

## Best and Worst at the ADAA Art Show



Joseph Cornell, "Aviary with Parrot and Drawers" (1949)

This is a really good ADAA Art Show, the best I can recall for some time. The Art Dealers Association of America is after all a professional organization, and after the last few years' vying with the Armory Show for top-dog status, it's as though they've realized they're never going to match the two-pier blockbuster for size, and decided instead to concentrate on what they're good at. There are some beautifully curated booths here - like David Zwirner's Alice Neel exhibit, for example, Greenberg Van Doren's Richard Diebenkorn show, and Donald Morris Gallery's fascinating grouping focused around Malevich, Frank Stella, and Al Held, which I particularly recommend. I came away reflecting that the ADAA fair's somewhat hidebound reputation has more to do with the rather gloomy nature of the Park Avenue Armory's space than with any of the work on display.

## Best Single Work

I try not to be predictable in these posts, and to keep plugging away at the same old enthusiasms, but when you find a booth full of one of your very favorite artists in the whole history of art, what are you going to do? There are a surprising number of Joseph Cornells out there on the market, and other booths here - including my friend Pavel Zoubok's - had other examples. But it was L & M Arts' Cornell show, which really any museum (up to and including the Met) could have been proud of, that made it the best booth here. It's also the place where you'll find my choice for the best single work in the fair: Cornell's 1949 *Aviary with Parrot and Drawers*, which is one of the most celebrated pieces in his entire oeuvre, and for good reason. It includes a number of the key elements that make his work the resonant mystery that it is, including the gorgeous exotic bird prevented from escaping by the box that encloses it, and the regular towers of drawers - boxes within boxes, as it were - that make the bird's captivity more obviously a metaphor for all sorts of other constraints, particularly the emotional ones that seem to have governed most aspects of Cornell's existence. It is as rich in poignant poetry in other words, as its maker's life out on Utopia Parkway in Queens was devoid of it.