Richard Hawkins is an artist living in Los Angeles. His first major museum survey, "Richard Hawkins: Third Mind," curated by Lisa Dorin, opened at the Art Institute of Chicago in October and travels to the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, in February 2011.

1. Larry Johnson, Untitled (Ice Breaker) (detail), 2010, diptych, color photographs, 15 3/4 x 18 3/4 and 19 1/8 x 27".

2. John McAllister, Innerly Innerness, 2010, oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 26".


5. Below: Vincent Fecteau, Untitled, 2010, acrylic on paper-mâché, 27 x 44 x 22 1/2".
7. "Gauguin: Maker of Myth" (Tate Modern, London; curated by Amy Dickson, Tamar Garb, Christine Riding, and Belinda Thomson) I’m picking this for the paintings, of course, but even more for Gauguin’s rarely seen artist’s books, which conflate found photographs, hand-copied poems and texts, reproductions of woodcuts and of influential artists’ works, and Gauguin’s own drawings and writings. Though overlooked by collage historians, the artist’s investigations of juxtaposition and rupture go much further than the quaint recontextualizations of Victorian scrapbooks. They also predate by two decades the experiments of Picasso and Braque.

8. Lari Pittman (Regen Projects, Los Angeles and Regen Projects II, Los Angeles) One gallery was full of outlandish new paintings; the other was densely packed with spectacular artists’ books (made in collaboration with Dennis Cooper and Jonathan Hammer) and works on paper. Writing on Pittman, at least in the press, tends to evolve into autobiographical anecdote and dichotomized description (renewal/deadly, decorative/ grotesque, etc.), while completely missing the Auntie Mame politics that were so amply in evidence here—i.e., queenly exhortations to defy tragic conservatism with every more decadent acting out.

9. Joe Goode, Purple (Artforum Name) (Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) I haven’t spent too much time in galleries over the past twelve months. I’d like to say I was busy, but really I was nonplussed: Every time I did venture out I saw hardly anything but blandness chasing after Conceptualist pedigrees. Though perhaps a counterintuitive selection for my "best of 2010," given that it was made in 1981 and has been in storage since 2008, I assert the timeliness of Joe Goode’s painting because it hovered before me like a retinal negative all year, the antithesis of so much that I saw. Had it been on view, I think it would have been a universal curatorial for aesthetic anhedonia, but I have my own Melanie Klein–ish reasons for liking it: phallic milk bottle; canvas (large and looming like a mother’s body, from an infant’s point of view) sucked dry and then smeared with the most glorious purple excreta. But its provenance reveals its own Conceptual pedigree: "Gift of Michael Asher."

10. "Brion Gysin: Dream Machine" (New Museum, New York; curated by Laura Hoptman) It’s about time this radical experimenter got some exposure and some attention. And while I’m on the subject of oversights, could someone please organize a Charles Henri Ford exhibition?