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SNIPS AND SNAILS: LET THE FALL ART SEASON BEGIN!

BY DOUG HARVEY

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September 11 is upon us, and we all know what that means — opening weekend for the new fall line of upscale home decorations! But, hey, given the profusion of cultural fanfare marking previous anniversaries of the whole chickens-coming-home-to-roost thing (and the brouhaha undoubtedly brewing in anticipation of the imminent 10-year milestone) it's not surprising that the art world would want to back away from geopolitical topicalism in favor of a back-to-normal (a.k.a. "Daddy Obama will fix everything! Let's go shopping!") mode of discourse. Which is fine. Frankly, I would consider the most self-indulgently aesthetic self-expression more authentically political than most formulaic ideological illustrations. This weekend offers the gamut, in overwhelming abundance — here are a few of the highlights to help map out your gallery-hopping:

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Another of my favorite cobblestoners is Brian Bress, whose chaotic but formally exquisite collage strategies are deployed with equal aplomb in his delirious videos, space-bending photographic tableaux, and, well, collages. "The Royal Box," his first solo exhibit at Cherry and Martin, opens Saturday. Essentially a multimedia exercise in extended self-portraiture, Bress' oeuvre overlaps considerably with that of his former running mate Elliott Hundley. But where Hundley's work offers breathtaking optical swaths of pixilated sincerity, Bress' work seethes with dark humor and comical paranoia. His new short video "It's Been a Long Day" is one of the funniest and most disturbing piss-takes on painting ever, while the lengthier "Because It's the Depression" pushes his surrealist cable access cutup aesthetic to new heights. Always slightly more serene, Bress' 2-D works foreground his phenomenal formal chops, particularly the mournfully sumptuous *A River* and the Arcimboldo-inspired *Impostor the Head*.

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