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ARTS / CULTURE

Three to See: Shedding Light

Each week Chicago Public Radio's Matt Cunningham brings us three events for our cultural calendar. This week sheds new light on the old.

Artist Gordon Matta-Clark came to Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art in January of 1978.

The museum asked him to participate in a performance series. The **MCA** had also recently purchased an adjacent 3-story greystone, slated for gallery space. Matta-Clark was known for his dissection of buildings. He jumped at the chance to create a work from the soon to be gutted building. Lynn Warren is a curator at the MCA. She says it was a winter quite like this one.

WARREN: Extremely cold, lots of snow and he was working in the most god-awful conditions. Laboring all day and sometimes into the night to finish this massive piece that he was doing.

The work entitled Circus or Caribbean Orange would be his last. Thirty years after that installation, the MCA opens a retrospective curated by the Whitney Museum in Manhattan. Matta-Clark explored the decay of 1970s New York. He would enter abandoned buildings and cut swaths through the floors, walls and ceilings, opening up these dark spaces. Again, curator Lynne Warren.

WARREN: His idea was very, actually, utopian. About restoring light and air to places that had been closed off for just too long.

Photographs of these buildings show his dizzying play with light and angles. And while you're at the MCA, walk up a flight to a small exhibition space, showcasing nine recent acquisitions by Chicago artists.

Stop two of our "Three to See" is John Arndt's video installation *Italian For Travelers*, inspired by a recent trip to Rome and Venice. The work combines video with audio from a *Learning Italian* tape. Arndt says he wanted to raise the question of what's important in life.

ARNDT: To do this, I did go to some of the typical tourist sites. Museums and sites of antiquity, but I spent most of the time just wondering neighborhoods, looking for everyday images that suggest something meaningful. That's where I find meaning to be located.

One of the images is atop a bridge overlooking the Tiber River in Rome. The camera pans down to colorful plastic bottles and soccer balls caught in a drain, dancing and swirling around. The Italian voice says, "This is exciting."

John Arndt's solo exhibition *Italian for Travelers* is on display Saturdays through April 5 at **Rowland Contemporary Gallery** on West Fulton Market.

The **Joffrey Ballet** opened its latest production this week celebrating the work of choreographer Antony Tudor. One work takes you to the world of burlesque. And while the Joffrey does a fabulous job at creating a g-rated show, if you want a more risqué version, I

have a show for you. Saturday night at the **Funky Buddha Lounge** on Grand and Milwaukee, you can see a performance billed as **Sex Workers Art Show**.

It's a benefit for the **Young Women's Empowerment Project**. Laura Mintz is its co-chair. She says the art and performances are great tools.

MINTZ: I think people who are not familiar with the topic will probably learn a lot. At least be enlightened as to what the particular performers experiences are, how they think about things. You know they may be surprised at some of the perspectives that they hear.

From G-Rated to X-Rated, you have a lot of options this weekend.

For Three to See, I'm Matt Cunningham, Chicago Public Radio.