

# Museums

## Washington's best art gallery shows of 2012

By Mark Jenkins, Published: December 7, 2012

As the U.S. economy continued the long slog of the slowest recovery since the 1930s, Washington's commercial art scene neither expanded nor contracted significantly in 2012. But the leading galleries, supplemented by nonprofit spaces and pop-up exhibitions, continued to present extraordinary shows. After reviewing about 200 local exhibitions in 2012 — and seeing many more than that — selecting the best was daunting. These 10 were certainly among the strongest, but they also represented the impressive breadth of art shown this year in a city open to both classicism and conceptualism, and always interested in politics.

### Colby Caldwell: Gun Shy



(Courtesy Colby Caldwell and Hemphill Fine Arts) - Colby Caldwell's "Untitled [yellow]."

March 24-May 25 at Hemphill Fine Arts

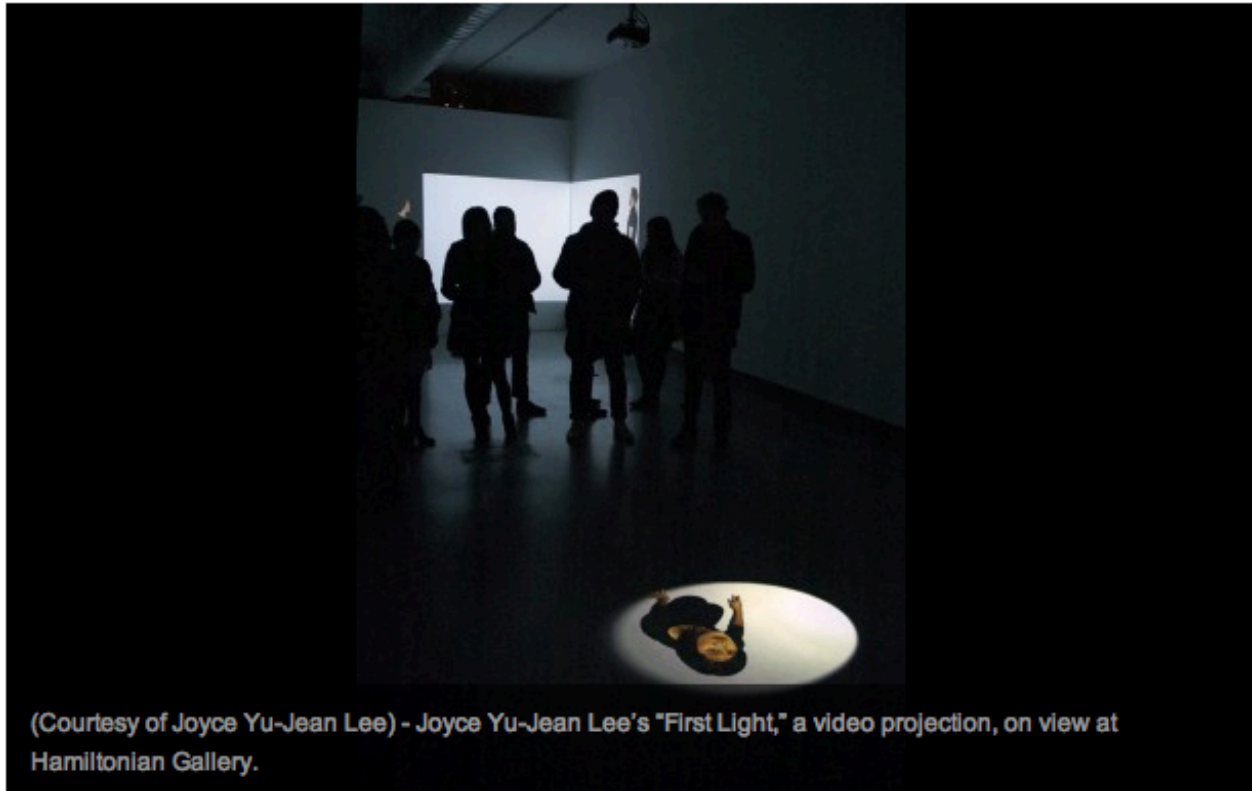
The Maryland artist's photographs of avian remains, abandoned duck blinds and used shotgun shells, supplemented by colorful digital abstractions, were evocative of loss and decay: dwindling recollections as much as environmental ravages. But Caldwell's scanner-made, seven-foot-high images (also shown in "Spent" at Civilian Art Projects) were equally notable for their beauty. The crisp detail, glossy surfaces and richly weathered, often metallic hues — plus the sheer scale — gave the photos the power of vast canvases.

### CTRL+P: New Directions in Printmaking

June 22-Sept. 16 at Arlington Arts Center

Customary expectations for prints were literally blown up by this wide-ranging group exhibition, which featured much wall-size work. Despite its keyboard-inspired name, this was not a show of computer-generated prints. Beside more recent techniques and technologies, the selection included examples of such traditional forms as woodcut and letterpress. The attitude, however, was experimental and contemporary.

### **Joyce Yu-Jean Lee: Passages**



Feb. 11-March 10 at Hamiltonian Gallery

Using photographs and video, this local artist focused on windows, skylights and peepholes. Exhibited in a darkened room and illuminated by pinpoint spotlights, her small, glossy photos showed luminous details from such notable structures as Rembrandt's house and the Great Wall of China. These were supplemented by two video-performance pieces that depicted people inside small areas of light, offering mini-narratives of entrapment and potential escape.

[EXCERPT]

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