



Artropolis: Art Chicago

September 13th, 2007



by Megan Voeller

If you can't beat 'em, buy 'em.

With words to that effect, Christopher G. Kennedy welcomed gallery owners and collectors to a Saturday breakfast at Artropolis, the umbrella brand for an art market extravaganza that included Art Chicago and four other fairs in downtown Chicago's Merchandise Mart.

At the breakfast, Kennedy announced plans for his company, Merchandise Mart Properties, Inc. (MMPI), a property management and tradeshow-producing firm and owner of both the Mart and Art Chicago, to buy the parent companies of New York's Armory Show and European fair VOLTA. The ambitious plan, Kennedy reasoned, would help put Art Chicago back on the map.

The Midwestern fair was ripe for a comeback. For over a decade, founders Thomas Blackman Associates ran the annual event until debt and other problems mounted to a critical point in 2006, days before Art Chicago was set to open. Kennedy's company, on the receiving end of a call for help, managed to relocate the fair to the Mart - complete with new, rush-printed invitations and advertisements. Then MMPI bought the fair outright. A year later, exuding enthusiasm for the acquisition, Kennedy ticked off evidence of his company's efforts to shepherd Art Chicago to new heights: from including satellite fairs Bridge, Intuit and The Artist Project, as well as the Mart's International Antiques Fair, to issuing hundreds of VIP passes and perks.

And in fact, the four-day (five-day, counting vernissage and media previews) event did come off, more or less, like a well-oiled machine. From the efficiently staffed elevator service that whisked visitors up and down floors at the Mart to the champagne-dispensing VIP bars, the Artropolis experience carefully coddled collectors. Whether they bought anything as a result is an entirely different question - and the source of some grumbling by gallery owners on the QT. But amid the predictable and the flashy - enough Jim Dine bathrobes to clothe Bea Arthur in perpetuity; strange, concrete-colored self-portrait heads by Jaume Plensa, odds and ends by Josef Albers; Lucio Fontana and Andy Warhol; and the inevitable homages to Sol Lewitt (whom we adore) - there was even some interesting and new art to see.

Unsurprisingly, much of it hailed from New York, though Chicago galleries were looking good, too, especially at Bridge. (More about that later.)

At Art Chicago, the booth of Chelsea's Jack Shainman had the rigor of a curated show, with El Anatsui's metal curtain-paintings (made of discarded aluminum and copper wire) striking up a lively conversation with Chicago-based Nick Cave's beaded soundsuits (an eerie marriage of Klu Klux Klan hoods and Broadway costuming) and paintings by Kerry James Marshall. The crowd took note, filling Shainman's nook with the energy of a cocktail party while other dealers manned sterile closets of art. Giant pizza boxes and Chinese take-out containers by Jonathan Seliger helped set the fun tone.

Not to be outdone, Roebling Hall offered Eve Sussman's two-channel video, *Bathers* (in collaboration with the Rufus Corporation), an ennui-saturated showcase of poolside babes, and a sad, fragmented American flag puzzle by Christoph Draeger. Amer Kobaslija's painstaking oil rendition of a janitor's closet - courtesy George Adams Gallery - turned ick-factor and claustrophobia into a startling experience of beauty. And at Susan Inglett Gallery, everything was an understated treat, from Shaun O'Dell's playful gouache-and-ink abstractions to Hope Gangloff's oversized pen-and-ink drawings of French can labels.

From across the pond, Frankfurt's Galerie Martina Detterer shone with paintings in themed series (trash, hairdos and oysters) by Cornelius Voelker and Kirsten Mosher's whimsical-yet-disturbing acrylic paintings on aluminum suggestive of cartoon disaster scenes. In a booth next door, Galerie Anita Beckers, also of Frankfurt, reaffirmed its reputation as a source for strong new media works with, among other wonders, drawings and video by Spanish artist Amparo Sard detailing the travails of an Alice in Wonderland-type girl subject to drowning and other fantastical discomforts.

Things got a bit spicier at Bridge, the smaller fair for emerging and new contemporary art that originated in Chicago and has expanded to London and Miami. Organized by Michael Workman, arts editor of *Newcity*, Chicago's alt weekly, Bridge was a mixed bag at times but rife overall with gems for the collector buying at a lower price point than Art Chicago's.

Here hometown galleries, especially those from the city's Fulton Market district, looked sharp. Landscapes - subtle and patterned in oil paint by Kim Curtis or in techno-baroque collages of bling by Sandra Bermudez - worked at Kasia Kay Art Projects Gallery. **At rowlandcontemporary, the booth was almost too full of treasures to parse them each individually: John Arndt's crystallized cowboy hat, Todd Mattei's tear-in-the-space-time-continuum digital landscapes and Carrie Moyer's richly symbolic paintings among them.**

Southerners made a good showing, too. Atlanta's romo gallery offered recent drawings by Alex Kvaes, whose psychedelic-organic landscapes are nearly hypnotic to behold. Miami's Dorsch Gallery presented a delightfully meta-portfolio of photographs by Tim Walker; the color-saturated images showcased tacky and often hilarious commercial paintings from buildings in Wynwood, a former shoe-and-fashion district where art galleries have accumulated and gentrification has followed. (The photos, accidentally or not, seemed to comment on the transformative power of the art market on urban renewal. Needless to say, harnessing some of the frenzy Miami has benefited from was a question very much on people's minds at Artropolis.)

Outside the Mart, a Sunday brunch gallery walk gave visitors an even closer look at Chicago's finest. **Less crowded at rowlandcontemporary's gallery space, the whole series of Moyer's paintings, called "Black Gold," were even more striking without distractions; here, they revealed the painter nose-deep in the creation of a unique personal, political and sexually-infused symbolism.** At NavtaSchulz Gallery, David Packer's oversized sculptures of engines and anatomically correct hearts charmed, as did Judith G. Levy's wheat paste-style installation of fun-loving banshees along Lake Street.

Whether Kennedy and company will be able to nurture Artropolis with enough cash to stimulate an arts-and-culture scene - or market - on par with Miami Basel remains to be seen. To the visitor, it was apparent that Chicago's organic contemporary art community is alive and kicking.

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Visual Arts

Robert MacDonald: *Separation Anxiety*

when: Now through Sat 10.28 (Sat: 11am-5pm)

where: Rowland Contemporary ([1118 W Fulton Market](#), 312.421.6275)

price: FREE

details: [Event Info](#)

In an exhibition marking the first anniversary of [Fulton Market](#)'s Rowland Contemporary gallery, Brooklyn-based artist Robert MacDonald's series of incredibly detailed drawings (technically, tiny paintings on vellum) are thoughtful, enigmatic investigations of psychology, symmetry, and taxonomy. Inspired by the subjectivity of the images in the [Rorschach](#) inkblot test, MacDonald's delicate biomorphic forms look something like mushrooms or bone fragments. On view in the project room are Todd Mattei's densely layered digital-photo collages and a clever, hypnotic video.

- *AM*

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ART

Eye Exam Opening Night

Michael Workman

This week in Chicago, the art world stirs from the ministrations of a sleepy summer spent elsewhere to a September already painfully overbooked and quickly spilling into October and even November. It all starts this Friday, when the gates are thrown open and that annual horserace known as the fall openings gets underway. Many alt-spaces have smartly timed their openings to occur on the night before or after Friday, when the art-viewing opportunities keenly outweigh available time to see it all (see the listings section for a full accounting). The commercial gallery trail starts for many in River North, then on to Fulton and Lake Streets, slowly winding through at eight-thirty and nine o'clock onto the sidewalks lining either side of Peoria Street between the 118 and 119 buildings, and on from there to area nightclubs like the Victor Hotel for some after-partying. Savvy travelers will need a roadmap to help them navigate it all, so here's an at-a-glance overview of some of the city's most notable shows.

Since most of this weekend's activities center on the West Loop, we'll restrict our suggestions to just a few choice River North picks: visitors should approach much of the art experience in this area walk-in style. There's plenty to surprise, such as the Josh Garber show "Pulse" and the "Smells Like Cologne" exhibition curated by Yound Sun Han at Zolla-Lieberman Gallery. Lieberman Gallery was a pioneer in the neighborhood, leading the way for the vast population of galleries that came to define the neighborhood as an art district, and the space continues to register taste-making muscle. Garber's organic shapes wear a surface skin studded with little metal studs, simultaneously chic and intransigently (though meekly) modernist at a time when the contemporary reigns supreme. At I-Space, those with a political bent will want to check out the "Underfire" exhibition, a show organized by Ryan Griffis that explores "the organization and representation of contemporary armed conflict."

Then it's on to the West Loop, starting with the Fulton/Lake Street contingent such as the EC Brown and Renee Gory show, "The Longest Piss" at Butcher Shop/Dogmatic Gallery. Visitors will recognize these two artists as the force behind the California Occidental Museum of Art,

bud light nights

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otherwise known as COMA. An exhibition space run out of their apartment, COMA has become a kind of ultimate alternative-art-insider's salon. While alternative art doesn't get the kind of market reception this weekend's built to strive after, it's a chance for a breath of fresh air outside the market mainstream. There are too many other shows to discuss in-depth, but make sure to add stops into the newly merged Packer/Schopf Gallery (an alliance of Aron Packer and the former Schopf Gallery) for "Soft Opening II," and the Robert MacDonald and Todd Mattei show at the year-old rowlandcontemporary.

At Washington and Peoria, start at the show of new work by Chris Johanson at Kavi Gupta Gallery. It's arguable that Los Angeles-based Johanson helped make this gallery's critical reputation, so effective was he in setting what was widely understood as a new aesthetic standard, at its height through perhaps late 2004. Though his cultural influence may be on the wane, he's sure to always serve up something interesting. Then it's the final leg of the evening, starting with either the 118 or 119 buildings. I suggest 118, since the 119 building's usually where the party ends up. One of the most anticipated openings is at Rhona Hoffman Gallery: a new series of works by Kehinde Wiley, "Scenic." Wiley's Baroque portraits of made iconographic imagery of everyday hip-hop fashion is daring in its willingness to court the cutting edge. Then make sure to check out the new solo show by Laura Mosquera at Monique Meloche Gallery; she's one of the gallery's longtime stable of artists. And check out Diane Christiansen's solo at gescheide. This Chicago artist has been toiling in near-obscure for too long, and was wisely picked up by this gallery at the height of her expressive range. Prolific and fearless, expect a wide range of media, from sculpture to animation, painting, drawing and installation.

Finally, across the street at 119, you'll have quite a selection from which to choose: there's Scott Fife at Bodybuilder and Sportsman Gallery, Juan Perdiguer: "Perros Fragmentados" at Three Walls and Josh Mannis, "The Dawn of Man" at 40000. Bodybuilder is opening Fife in its new space in the building; it ceded its old space to 40000, a recent transplant from Wicker Park. In Mannis' first solo, he uses photomontage to incorporate the imagery of National Geographic and Abu Ghraib. Fife fashions eerily poxied paens to art and pop-culture stars such as Jackson Pollock and Diana Ross in zombie-like busts and drawings. Perdiguer's drawings on photographic paper with etching ink replace the human figure with greyhound dogs to tell a story of a humanity gripped by existential longing. All in all, an auspicious start for a city that, at the close of summer, desperately needs to find its place in the sun.

Josh Garber and "Smells Like Cologne" show at Zolla-Lieberman Gallery, 325 West Huron, (312)944-1990, through October 14. "Underfire" shows at I-Space, 230 West Superior, (312) 587-9976, through October 7. EC Brown and Renee Gory show at Butcher Shop/Dogmatic, 1319 West Lake, (312)666-4566, through October 7. "Soft Opening II," shows at Packer/Schopf Gallery, 924 West Lake, (312)432-1630, through October 14. Robert MacDonald and Todd Mattei show show at rowlandcontemporary, 1118 West Fulton Market, (312) 421-6275, through October 8. Chris Johanson shows at

Kavi Gupta Gallery, 835 West Washington, (312)432-0708, through October 14. Kehinde Wiley shows at Rhona Hoffman Gallery, 118 North Peoria, (312)455-1990, through October 14. Laura Mosquera shows at Monique Meloche Gallery, 118 North Peoria, (312)455-0299. Diane Christiansen shows at gescheidle, 118 North Peoria, (312) 654-0600. Scott Fife shows at Bodybuilder and Sportsman Gallery, 119 North Peoria, (773)235-7297, through October 14. Juan Perdiguero shows at Three Walls, 119 North Peoria, (312)432-3972, through October 14. Josh Mannis shows at 40000, 119 North Peoria, (312)738-0179, through October 7.

(2006-09-05)

Also by Michael Workman

Eye Exam

Welcome to the new fall season in Chicago. It's worth painting a brief picture of the state of things in anticipation of next week's long list of gallery openings, a coordinated event citywide which marks the start of the traditional fall season

(2006-08-29)

Eye Exam

Despite a sloppy downpour, a good-sized crowd gathers outside the Page Brothers Building for Burtonwood and Holmes' installation, "PRODUCT Placement." Outside, artists are clustered in groups beneath the construction platform that skirts the building, smoking, talking about Chicago art. Inside, the walls are covered with junk mail advertising everything from toothpaste to TVs, and in the middle of the smallish room sits a huge replica, constructed entirely of cardboard, of an Abrams A1 tank

(2006-08-22)

Eye Exam

It's always like this. Walking through the West Loop gallery district this past Thursday was not unlike wandering into a ghost town, sans tumbleweeds. Every year in mid-August, the sea pulls back before the storm rages in to flood the mainland, a few quiet end-of-summer moments before the frenzy of the fall openings

(2006-08-15)

Eye Exam

On a sunny but cool Saturday, I'm driving with my wife and son through the back roads of Wicker Park, looking for the Gosia Koscielak Studio and Gallery on Bosworth. We find it at 1646, past a vacant lot and behind the building that used to house a Blockbuster Video, at the end of a narrow street that merges into a blind turn. It's in a spot that nobody would have any reason to visit, except kids roaming the alleys to dumpster dive or homeless people looking for a dry spot to sleep under the Kennedy Expressway overpass

(2006-08-08)

Eye Exam

(2006-08-01)

Rowland Contemporary	Robert MacDonald & Todd Mattei	Sep 8/?	MacDonald: Decalcomania drawings like Rorschachs in nightvision. Mattei: flatscreen videos and digital images akin to the European techno painting of Albert Ohlen
40000	Josh Mannis: THE DAWN OF MAN	Sep 8/Oct 7	Psychedelic kaleidoscopic collages, prints and videos with thumping, beautiful soundtracks
Gescheidle	Diane Christiansen: Rabbit in a Blender	Sep 8/Oct 7	Don't let the youthful vigor of these works fool you, Christiansen is no kid. Works on paper to be loved follow a Prometheus Bound Pikachu
Monique Meloche	Laura Mosquera: in the deep end	Sep 8/Oct 14	Developing beyond bland art crowds on 60s backgrounds.
Valerie Carberry	Jim Lutes: New Paintings	Sep 8/Oct 28 *Opening Sat 9	One of Chicago's greats, the work is truly unique, mixing realism, abstraction, egg tempera, great old moves with contemporary ones
Bodybuilder & Sportsman	Scott Fife	Sep 8/Oct 28	Heads meticulously crafted from cardboard, screws, glue & ink wash drawings. Geronimo, Guevera, van der Rohe
Wendy Cooper	Aline Bouvy / John Gillis	Sep/Oct	Brussels art team does it all, painting, sculpture, animated drawings & collages, performances. Looks very cool, very European. But also very "edgy, hip, fresh" very Artforum or Art Now.
Lisa Boyle	New Work by Jeffrey Beebe and Andrea Myers	Sep 16/Oct 14	Beebe's small works on paper seem right in step with that contemporary vein of humble, careful water media with surreal figuration
Western Exhibitions	Pornographic Pantograph with Allusion to Juan Cotan (In Progress, Patent Pending) by John Neff	Sep 16/Oct 21	Not particularly excited by this show, but Western does good work and you should check it out the new space

MUSEUMS & INSTITUTIONS

Art Institute	So the Story Goes: Photographs by Tina Barney, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, Nan Goldin, Sally Mann, and Larry Sultan	Sep 16/Dec 3	mixture of cross-over photographers, lots of sexiness. Barney takes pictures of her privileged life, so she automatically sucks. Art is from the streets, man. Not really
Block Museum	Keeping Shadows: Photography at the Worcester Art Museum	Sep 22/Dec 10	Standard history photos. But that stuff is awesome
Art Institute	Focus: Mel Bochner: Language 1966 - 2006	Oct 5/Jan 7, 07	Famous for measuring the distance between a Mondrian and the end of the wall
Smart Museum of Art	Drawing as Process in Contemporary Art	Oct 5/Jan 14, 07	Sure it's another drawing show, but drawing is awesome when done well
Block Museum	. . . even in a room full of darkness, An Installation by Matthew Girson	Oct 10/Dec 17	Either it will be great, or it will be stupid, like the odorless perfume
Museum of Contemporary Art	The Art of Richard Tuttle	Nov 11/Feb 4, 07	"Subtle, poetic, austere" these words were invented to describe his work. Watch out students: if you were sick of having your work called "Tuttle-esque" just wait
Chicago Cultural Center	Material Difference: Soft Sculpture & Wall Works	Nov 4/Jan 7, 07	Fiber shows either hold up, like a starched collar, or fall flat, like muslin

LATER ON

Roy Boyd	Markus Linnenbrink: New work	Oct 13/Nov 28	Layers of resin dripped, drilled, gouged into colorful abstractions
Thomas Robertello	Jason Robert Bell: The Kala Series	Oct 20/Nov 25	Anyone who dismisses the She-Sasquatch and Caveman Robot should pay more attention to the work itself

NAME RECOGNITION

Kavi Ghupta	Chris Johanson	Sep 8/Oct 13	Gotta love the retardaire stylings, cheap materials and bright colors. Resist the urge to do the exact same thing yourself, he's doing it much better.
Rhona Hoffman	Kehinde Wiley: Scenic	Sep 8/Oct 14	What are they calling it? Funk Baroque? Urban Rococo?
Smart Museum of Art	Adrian Piper: The Mythic Being	Sep 16/Dec 10	Important conceptualist and identity politician. Boring art, though
Russell Bowman	Candida Höfer	Oct 20/Nov 25	"I am an emotionless German photographer"
Russell Bowman	Kara Walker Prints	Dec 1/Feb 10, 07	Recent works have been moving from silhouettes towards brushy draftsmanship

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Time Out Chicago Issue 53: Mar 2–Mar 9, 2006

Kelly Kaczynski and Todd Mattei: “Drive of Eyes”

rowlandcontemporary, through Mar 11.

In September, Mark Rowland returned to the Chicago art scene after a stint in the corporate world and opened a gallery at Fulton and May Streets. His fourth show presents two young Chicagoans whose work, according to the gallery literature, has its “center firmly out of focus.”

Kelly Kaczynski starts off this decidedly narrative-free exhibition with a sculpture titled *Under Mountain*—a gloomy, globby, white mountain with a hot-pink cutaway revealing an underworld sanctuary populated by tiny deer. Her other work continues this terrestrial bent with sculpture derived from trees and cleanly rendered drawings of mountainous terrain with abstract touches of bright color. A large wall piece called *Travel Wary II*, in which Kaczynski takes a router to a piece of birch, brings up anxious feelings of being lost and studying a confusing map of the distant suburbs in search of an aunt’s house.

Where she loses us is in a pair of collages, each consisting of receipts. Nobody wants to be the jerk who says, “I don’t get it,” but, well, we don’t get it.

Todd Mattei’s pretentiously titled Photoshop manipulations also left us cold. They offer little more than low-res images, collaged together and occasionally distorted. Maybe he’s trying to make fun of “art.” His video work, however, gave us a bit more to chew on. In it, he’s created multiple layers of abstracted moving images (a guitar player, a smokestack, an owl-like creature, etc.) and mutilated logos, which results in something not unlike a billboard in *Blade Runner*.

“Drive of Eyes” is a mixed bag of mixed media, with the highs more than making up for the lows, and giving us good reason to return to this gallery.—Jason Mojica



Todd Mattei, *Male Seeks Dissociation*, 2006.

Art Letter (02/17/06)

There are several openings tonight; two of which really impress me.



Not in a long time have I seen a gallery new to Chicago like [NavtaSchulz](#). Located in the West Loop, this is their second location. The first is out-of-state. Most of their collectors are from Chicago, so sensing an affinity, they came here. This isn't a half-vast fledgeling effort. This gallery feels solid, confident, warm and strong. Because I didn't discern a single aesthetic running through all the work, I asked and was told the guide was whether or not they'd hang it in their home.

I like the NavtaSchulz Gallery. The space is clean, but not over done. And friendly. Too many galleries are snooty when a stranger walks in before the show is completely ready for viewing, as if they have some pretense, pretext and predisposition that says they have to perpetuate artifice. Not here. They didn't know me from Adam and they made me feel welcome. Then I introduced myself and their tone was consistent.

Jodi Navta and Ryan Schulz clearly love the art and artists they are showing, some of whom are from Chicago. Though they surely have solid business instincts, it is the love and the art that comes first and guides the professionalism they demonstrate in their first exhibit. Bravo.

[Rowland Contemporary](#) is another gallery I respect. And they are located nearby. They do not have an opening tonight but do have a tight, humorously challenging, stimulating, exhibit updating our notion of [trompe l'oeil](#). Convincingly using technology and technique, [Kelly Kaczynski](#) and [Todd Matei](#) get us to question what we are looking at. I thought it was fun and it made me think. That's a good thing.



Okay, the other show that opens tonight that got my juices flowing is at [Zolla/Lieberman Gallery](#). I've like [Cheonae Kim's](#) work for years. When I had a gallery I represented her. The art is fresh, abstract and intuitive. A lot of it comes from her knowledge of language and word structure. And a lot comes from her Korean culture which she didn't realize until she went back to visit after a

decade long absence. It fascinates me that she has had substantially more success, read sales, outside Chicago than she has here at home. We should fix that.

In another one person exhibition at the expansive Zolla/Lieberman is a tour de force exhibition of 'archeological' sculptures by [Stephen de Stabler](#). These works just plain sing. I first saw his work 30 years ago and now, as an artist in his 70's, de Stabler is making his best work. So many artists work so hard to grow, progress and rise to the top, that by the time they are 50 they either start doing greatest hits, or they just fade away. What a joy to see the strength and understanding in these de Stabler sculptures. He has mastered the media and explores wonderful nuances in his glazes and how they add to the content and meaning of his work.



Some museums feel empty

when I visit and some don't. One museum that always impresses me as popular is Chicago's [Museum of Contemporary Photography](#) which is affiliated with [Columbia College](#). They have a special exhibit called *Made in China*. I was surprised to learn that this quality exhibit was curated at the MoCP and does not travel. I've really like the large scale, large content photographs of Canadian Edward Burtynsky since I first became familiar with him about 10 years ago. I just bought [his book](#) about a week ago because I couldn't wait to see his Chinese work and then at this exhibit I see them full scale. And Burtynsky is only one of several photographers in the well-curated show that gives a fuller understanding of what China produces, how it produces it and what it recycles. This is a beautiful exhibit that is as informative as it is artful.

Something special is being inaugurated tonight. Five galleries make up the Bronzeville Art District ([Gallery Guichard](#), [Neleh Artistic Expressions](#), [Nicole Gallery](#), [SteeleLife Gallery](#) and the historically significant [South Side Community Art Center](#)). Together they've coordinated to have receptions every third Friday of the month. And to make it really easy for all of us they'll have a trolley that runs between all of them as well as McCormick Place. Easy parking, easy accessibility, camaraderie, new art. This is good.



That's it,

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Paul Klein

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Gallery makes 'Space' for look at urban life

February 10, 2006

BY MARGARET HAWKINS Galleries

Boundaries, structure, freedom, shelter, space. We take these elements of architecture for granted, yet urban spaces define how most of us experience our daily lives and our relationships.

In a provocative installation, Walsh Gallery presents the work of six Asian and Asian-American artists who deal with this subject.

Wang Wei's giant birdcage installation occupies the main gallery and is the exact size of an apartment he once rented in Beijing. The mazelike structure of wooden beams and steel scaffolding requires us to pick our way through a space in which we feel surrounded by bars and obstacles. Except for its high ceiling, it is a bit like a prison cell, yet the chirping of birds and the scattered pellets on the floor lend a kind of jungle feeling, too.

Wang Wei's work may be about the confining minimalism of urban life but it also is a pleasing kind of challenge, like a labyrinth that might lead to a surprising place. Better this than the claustrophobic nightmare of the Gao Brothers: their photographs show boxlike compartments crammed with their own naked bodies curled and contorted to fit the space.

These horrific images address the compression and compartmentalization of modern life and relationships. Paradoxically, sometimes it's harder to be close when physical proximity doesn't allow any distance. But these pictures also remind us of those discomfiting photos we've seen recently of Third World jails, places where living bodies are warehoused with no thought to sanitation or privacy, let alone comfort or sanity.

"My Space, Your Space," Walsh Gallery, 118 N. Peoria; (312) 829-3312. Through Feb. 25.

Fred Stonehouse's new work incorporates his signature crying man, a kind of lachrymose clown with big, sad eyes that are so dramatically woeful they're almost funny, though in the past the paintings seemed genuinely sad. The new ones are more like a campy pantomime or distant memory of emotion. The figures are painted in a dense, dark style with blobs of color and sketchy drawings of what appear to be water bottles or internal organs floating around in front of them.

Stonehouse's style of distressing his work by placing a screen of messiness over his carefully painted figures suggests a layering of memory. He shows us how events get in the way of and add to our personal myths, partially obscuring them but also remaking them in a constant process of evolution.

"Songs and Dreams," Fred Stonehouse, Gescheidle, 118 N. Peoria; (312) 226-3500. Through Feb. 25

A collaborative exhibition by Kelly Kaczynski and Todd Mattei uses video animation, digitally constructed images, drawings and sculpture to make us question where truth ends and fiction begins.

"Drive of Eyes," rowlandcontemporary, 1118 W. Fulton Market; (312) 312-421-6275. Through March 11.

Margaret Hawkins is a local free-lance writer.