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At Lora Reynolds Gallery: Troy Brauntuch, Andy Coolquitt & Jeff Williams
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Lora Reynolds Gallery goes local in a nicely organized exhibit spotlighting three artists—Troy Brauntuch, Andy Coolquitt and Jeff Williams—who are principally based in Austin but whose noted careers generally mean they mostly show in art-world capitals like New York, London and Berlin.



Brauntuch and Williams are both on the faculty of the University of Texas; their work is featured in the occasional faculty exhibit on campus. Williams won the now defunct Texas Prize in 2012, which was awarded by AMOA/Arthouse.

Coolquitt—who divides his time between Austin and New York—had a big local splash in 2012 when a major solo exhibit landed at the Contemporary Austin, a show accompanied by a luscious catalog published by UT Press.

Brauntuch, who was born in 1954, is part of the so-called Pictures Generation of the 1970s, who made much of appropriating images plucked from mass media.

Like in his previous paintings, in the quartet now on view Brauntuch obscures the found images in dark, moody blackness to the point that they are beguilingly almost indistinguishable in his velvety canvases. Only after careful looking do hazy scenarios—a woman wrapped in a scarf, a vintage camera—begin to emerge.

But then that's Brauntuch's point: His is an invite to look, and look again. And to a certain extent, Coolquitt and Williams cajole you to look more deeply too.

Williams does it by forcing industrial materials to the point of failure, torching, compressing or chemically corroding them to the edge of total transformation — or even disappearance.



Under his hand, giant, hefty steel sheets are clamped and folded as if they were nothing but paper, or part of an aluminum I-beam is melted, the shiny metal dripping like butter.

There's a menacing quality to Williams' work, but it's nicely balanced with a dollop of geeky curiosity from someone fascinated by the wonderful science behind all the metal and stone and chemicals he's working with.

Coolquitt is the most optimistic of the trio. He's an inveterate scavenger, culling the most quotidian things from often the scruffiest urban settings, then altering the empty cans, metal tubing, wire, plastic parts and scrap fabric into sculptural objects that have a purpose of sorts.

Coolquitt fashions colorful metal tubing and leftover electrical wire into a series of light fixtures. Scrap metal is welded together to form a wall shelf for salvaged glass vases. And brightly colored pieces of scrap fabric are re-imagined into towels that are an homage to color field painter Kenneth Noland.

From the detritus of urban life, Coolquitt conjures up an eccentric collection of assembled objects that fancifully straddle the border between art and function.