

PRESS COVERAGE



Building Pictures

April 4 — May 31, 2008

1. Chicago Tribune, 4.10.2008
2. Time Out, 4.3.2008

www.chicagotribune.com/features/lifestyle/chi-0410artapr10,0,40389.story

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ART REVIEW

Building photos construct their own internal realism

By Alan G. Artner

Tribune critic

April 10, 2008

Images of architecture often are a species of advertising, but images *about* architecture usually are something more, as in "Building Pictures," the atypical and absorbing exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Eight international artists, ages 30 to 50, have taken aspects of the constructed landscape as the subject of photographic prints, a video and an installation. Not one is concerned with the time-honored aim of the architectural photographer, which is to show buildings in their best light. All see architecture as raw material for speculations on 20th Century history, abstract picture making and, least expected, current politics.



More than half the artists are concerned with the history of modernism, from Thomas Ruff's attempt to revivify monuments by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe to Chris Mottalini's recording of the death knell of homes by Paul Rudolph. Along the way, the sensuousness of Luis Barragan's home inspires two-dimensional equivalents from both Terence Gower and Luisa Lambri, and the rationalism of buildings in Alexander Apostol's Venezuela comes upon hard times. These all comment on the legacy of the Modern Movement, equally celebrating it as well as showing it deserted and in heart-rending decline.

Apostol's pictures seal windows and doors while adding names to the buildings. Such alterations do not change our belief that the structures are real. But the opposite occurs in images by Bas Princen and Josef Schulz, where alterations in form and color virtually recast buildings and landscapes into pure inventions. The influence of modern photographs also transforms Lambri and Schulz's walls into minimal studies that look more like abstract drawings than real sites.

Princen's interventions give his scenes an eerie quiet that is deepest in "Outskirts (Findeg)," a 2007 C-Print of the rear of a hulking structure that is as mysterious as any building painted by Giorgio de Chirico. Gower shifts back and forth from architecture as a setting for a campy 1960s film to unpeopled photographs and rudimentary drawings of the same sites. And Dionisio Gonzalez makes the greatest alterations of all, reconstructing the shanty towns of Sao Paulo, Brazil, to incorporate bits of high-toned contemporary architecture.

Gonzalez's immense panoramas recall the format of widescreen movies, though their purpose is not to entertain. Instead, the chockablock nature of the buildings reflects the chaos of the shanty towns as opposed to the artificial order of a recent government re-urbanization project. So invented architecture here challenges what already exists, dazzling the eye but also raising issues for serious discussion.

"Building Pictures" continues at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., through May 31. 312-663-5554.

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misdeeds, but capture decades of cultural and economic upheaval in the U.S. Through Apr 12.

*** "Henry Darger."** Thirteen of the self-taught artist's watercolor collages accompany the new Henry Darger Room Collection, an installation that evokes his former Lincoln Park apartment and studio. Through Jun 28.

Milwaukee Art Museum

700 N Art Museum Dr Milwaukee, WI (414-224-3200, mam.org). Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun 10am-5pm, Thu 10am-8pm. \$8, seniors \$6, students \$4, kids under 12 free.

*** "Foto: Modernity in Central Europe, 1918-1945."** Photographs and photomontages by László Moholy-Nagy, Hannah Höch and many other artists from Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary and Poland trace the development of a distinctive vision of modernity. Through May 4.

Museum of Contemporary Art

220 E Chicago Ave at Mies van der Rohe Way (312-280-2660, mca-chicago.org). El: Red to Chicago. Bus: 3, 10, 26, 66 (24hrs). 125, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 151 (24hrs). Tue 10am-8pm, Wed-Sun 10am-5pm. \$10, students and seniors \$6, kids under 12 free, Tuesdays free.

*** "Recent Acquisitions: Focus on Chicago."** Themes of recycling, reuse and appropriation unite these works by current and former Chicago-based artists including Scott Wolniak, Laura Letinsky, Tony Tasset, Dan Peterman, Melanie Schiff and Rashid Johnson. Through Apr 20.

*** "Gordon Matta-Clark: You Are the Measure."** This is the first full-scale retrospective of Gordon Matta-Clark's work in 20 years. Originally organized by New York's Whitney, in Chicago it features additional material on Matta-Clark's last major work: an installation at the MCA. Through May 4.

*** "Collection Highlights, 1949-2007."** World-class art by the likes of Francis Bacon, Lee Bontecou, Donald Judd, Gerhard Richter, Robert Smithson, Jenny Holzer, Sigmar Polke, Matthew Barney, Catherine Opie and many more. Through Jun 8.

*** "Karen Kilimnik."** "Scatter art" star Kilimnik thrusts contemporary celebrities like Leonardo DiCaprio and Paris Hilton into the Romantic sublime in the paintings, videos and installation work shown in this 15-year retrospective. Through Jun 8.

Museum of Contemporary Photography

FREE Columbia College, 600 S Michigan Ave at Harrison St (312-344-7779, mcp.org). El: Red to Harrison. Bus: 1, 3, X3, 4 (24hrs). X4, 6, 7, 10, 14, 26, 28, 126, 127, 145, 146, 147. Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri, Sat 10am-5pm, Thu 10am-8pm, Sun noon-5pm.

"Building Pictures." From idealized space to Modernist dystopia, seven artists, including Terence Gower, Luisa Lambri and Thomas Ruff, tackle the connections between architecture and photography. Opens Thu 3, 5-7pm. Through May 31.

National Museum of Mexican Art

FREE 1852 W 19th St between Wolcott Ave and Wood St (312-738-1503, nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org). El: Blue (rush hrs), Pink to 18th. Bus: 9 Ashland (24hrs), 50 Damen. Tue-Sun 10am-5pm.

"Con Safos (With Respect)." These selections from the nation's largest private collection of contemporary Chicano art include paintings, sculptures, photographs

and other work created since the 1960s. Through Jun 15.

"Chupacabras! Artists Reinterpret the Myth." Ten Chicago artists address the legend of the Chupacabra, a vampiric creature with a taste for unsuspecting livestock. Through Jul 20.

Smart Museum of Art

FREE U. of Chicago, 5550 S Greenwood Ave at 55th St (773-702-0200, smartmuseum.uchicago.edu). Bus: 4 Cottage Grove (24hrs), 55 Garfield (24hrs). Tue, Wed, Fri 10am-4pm, Thu 10am-8pm, Sat-Sun 11am-5pm.

*** "Adaptation."** Guy Ben-Ner, Arturo Herrera, Catherine Sullivan and Eve Sussman & the Rufus Corporation reinterpret classics from various artistic genres as video installations. Works such as Ben-Ner's silent *Moby Dick*—filmed in his kitchen—raise questions about artistic creativity and fidelity. Through May 4.

"Idol Anxiety." Artifacts ranging from Mesopotamian cult figures to Renaissance paintings illuminate the diverse relationships between people and their objects of worship. Through Nov 2.

Spertus Museum

610 S Michigan Ave at Harrison St (312-322-1700, spertus.edu). El: Red to Harrison. Bus: 1, 3, 4 (24hrs), 145. Mon-Wed, Sun 10am-6pm; Thu 10am-7pm; Fri 10am-3pm. \$7, seniors and students \$5.

*** "The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation."** Ethnic and religious identity informs, but doesn't define, the work of Collier Schorr, David Altmejd, Karl Haendel and the 13 other contemporary Jewish artists in this eclectic exhibition. Through Apr 13.

Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art

2320 W Chicago Ave between Oakley and Western Aves (773-227-5522, uima-chicago.org). Bus: 49 Western (24hrs), 66 Chicago (24hrs). Wed-Sun noon-4pm. Suggested donation \$5.

"Meditation of Weapons." Ukrainian artist Anton Skorubsky Kandinsky uses his Socialist Realist training to turn Western icons into tongue-in-cheek kitsch. Through May 11.

Galleries

North Side

Audible at ESS

5925 N Ravenswood Ave between Ardmore and Peterson Aves (773-769-1069, essart.org). Bus: 50 Damen, 84 Peterson, 92 Foster. Sat-Sun 1-5pm.

"Simplicism II: Gouache Work." Columbia College prof McArthur Binion continues his *Simplicism* project with new abstract gouaches. Through Apr 18.

Contemporary Art Workshop

542 W Grant Pl between Geneva Ter and Cleveland Ave (773-472-4004, contemporaryartworkshop.org). El: Red, Brown, Purple, (rush hrs) to Fullerton. Bus: 8, 11, 74. Tue-Fri 12:30-5:30pm.

"Kirsten Leenaars and Angel Otero." A pile of paper airplanes accompanies Leenaars's video *Travelogue of a Stationary Dreamer*; Otero shows his "Cooking Boogaloo" abstract landscape paintings. Opens Fri 4, 5:30-9pm. Through May 13.

Thomas Masters Gallery

245 W North Ave at Wieland Ave (312-440-2322, thomasmastersgallery.com). El: Brown to Sedgwick. Bus: 72 North, 156 LaSalle. Wed-Fri noon-6pm, Sat 11am-6pm, Sun noon-5pm.

"Gert Wiedmaier: Chicago Observations." The German artist explores



Re-envisioning Difference

Notes from the Forefront of Culturally Specific Museums

PANEL DISCUSSION

Thursday April 10 at 6 pm
Extended gallery hours until 8 pm

In conjunction with Spertus Museum's inaugural exhibition *The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation*, Robin Cembalest, executive editor of *ARTnews*, moderates a panel discussion exploring the challenges and missions of culturally specific art museums in the 21st century.

Tickets are \$8 | \$5 for students and Spertus members. Call 312.322.1773 or visit www.spertus.edu.

The New Authentics: Artists of the Post-Jewish Generation is on view until April 13.

THE PANEL INCLUDES

Melissa Chiu
Director of Asia Society Museum, New York

Romi Crawford
Curator and Director of Education and Public Programs, Studio Museum in Harlem

Deborah Cullen
Director of Curatorial Programs, El Museo del Barrio, New York

Rhoda Rosen
Director of Spertus Museum

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