



Arts

## At Neimans Downtown Flagship Store, New Window Dressing for April's Dallas Art Fair

By Patrick Michels, Wed., Mar. 23 2011 @ 9:48AM

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Photos by Patrick Michels

With this year's **Dallas Art Fair** just a couple weeks away, downtown's Neiman Marcus flagship store is once again getting into the spirit -- which is why, just after noon Tuesday, Houston artist-hoarder **Bill Davenport** was packed into a window box along Main Street, hanging thrift store paintings on the wall.

Davenport's is one of seven window showcases at Neimans this year, each space filled by a different leader from the local arts community or an artist of their choosing. Some of the window setups were nearly complete early Tuesday, but the whole show's going to be unveiled at 6 p.m. today.

Davenport, like each of the other artists dressing up their windows, used the space to riff on the high-dollar retail shop setting -- his is a miniature incarnation of "Bill's Junk," his thrift-store art installation at the Contemporary Art Museum Houston two years ago.

That show was itself a reinterpretation of his shop in Houston, a collection of art he's found in thrift stores over the years. As before, he says, each of the things in the window will be for sale. "Just email me," he says, if you think that giant ball of yarn or the saggy football mounted to an autumn landscape painting would look good on your wall.

"You look at things differently if you can buy them," he says. "It suddenly puts art in a familiar context."



Davenport puts a small piece into place at the front of his window case.

That painting with a football stuck to it is one of the few pieces in the window Davenport had a hand in making. (Nowadays, he says, most of his own work is in large outdoor sculptures.) Usually, he'll leave his thrift-store finds as-is, but then there are paintings, like this art-school reject canvas of trees in the fall, that, he says, "need improvement. Some things are just desperate."

Finished in another window, but covered up for now, is the graffiti installation from [Sour Grapes](#), in the [video Robert pointed out last week](#).

Sculptor [Jeremy Mora](#) was still working behind the neighboring window Tuesday, though, setting his small pieces on pedestals and floor spaces where they'll only be visible through small gaps in a big black vinyl window skin. Mora says the window covering idea came from the guy who nominated him for the window spot, the Nasher Sculpture Center's Stephen Ross.

"It runs the risk of people saying, 'Oh, it's just a black window,'" and walking on by, Mora says. "People don't usually go beyond their usual comfort level." When the window covering is finished, he says, you'll be able to peer in and just see one piece at a time, with an extra dose of mystery and adventure -- especially at one piece he hinted is only going to be visible by craning around and looking around the edges.

Other artists filling the windows include Ed Marquand from [Marquand Books](#); [Selven O'Keef Jarmon](#), nominated by the Menil Collection's Toby Kamps; selections in a 'Wunderkammer' collection of oddities from the [Webb Gallery](#) in Waxahachie; and [Edward Setina](#), nominated by artist Richard Patterson. The window installations will stay up through April 10.



A graffiti installation by Sour Grapes.



Peering in on Davenport as he assembles his display.