

Texas Biennial

By Frances Colpitt

Encompassing 73 Texas artists from small towns as well as metropolitan centers, the bulk of the third Texas Biennial consisted of the two large thematic group shows and four regional solo exhibitions, all held at six nonprofit and artist-run venues throughout the city. Guest-Curator Michael



Duncan, a Los Angeles-based art critic and curator (and A.i.A. corresponding editor), selected participants from an open call, which resulted in 650 submissions, amplified by wide-ranging studio visits. While several of the biennial artists show at commercial galleries, the majority are unknown to the wide art world.



To provide more in-depth exposure, one artist was chosen from the north, south, east and west of Texas to have a solo exhibition, each a different venue. The most engaging for this view was William Cannings at Okay Mountain. He exhibited steel sculptures of life-size inflatable objects, like inner tubes, beach balls and rafts, which he makes by heating metal sheets and shaping them with forced air. Painted in shiny enamel, the works convincingly capture the puckered seams and puffed-out shapes of the artist's motifs. Unlike Jeff

Koons's works, Cannings's are actual size, thick and glossy rather than thin and glassy. The weighty material is rendered buoyant and airy, like the show as a whole. In addition, Lee Baxter Davis exhibited detailed Western-themed ink drawings of partially dressed and frequently armed men and women at Pump Project, and Jayne Lawrence presented totemic sculptural assemblages at Mass Gallery. Kelli Vance showed titillating Photo-Realist paintings of her female friends in suburban interiors at Big Medium.