

PRESS COVERAGE



Beyond the Backyard

June 16 — August 23, 2008

1. Chicago Gallery Guide, Jun-Aug 2008
2. Chicago Life Magazine, Summer 08
3. Chicago Tribune, 7.3.2008
4. Time Out, 7.24.2008

MoCP
Museum of
Contemporary Photography



June 20 – August 23, 2008

Beyond the Backyard

Featuring work from the MoCP Permanent Collection
and the Midwest Photographer's Project

600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60605
312 663 5554
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Columbia 
COLLEGE CHICAGO

Amy Stein *Watering Hole, 2005*, Courtesy of the artist

Amy Stein



DePaul University Art Museum, 2350 N. Kenmore, 773-325-7506, presents *Ellis Island Portraits: 1905-1920* through June 13.

Field Museum, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr., 312-922-9410, hosts *George Washington Carver* through July 6. *Mythic Creatures: Dragons, Unicorns & Mermaids* runs through Sept. 1. *Nature Unleashed: Inside Natural Disasters* runs through Jan. 4.

Hyde Park Art Center, 5020 S. Cornell Ave., 773-324-5520, presents *Kiss on the Cheek: Portraits by Dale Washington*, depicting the personalities in Chicago's current South Side art collecting community, July 6 through Sept. 28.

International Museum of Surgical Science, 1524 N. Lake Shore Dr., 312-642-6502, presents *Neither With, Nor Without* and *Alternative Anatomies* through July 18.

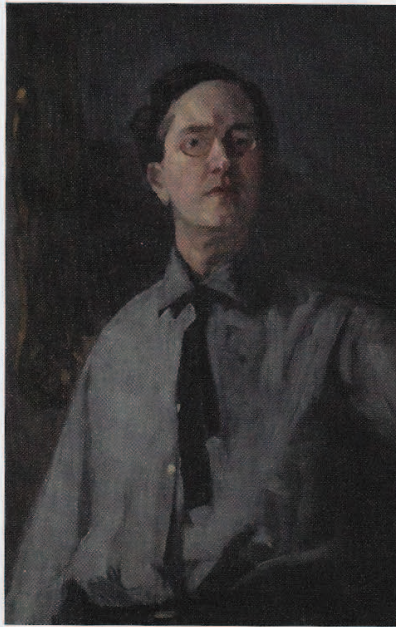
Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, 756 N. Milwaukee Ave., 312-243-9088, features *Henry Darger* through June 28.

Kohl Children's Museum of Great Chicago, 2100 Patriot Blvd., Glenview, 847-832-6600, presents *Chagall for Children* June 10 through Aug. 31.

Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan Ave., 312-915-6394, presents *Manifest Destiny/Manifest Responsibility: Environmentalism and the Art of the American Landscape* through Aug. 10.

Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle, Evanston, 847-491-4000, hosts the *MFA Thesis Exhibition through June 22. Design in the Age of Darwin: From William Morris to Frank Lloyd Wright* runs through Aug. 24.

Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago Ave., 312-280-2660, presents *Jeff Koons* through Sept. 21. *Artists in Depth: Works from the MCA*



Collection runs through Mar. 1, 2009.

Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., 312-663-5554, features *Beyond the Backyard*, an exhibition examining the outdoor places in which we spend our leisure time, June 20 through Aug. 23.

Museum of Science and Industry, 5700 S. Lake Shore Dr., 773-684-1414, hosts *Smart Home: Green + Wired* through Jan. 4. *The Glass Experience* runs through Sept. 1.

National Museum of Mexican Art, 1852 W. 19th St., 312-738-1503, presents *Con Safos (With Respect)* through June 15.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton, 312-943-9090, presents the *24th Annual Book Fair* July 24-27.

Renaissance Society, 5811 S. Ellis, 773-702-8670, hosts *Black Is, Black Am't* through June 8.

Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood, 773-702-0200, presents *Seeing the City: Sloan's New York* through Sept. 14.

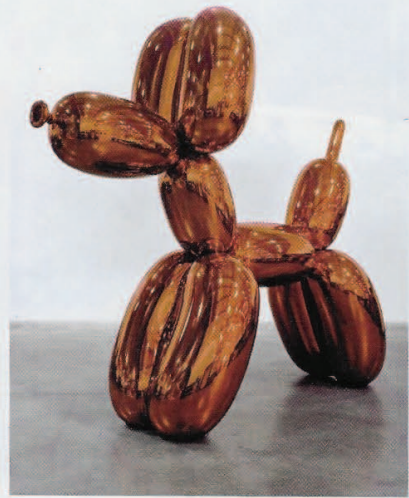
Spertus Museum, 610 S. Michigan Ave., 312-322-1700, hosts *Mapping Dystopia* through Sept. 7.

Swedish American Museum, 5211 N. Clark, 773-728-8111, presents *Westerlind-Bornholm: Reflections* through June 15.

PERFORMANCE

The Artistic Home presents *Juno and the Paycock* through June 29 at Live Bait Theatre, 3914 N. Clark. Call 866-811-4111 for tickets.

Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University, 50 E. Congress, 312-902-1500, presents *Shelley MacArthur Cabaret* June 13.



Clockwise from top: *Benin-Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria*, **Art Institute of Chicago**: *Balloon Dog (Orange)*, 1994-2000, Jeff Koons. **Museum of Contemporary Art**, private collection: *Self-Portrait in Gray Shirt*, 1912, oil on canvas, John Sloan. *Seeing the City: Sloan's New York*, **Smart Museum of Art**, courtesy of Delaware Art Museum, gift of Helen Farr Sloan.



Nature is fenced off twice in Shawn Records' "Untitled, E-3/F-3," from the 2005 "Portland Grid Project." Photos courtesy the Museum of Contemporary Photography

ART REVIEW

'Backyard' images embrace garish smugness

By Alan G. Artner
TRIBUNE CRITIC

"Beyond the Backyard," at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, is not your usual summer group show. It's better, both because it is large—photographs and videos by 50 artists—and it explores a theme that is particularly American, having been treated by professional photographers here for more than half a century.

Had the work of non-professionals been included, the backyard might have been seen as one of the most enduring of all settings in American picturemaking. Check for yourself. Every collection of family photographs has at least a few taken in the backyard, especially when the families lived in cities; as contrary to the show's emphasis on suburbia, patches of green were even more prized in an urban setting.

But the exhibition is called "Beyond the Backyard," so more public spaces are present, too, and they were as near as Chicago's housing projects and far as Tokyo's parks. Still, images show these places being treated similarly to backyards, as extensions of living quarters wherein unbridled activities, athletic as well as sexual, might be carried on.

A chief difference between the



A Bill Owens carbon inkjet print titled "I bought the lawn in six-foot rolls, it's easy to handle. I prepare the ground and my wife and son helped me roll out the grass. In one day you have a front yard" (1973).

public and private revolves, of course, around the issue of ownership. The interest of many of the photographs on view derives from this issue, for as a possession the backyard reflects as much of the owner's taste as a dwelling, and such taste may be more photogenic out-of-doors because of how dramatically (or comically) it contrasts with nature.

A number of the suburban pictures may look too easy in the way they hold up the American middle class to ridicule by presenting its rituals and possessions. But, without question, the suburban backyard is a showcase for such folly in a way that the yard behind a bungalow or apartment house usually is not. This may be because the suburban backyard from the 1970s and 1980s only rarely appeared threatened and most often seemed a sign of fulfillment. So photographers saw in it a garish smugness.

Now, in an age when human endeavor is measured entirely by money, garish smugness appears in

photographs apart from criticism and backyards displaying many possessions stand in for Eden. It's a strength of the show that such visions can be contrasted with the works of earlier photographers such as Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Harry Callahan and Dorothea Lange, who present a world in which people appear simpler, closer to nature and, not incidentally, to one another.

Any exhibition with a theme that legitimately gathers first-rate pictures by William Christenberry, Jno Cook, Emmet Gowin, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, Nic Nicosia and Garry Winogrand, among others, should be seen more than once.

"Beyond the Backyard" continues at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave., through Aug. 23; a gallery talk and curator's tour will take place at, respectively, 6 p.m. July 10 and noon July 17. Call 312-663-5554.

aartner@tribune.com

Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art

FREE Northwestern University, 40 Arts Circle Dr, Evanston (847-491-4000, blockmuseum.northwestern.edu). El: Purple to Foster. Bus: 201 Central/Ridge (24hrs). Tue 10am-5pm; Wed-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat, Sun noon-5pm.

* **"Design in the Age of Darwin: From William Morris to Frank Lloyd Wright."** What does evolutionary theory have to do with 19th-century decorative arts? Everything, according to this exhibition, which examines how The Origin of Species influenced both England's greatest designers—Morris, Christopher Dresser, C.F.A. Voysey and C.R. Ashbee—and Americans such as Louis Sullivan and Wright. Through Aug 24.

* **"Theo Loffmann: Weaving a Life Into Art."** This retrospective covers 30 years of the American fiber artist's career. Through Aug 24.

Milwaukee Art Museum

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

* **J. Palin Thorley: Modern and Traditional Design in Twentieth-Century Ceramics."** Wedgwood-trained Thorley created both avant-garde pottery and wares for Colonial Williamsburg. More than 150 of his designs—and their ads—offer insight into American dining habits. Through Aug 17.

* **"Gilbert & George."** Sex, death, religion and bodily functions figure prominently in the London-based artists' biggest retrospective ever, which features more than 45 pieces made since 1971, new works and a host of archival materials. Through Sept 1.

Museum of Contemporary Art

220 E Chicago Ave at Mies van der Rohe Way (312-280-2660, mcachicago.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, under 12 free, Tuesdays free.

* **"Utopia Station."** Reminisce about the heady days of 2003 with the MCA's posters and artists' books from the 50th Venice Biennale, created by 150-plus artists including Louise Bourgeois and Yoko Ono. Through Sun 27.

* **Jeff Koons.** Koons's transformations of Michael Jackson and Bubbles, inflatable toys and other pop and consumer culture detritus into high art get their first major museum survey in 15 years. Through Sept 21.

* **"Everything's Here: Jeff Koons and His Experience of Chicago."** When Koons spent a year at the SAIC in the 1970s, Ed Paschke, H.C. Westermann, Roger Brown and other local artists became his idols. Their works provide context for Koons's concurrent show. Through Oct 26.

Museum of Contemporary Photography

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

* **"Beyond the Backyard."** More than 40 artists react to this mainstay of American suburbia in portrayals that range from reverent to subversive. Through Aug 23.

National Museum of Mexican Art

FREE 1852 W 19th St between Wolcott Ave and Wood St (312-738-1503,

nationalmuseumofmexicanart.org). El: Pink to 18th. Bus: 9 Ashland (24hrs), 50 Damen. Tue-Sun 10am-5pm.

* **"A Declaration of Immigration."** More than 70 artists including Juan Angel Chavez, Anni Holm and Mario Ybarra Jr. offer perspectives on immigration based on personal experience. Through Sept 7.

Noyes Cultural Arts Center

FREE 927 Noyes St, Evanston (847-448-8260, cityofevanston.org/departments/parks/centers/noyes.shtml). El: Purple to Noyes. Bus: 201 Central/Sherman (24hrs). Mon-Sat 10am-7pm; Sun 10am-6pm.

* **"Chris Verene: Galesburg."** Verene's color photographs of family and friends in his rural hometown of Galesburg, Illinois, have received national acclaim. Through Aug 31.

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-Fri 10am-4pm; Sat, Sun 11am-5pm.

* **"Seeing the City: Sloan's New York."** Thirty years' worth of primary materials place the work of John Sloan—a painter affiliated with the Ash Can School—in the context of early-20th-century New York City. Through Sept 14.

* **"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.

Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art

2320 W Chicago Ave between Oakley and Western Aves (773-227-5522, uimachicago.org). Bus: 49 Western (24hrs), 65 Chicago (24hrs). Wed-Sun noon-4pm. \$5 suggested donation.

* **"Les Formes Vivantes: Alexander Archipenko as Graphic Artist."** Fifteen of Archipenko's 54 known prints reveal the 20th-century sculptor's 2-D experiments with negative space and form. Through Aug 10.

Galleries

Michigan Ave

Finestra Art Space

Fine Arts Building, 410 S Michigan Ave between Van Buren St and Congress Pkwy (847-977-0526, finestraartspace.com). El: Red to Harrison; Orange, Brown, Pink, Purple (rush hrs) to Library. Bus: 3 King Drive, 147 Outer Drive Exp. Fri, Sat 2-6pm.

* **"Almost Voyage Time/Travelers Report."** Frank Piatek's installation tests his hypothesis that art is a process of "evocation." Through Wed 30.

KN Gallery

John Hancock Center, 875 N Michigan Ave, suite 2515, at Delaware Pl (312-640-5550, kngallery.com). El: Red to Chicago. Bus: 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 151. Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 11am-4:30pm.

* **"Raw Boundaries."** Chicago-based Melissa Jay Craig and seven other emerging contemporary artists fill the gallery with site-specific installations. Through Aug 23.

Richard Gray Gallery

John Hancock Center, 875 N Michigan Ave, suite 2503, at Delaware Pl (312-642-8877, richardgraygallery.com). Bus: 3, 66, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 151 (24hrs). El: Red to Chicago. Mon-Fri 10am-5:30pm.

* **"Alex Katz: Subject to Reversal."** Katz—a figurative painter associated with

Pop Art—presents 18 new portraits in which he captures the backs of his sitters' heads. Through Aug 2.

Valerie Carberry Gallery

John Hancock Center, 875 N Michigan Ave at Delaware Pl, Suite 2510 (312-397-9990, valeriecarberry.com). El: Red to Chicago. Bus: 143, 144, 146, 147, 148, 151. Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 11am-5pm.

* **"Modern and Postwar Painting and Sculpture."** These works in various media include pieces by Maurice Berezov, José de Rivera and Herbert Ferber. Through Sept 5.

North Side

Art on Armitage

4125 W Armitage Ave at Kedvale Ave (773-235-8583, artonarmitage.com). Bus: 73 Armitage. Daily 10am-10pm.

* **"Irene Pérez: Homeland of Many Nations."** Pérez tackles American patriotism with an assemblage of 256 American flags—one for each country in the world—and three photographs documenting the flag's commercial use. Through Jul 31.

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.

* **"Summer Group Exhibition."** This annual event showcases nine emerging artists, all students or recent grads. Through Aug 8.

Pilsen

antena

1765 S Lafin St between 17th and 18th Sts (773-344-1940, antenapilsen.com). El: Pink

to 18th. Bus: 9 Ashland (24hrs), 60 Blue Island/26th (24hrs). Sat noon-5pm.

* **"Tania Kupczak: unseasonable."** The imprecision of meteorology inspired Kupczak's "map" paintings, which she presents with video and sound art about navigating snow. Through Aug 16.

Extension Gallery

1835 S Halsted St between 18th and 19th Sts (773-742-0983, extensiongallery.com). Bus: 8 Halsted. Fri-Sun noon-5pm.

* **"Unseen Current."** Ball-Nogues Studio, an L.A.-based architectural firm, takes over the gallery with an interactive installation made from more than fifteen miles of brightly colored twine. Through Aug 10.

River North

El: Brown, Purple (rush hrs) to Chicago. Bus: 29, 66 (24 hrs), 156.

Carl Hammer Gallery

740 N Wells St between Superior St and Chicago Ave (312-266-8512, hammergallery.com). Tue-Fri 11am-6pm, Sat 11am-5pm.

* **"Francois Robert: Contents."** Francois Robert spent decades photographing what was inside the purses and pockets of his friends and acquaintances in this revealing exhibit. Through Aug 28.

Catherine Edelman Gallery

300 W Superior St at Franklin St (312-266-2350, edelmangallery.com). Tue-Sat 10:30am-5:30pm.

* **"Daniel Traub: City's Edge."** Traub's photographs capture the messy boundary between urban and rural China. Through Aug 29.

David Weinberg Gallery

300 W Superior St at Franklin St (312-529-5090, davidweinberggallery.com). Tue-Sat 10am-5:30pm.