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Melany Jean's Top 10 Fresh Takes in the Arts of 2017: Works of art and shows that were intimate, funny, and awe-inspiring stood out over the year

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1) **TEXAS BIENNIAL (Big Medium)** In the hands of curator Leslie Moody Castro, an expansive road trip provided a revelatory survey of the visual arts landscape statewide. The culminating exhibition gathered some of the best from the trip in an eclectic show that felt timely and nonetheless cohesive.

2) **"RAUL GONZALEZ: DOING WORK" (grayDUCK Gallery)** A kaleidoscopic show that managed visual interest with unexpected materials and a provocative exploration of fatherhood and immigrant workers filtered through Gonzalez's personal experience.

3) ***THE COLOR OF BEING/EL COLOR DEL SER: DOROTHY HOOD, 1918-2000 BY SUSIE KALIL* (Texas A&M University Press)** This was published in autumn of 2016, but what is 2017 if not a constant look back at autumn 2016? (The book is, however, attendant to a Dorothy Hood retrospective that ran through January of this year in Corpus Christi.) All that to say: Read this for a look at one of the most brilliant and painfully eclipsed abstract painters to straddle the U.S./Mexico border.

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4) MEET HER HANDS (BossBabesATX) The lecture and exhibition series, held at the Elisabet Ney Museum, offered the opportunity for a casual talk with artists about their work and process in a beautiful setting.

5) "NINA KATCHADOURIAN: CURIUSER" (Blanton Museum of Art) The conceptual artist's survey sparked laughter and, appropriately, curiosity that left you wandering through the rest of the Blanton's familiar collection with fresh eyes and renewed interest.

6) *THE RESONANT LUNG* BY COLIN MCINTYRE The pipe organ-Frankenstein's monster sculpture/instrument provided repeated awe in the hands of various musicians and composers throughout the year.

7) "MARTA LEE AND ANIKA STEPPE: KIND OF ABOUT MICHIGAN" (UT Visual Arts Center) The two-person show revealed an intimacy between both creators that seeped through the works and invited the audience to explore alongside them.

8) RECSPEC GALLERY OPENING The design agency ventured into a new arena with its opening of the exhibition and retail space in the Flatbed building, and right from the opening it has delivered with delightful collections and wares.

9) *WAIT TILL YOU SEE ME DANCE* BY DEB OLIN UNFERTH (Graywolf Press) This collection from Austin-based Unferth is a touching exploration of emotional and relational tensions, delivered in a range of captivating and creative forms within the ever-growing short story umbrella.

10) OFF-EAST, OR THE GRANDMA SELLING EMBROIDERY IN HER YARD During the East Austin Studio Tour, a Spanish-speaking grandmother strung balloons and beautifully embroidered linens around her front yard and enlisted her granddaughter to translate sales in an unofficial bid at EAST-goers and probably unintentional art installation.