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The Nifty 50

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36. Julian Louie has been inspired by matadors, samurai warriors and French maids alike. He showed a Lolita-meets-Rei Kawakubo power look for this coming spring that was staunch but sexy in sweet sorbet shades.

37. The artist Ryan McNamara landed a triple punch in 2009 with his Bruce Nauman-meets-"Thriller" video "I Thought It Was You" at the Athens Biennale; his trancelike performance of "The Star Parade" at Salon 94 Freemans; and his multiple-duet dance "Sacred Band of Thebes" at X Initiative.

38. Heidi Mount is a Utah native and a working mom who was discovered outside a Britney Spears concert. This year she returned the top-model torch to America by scoring the Chanel campaign. Is she the next Christy Turlington?

39. RASHAAD NEWSOME's performances and videos probe the interplay of over-the-top black entertainers and the multiracial audiences they play to. Both amusing and provocative, Newsome's work is a riveting exploration of a relationship that is no longer black and white.

40. Declaring art-world bona fides right from the start -- their name, Ohne Titel, means "untitled" in German -- Alexa Adams and Flora Gill make the kind of futuristic clothes fit for gallery walls, as well as the stark black dresses to wear to the opening.

41. The plucky Georgia teenager Melanie Oudin is American tennis's next big hope. She scored upsets at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open -- only a year after turning pro -- and has a breathless charm that brings to mind Alicia Silverstone in "Clueless."

42. Two years ago Emily Pilloton founded Project H Design, a nonprofit foundation aimed at fostering smart, socially conscious design. Her vision is articulated in a winning new book, "Design Revolution: 100 Objects That Empower People."

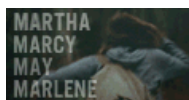
43. Experience in production design has paid off for Roman AND Williams's husband-and-wife team Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch, who have had a run of dramatic spaces, including the Standard Hotel's Boom Boom Room (right out of "Casino") and the Ace Hotel's restaurant Breslin (right out of "The Shining").

44. Thanks to her lightning-fast mouth, the Baltimore-bred Rye Rye is hip-hop's newest sensation. A protégée of M.I.A. who was signed by Interscope, Rye Rye has all the cred of a hot new rapper while holding on to her youthful charm.

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45. Paul Schneider is poised to make the jump from supporting actor to star. He has proven his range with his sweetly funny role on "Parks and Recreation" and his scene-stealing charm in films like "Lars and the Real Girl" and "Bright Star."

46. The art and fashion photographer David Benjamin Sherry bridges the divide between nature and artifice. Recasting serene landscapes in psychedelic colors, he has brought his brand of lush romanticism to GQ Style and AnOther Man.

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47. Among the many surprises of the film "Precious," the biggest one was the star, a Harlem psychology student with no background or even interest in acting. Now Gabourey Sidibe wants to keep acting. She can sing too.

48. The genius behind Momofuku Milk Bar, the pastry chef Christina Tosi is working on a new cookbook that will bring a giddy decadence to desserts -- a totally adolescent one, thanks to delights like "crack pie" and ice cream flavored with Fruity Pebbles.

49. Sara VanDerBeek's gallery, Guild & Greyshkul, is no longer around (sigh), allowing this creative dynamo more time to focus on her photographs, which contrast the graphic elegance of 1930s imagery with the factual bite of archived news materials.

50. With a fresh D.I.Y. sound wavering between angry noise and breezy bounce, the Brooklyn-based band the Vivian Girls took off last year like a rocket, playing all over the world. Their name has even been part of a question on "Jeopardy!" DAVID COLMAN

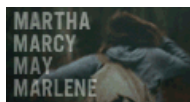
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