

PalmBeachPost

The Best of 2004: Art

Gary Schwan's five favorite works of art in 2004

By Gary Schwan

Thursday, December 23, 2004

1. Seven Characters (1985-2000). Ilya and Emilia Kabakov. Multimedia installation. Norton Museum of Art.

Because it renewed your faith in installation art after seeing so much clumsy work over the years. A recreation of a crowded, Soviet-era apartment building, the work was cleverly installed and told moving personal stories. The work was both political and humane.



Portrait of a Man in a Red Doublet (17th century).

2. Portrait of a Man in a Red Doublet (17th century). Rembrandt van Rijn. Oil on canvas. Palm Beach Classic art fair.

Because it's Rembrandt van Rijn, and his work is scarce on the ground in these parts. Or, rather, the walls.

3. Boanerges (2003). Paul Manes. Oil on canvas. Eaton Fine Art, West Palm Beach.

Because the New York artist can paint anything he wants with a versatile touch. In this case, he took a World War II-era bomber, spread its wings over three canvases, and made it look like the fearsome engine of wrath it was.



4. Sunset on the Marshes (1867). Martin Johnson Heade. Oil on canvas. Vero Beach Museum of Art.

Because Heade's rosy sky is sublime, and he has a Palm Beach connection. His patron was Henry Flagler. The picture was just one of several fine works in an 18th-century American landscape show.

5. God II. Michael Joo. Multimedia installation. Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art.

Some art stops the heart because it's so beautiful. Joo's work stopped the heart because it was shocking. Turn a corner and you found a skeleton in an Eskimo garb sprawled atop a "snowy" refrigerated base. Viewers' breath added frost to the tableau, slowly obscuring the disintegrating figure. Eerie, and an example of Joo's science-meets-art approach.