

Chanel, Jeanne Lanvin and Elsa Schiaparelli in fashion, Cartier in jewellery, Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann in furniture, Lalique in glass, Dreyfus in applied design, and artists Raoul Dufy, Man Ray and Sir Cecil Beaton in painting and photography. The style, initially associated with exquisite luxury objects designed by French artist-craftsmen, also lent itself to affordable mass-produced goods, informing the look of shoes, clothing, toiletry packaging, furniture, tableware (think Fiesta ware) and flatware. ROM curator Peter Kaeligren clarifies: "Art deco established models and parameters for modern design that have carried over to this day." Sept. 20 to Jan. 4, 2004. \$15-\$18. Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queen's Pk., 416-586-8000, www.rom.on.ca.

FREE Jakub Dolejs. At 27, this recent émigré from Prague has landed squarely on his feet in Toronto. An artist who can paint as well as squeeze the shutter release, he creates oversized photo tableaux, confident historic narratives involving costumed models set against skilfully rendered backdrops. In his hands, the past is subtly recreated with an eye to exposing contemporary mores. Particularly appealing is his pair of tableaux showing Napoleonic soldiers in anti-heroic off-moments. Doubled over in front of a simulated 19th-century alleyway is a young infantryman in the process of being sick, presumably with fear. Dolejs's sense of the circularity of human affairs is also translated into a mountaintop scene inspired by Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting *Wanderer*, in which a frock-coated gentleman is seen from

behind as he surveys a majestic vista. In Dolejs's version, the fellow has gotten down to business: he has taken off his coat and started sketching the lush landscape. So convincingly has the artist entered into the romantic sensibility, it's hard to accept that he wasn't copying an actual painting by the master. Sept. 4 to Oct. 11. *Angell Gallery, 890 Queen St. W., 416-530-0444, www.angellgallery.com.*

Richard Storms. "It's just about painting," the artist insists, but in the marketplace that's a hard sell. In his 25 years as a painter, Storms has explored different methods of applying paint with a dedication and skill that could easily be overlooked if you judge his oeuvre solely by its varied style or materials. Appreciating that to the casual observer Storms's work looks so different from show to show, his dealer, Robert Birch, has astutely mounted an exhibit that includes older paintings and sculptures, dating back to 1985. The current works are modestly scaled paintings of geometric shapes in subdued magentas, oranges, greys, blues and whites. Some feature horizontal bands of enamel that have bled a bit around the edges of the masking tape he used to block them off. These he dubs his "Perfect Enough" paintings. This bland description is a disservice, however, to an artist committed to recognizing the visual congruences of life that others overlook (such as the similarities between chair legs and certain letters of the alphabet). Sept. 6 to Oct. 4. *Robert Birch Gallery, Distillery Historic District, 55 Mill St., Bldg 3, 416-365-3001.*