Fall exhibits spread out in local spaces

Amid all the hoopla of country concerts, spicy chili and fall festivals, local art galleries are quietly celebrating the season with large and quite diverse exhibits. Sometimes visual art gets drowned out by the clamor of performing arts in the fall, so here's an update on big deals in cool spaces.

**RETooled: Highlights from the Hechinger Collection**: The Appleton Museum of Art now is reveling in the art of tools. That is to say, the museum is showcasing 41 paintings, sculptures, works on paper and photographs that, in essence, are an ode to the man-made gadgets and machines that have helped carve out life as we know it. But don't expect the Appleton to look like Home Depot; these works are fun and, as the Appleton staff puts it, "fantastic."

"Providing a dynamic entry point into the rich themes, materials and processes of 20th century art, 'ReTooled' profiles 28 visionary artists from the Hechinger Collection," the museum noted in a news release. Artists include Arman, Richard Estes, Howard Finster, Red Grooms, Jacob Lawrence, Fernand Léger, H.C. Westermann, Berenice Abbott and Walker Evans, as well as pop artists Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg and James Rosenquist.

"This provides a whole new perspective on things we see every day," said Jen Boys, the museum's graphic design, Web and public relations coordinator. "There are some really big-name artists in this exhibit."

This is a traveling exhibit curated by Jared Packard-Winkler and organized for touring by International Arts & Artists of Washington, D.C. The Hechinger Collection, by the way, is owned by hardware industry pioneer John Hechinger Sr. He has been collecting tool-related works — items that explore art and design — for decades, and the goodies at the Appleton are a mere slice of the larger collection.

"ReTooled" runs through Jan. 5, 2015, at the Appleton.

"Blue, Red, Brown," left, is on display at the Appleton Museum of Art, while "Enlightenment" is on display at Gateway Bank.

***RIGHT: F.L. Wall's "Summer Tool" is part of the "ReTooled: Highlights From the Hechinger Collection" exhibit at the Appleton Museum of Art."