You look at this pale pink glow and don't know how deep or wide or tall it is. It was only with detective skills that we finally figured out where the hidden lights we buried.



Two other works intrigued me. One was a large steel sailor's needle hung on a cord and hovering in front of a horizontal wire. Every once in a while a current was passed through the wire which made the needle play the wire

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and an interesting sound was produced. The other was a large rectangular grey rock (left) attached with a steel cable to a large rectangular black rock. These rocks were then hung either side over the top of a tall white wood panel and the entire panel leaned against the wall with the grey rock between the wall and the panel. Both were very simple but very effective. I apologize for not having artists' names for these pieces. Many of the works in this show were also included in the Biennial and the same thing was true for the shows at the [Ca' d'Oro](#).

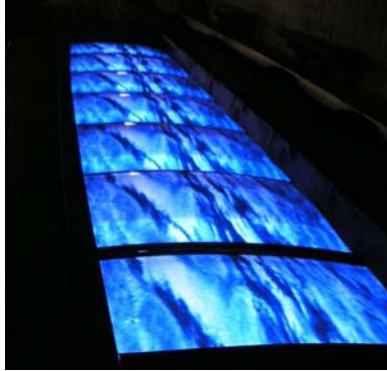
The Ca' d'Oro is an ancient patrician residence of the fifteenth-century. It holds the art collection of Baron Giorgio Franchetti, who bought the building in 1894, and gave it to the State. The house is decorated with a Venetian Gothic style with paintings of the Venetian school plus works of the Tuscan and the Flemish school, wonderful bronze statues and Renaissance statues as well. At Ca' Duodo, the palace next to the Ca' d'Oro, there is an interesting collection of ceramics found in the Venetian lagoon. I choose the above (right) set to show you with fashionable hairdos of the 14th century.



The special exhibition during our visit to Ca' d'Oro was [L'anima Dell'acqua - Contemporary Art](#), and it was all about the water that, of course, surrounds us everywhere in Venice. Rather like the ocean views in Southern California, the art always has to compete with the city of Venice, its canals and views and fabulous architecture. The setting for the school of fish above was spectacular and you can see with the detail image how marvelous they are, each supported on a rod and floor stand. The view out that window was of the Grand Canal.

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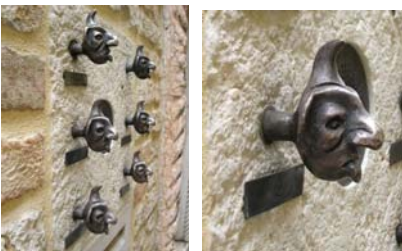


[Fabrizio Plessi](#) has undoubtedly the most incredible room with tiled floor and spectacular windows to display his beautifully constructed set of boats with video clips of running water surging on the top of each one.

A succession of giant cruise liners passes in the lagoon and their mass reminds you how small and delicate Venice is. But the city is now amazingly clean. There is, we understand, a huge fine for littering and you mainly smell ladies' perfumes instead of the sewage as in past years. After a few days, Italian life seeps into your own and we are less harried and more observant. I could easily drink wine by the end of the week but water started to give me indigestion. I wanted 3 months and had to settle for one week, but I feel sure that if we came back we would slow down even more. The city is for the very fit as you really walk the whole time and stairs abound over hundreds of bridges. We will have to go again before our bodies betray us.

To sum up the attraction of the art both in London and Venice, I would say site specific installations were the greatest draw. I have a theory this is due to our exposure to UTube and the multi media savvy of youth. A simple image or object is not enough to gratify desire any longer. We want entire environments which somehow encompass us and give us a total sensory experience.

Just one last note about the weather in England and Venice - It was absolutely fantastic almost the entire month of October, 2009. In fact, when we arrived back in Cardiff by the Sea, jet lagged but joyful to easily drive and park a car, it was cooler than any time during the trip. We had to put the heat on in the house and pull out the extra blankets. A terrible cliché, but it is good to travel and good to return. A first week at home showed that SD has as much to offer as any major city in the world. I highly recommend [Untitled](#), the movie about the art world now playing in Hillcrest. And I recommend even more strongly the [Tara Donovan](#) art exhibition at the Downtown MoCAsD through February.



Apartment door bells next to the apartment where we stayed.