

Josh Tonsfeldt
Artforum.com, December 2010

ARTFORUM

Best of 2010

Joanna Fiduccia

Carol Bove, Blinky Palermo, Renwick Gallery group exhibitions



Blinky Palermo, *untitled (T-formiges Objekt mit Gouache)* [T-shaped object with Gouache], 1967–72, gouache on pressed paper and mixed media, 81 1/2 x 127 1/2 x 1 3/8”.

On a visit to Carol Bove’s exhibition at Kimmerich in New York last March, the gallery assistant kindly asked me to refrain from blowing on the peacock feathers. Apparently, a number of visitors had been so disarmed by Bove’s exquisite compositions that they had committed surprising lapses in decorum, and the gallery had begun preemptively beseeching the rest of us to control ourselves. Truth be told, Bove’s sumptuous mantles of feathers on canvases were enticing. In this show, arrangements of organic, ornamental, and industrial materials participated in a familiar conversation about display, but they were so prodigiously, yes, *beautiful* that conventionality was compressed by the heightened atmosphere—not banished but rather made to shimmer like one of Bove’s veils of silver chain.

Lynne Cooke’s “Blinky Palermo: Retrospective 1964–1977” may have been organized through the joint effort of other institutions (Dia:Beacon and the Hessel Museum and CCS Galleries at Bard College, where the exhibition’s tour will conclude next year), but this doesn’t make its debut at LACMA any less magical. Palermo’s first US retrospective covers his principal productions while remaining intimate and uncluttered, the work occurring with the paradoxical bewilderment and *naturel* of a missing link, or a benediction.

The series of group exhibitions at Renwick Gallery last year reinvigorated the space and set a high standard for animated, intelligent shows. Curated with brio, they proposed connections as well as parleys among richly eccentric work from artists such as Margarete Jakschik, Katja Strunz, Talia Chetrit, and Valerie Snobeck, alongside historical singularities such as Francesca Woodman and Charlotte Posenenske. The first exhibition, in May, included a cozy evening of screenings from artists and collectives, including Heather Guertin and Josh Tonsfeldt, interspersed with a reading by Wayne Koestenbaum, who began with an excerpt from Gertrude Stein’s *Tender Buttons*: “More of double. A place in no new table. A single image is not splendor . . .” A fitting overture to the Renwick’s jubilant many.

Joanna Fiduccia is a writer living in Los Angeles, and a Dickson Fellow in the art history department of the University of California, Los Angeles.