

PRESS COVERAGE



# **Shimon Attie: The History of Another: Projections in Rome**

May 6- July 2, 2004

1. Chicago Life, 8. 1. 2004
2. Chicago Sun Times, 5. 7. 2004
3. Chicago Tribune, 5. 2. 2004
4. Chicago Tribune, 6. 27. 2004
5. Cleveland Jewish News, 1. 10. 2005
6. The Art Newspaper, May, 2004

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# events

## Museums

The **Art Institute of Chicago**, 111 S. Michigan Ave., 312-443-3600, presents *Building a Collection: New Acquisitions and Promised Gifts of British Art* through June 20. *Pieced Together: Photomontage from the Collection* runs through Sept. 19. *Seurat and the Making of "La Grande Jatte"* begins June 19 and continues through Sept. 19.

The **Terra Museum of American Art**, 664 N. Michigan, 312-664-3939, presents *A Transatlantic Avant-Garde: American Artists in Paris, 1918-1939*, through June 27. The show explores the period when many American artists traveled to Paris for an artistic exploration rather than for academic training.

The **Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA)**, 220 E. Chicago Ave., 312-280-2660, presents the work of Dan Peterman, the first in-depth survey in the United States of the work of this internationally recognized Chicago artist, June 26 through Sept. 5. In his work, Peterman seeks to reveal how man interacts with the natural world and his technological surroundings. Also at the MCA, running through the same dates, is *Skin Tight: The Sensibility of the Flesh*. Presenting the designs and concepts of fashion designers in a contemporary art museum context, *Skin Tight* is premised on the idea that art and fashion are parallel impulses that powerfully influence and react to one another.

The **Field Museum**, 1400 S. Lake Shore Dr., 312-922-9410, hosts *Splendors of China's Forbidden City: The Glorious Reign of Emperor Qianlong* through Sept. 12. Emperor Qianlong held total power over some 300 million subjects, more than any ruler before or since. The exhibition includes more than 500 artifacts and art objects, most of which have never before been seen in the United States.

The **Museum of Science and Industry**, 5700 S. Lake Shore Dr., 773-684-1414, hosts *Action! An Adventure in Movie-making*. Guests will encounter the best of Hollywood's top actors, writers, directors, sound technicians and masters of special effects to discover how these movie wizards make celluloid magic. And don't miss the latest Omnimax shows. *Lewis and Clark: Great Journey West* continues running.



The **Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum**, 1852 W. 19th St., 312-738-1503, presents *Risking the Abstract: Mexican Internationalism and the Art of Gunther Gerzso* through June 27. Gerzso is considered Mexico's premier abstract painter and one of the most respected modernists in all of Latin America.

The **Newberry Library**, 60 W. Walton, 312-943-9090, features *Ni'ihii: In a Good Way: Photographs of Wind River Arapaho, 1976-1996*, through July 15. The exhibit includes 44 black and white photographs of Northern Arapaho Indians taken by cultural anthropologist and photographer Sara Wiles.

The **Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art**, 40 Arts Circle, Evanston, 847-491-4000, hosts the *MFA Thesis Exhibition* from Northwestern's Department of Art Theory and Practice through June 20. Beginning July 14 and running through Aug. 22 is *Persistence of Vision: The Evolution of the Moving Image*, an exhibition that explores the artistry of pre-cinema and early cinema.

The **National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum**,



1801 S. Indiana, 312-326-0270, exhibits *Trauma & Metamorphosis* through September 30.

Top Left: Michel Nedjar, mixed media. Judy A. Saslow Gallery

Bottom Left: Esplanade Condominiums, Cambridge, Mass. Big & Green, Chicago Architecture Foundation.

Top Right: Shimon Attie: The History of Another, Museum of Contemporary Photography.

Bottom Right: Hunt Slonem, Finches, oil on canvas, 1998. Jean Albano Gallery.



## CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

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## Photo projections merge past and present into art

May 7, 2004

**MUSEUM PIECES BY MISHA DAVENPORT**

In one of Shimon Attie's latest photographs, "On Via della Tribuna di Campitelli," the black-and-white image of two girls is projected on the stoop of the doorstep of a bright yellow house in Rome. It seems to capture them mid-sentence in a long forgotten conversation. One girl gazes over her shoulder, seemingly looking at the viewer.

"Di Campitelli" and other works are all part of the 46-year-old artist's latest project, **The History of Another**. The exhibit premieres at 5 today at the Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan. Attie also will be on hand to sign copies of the book that chronicles the exhibit.

The Village Voice described a previous work as "metaphysical archaeology." It's a term Attie doesn't exactly agree with.

"I often work through an archaeological lens and experience the world as layered. Yet 'metaphysical' is not a word I would use easily. It's too grandiose," he said.

Speaking by phone from his New York apartment, Attie described his work as an attempt to give visual form to personal and collective history that he believes is latent in architecture and the cityscape.

"I'm a digger. I use visual media to dig beneath the surfaces, visually excavating layers that are present but not necessarily seen," he said.

A former psychotherapist, Attie traded in a therapist's couch for a much wider canvas on which he analyzes our collective memories and history.

Attie takes two to three months looking through archival images for his works. He spends additional time walking around the city he is working in, looking for buildings suitable for his canvas. Finding the right marriage between the past and present can sometimes be a challenge, but it's ultimately worthwhile for him.

"I'm somebody who has been very moved in his life by loss of different kinds, who uses art as an arena in which to transform that loss into something hopeful, filled with both magic and wonderment," Attie said.

As if the conflict between the past and present weren't enough, Attie usually adds an additional layer of complexity into his images -- mostly in the form of new construction. He seems to be saying, "Don't get too comfortable; change is inevitable," and he implores the viewer to cherish and preserve both memories and images.

"In my work, I attempt to foster a new appreciation for the richness of the places and sites in which we live or visit," he said.

"The History of Another" runs from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays (Thursday until 8 p.m.) and from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, through July 2. Admission is free.

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## WEEKEND PLUS

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES • FRIDAY, MAY 7

# Photo projections merge past and present into art

BY MISHA DAVENPORT  
*Museum Pieces*

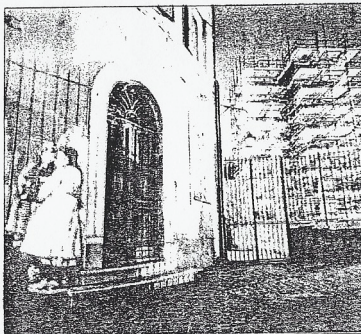
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"On Via della Tribuna di Campitelli" is one of the photographs of projection pieces by Shimon Attie that are part of "This History of Another" at the Museum of Contemporary Photography.

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Chicago Tribune

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## OUR CRITICS' CHOICES

### ART

#### JOAN JONAS

Two recent works by the video and performance art pioneer; opens today, Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 5811 S. Ellis Ave.; free; 773-702-8670.

#### SHIMON ATTIE

Photographs concerned with memory, place and identity; opens Friday, Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.; free; 312-663-5554.

#### TAISHO CHIC: JAPANESE MODERNITY, NOSTALGIA, AND DECO

Works reflecting 1920s styles of the West; through June 20; David and Alfred Smart Museum, 5550 S. Greenwood Ave.; free; 773-702-0200.

— Alan G. Artner

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## ART

### IAN HAMILTON FINLAY: 'VESSELS'

Objects and words that testify to the classical sensibility of one of the veteran mavericks in contemporary art; through July 16; Arts Club of Chicago, 201 E. Ontario St.; free; 312-787-3997.

### 'JAPANESE ART FROM THE ALSDORF COLLECTION'

Scroll paintings, ceramics and lacquer objects from distinguished holdings assembled over decades since the 1960s; opens Friday; Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Ave.; \$12 suggested admission. 312-443-3600.

### 'SHIMON ATTIE — THE HISTORY OF ANOTHER'

Photographs concerned with memory, place and identity; closes Friday; Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 S. Michigan Ave.; free; 312-663-5554.

— Alan G. Artner



# CLEVELAND Jewish News.com

Monday January 10, 2005

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## ARCHIVES

### Memory resonates in stunning photos at CIA

By: MARILYN H. KARFELD Staff Reporter

The ruined grandeur of antiquity collides with the ephemeral figures of turn-of-the-century Roman Jews in 17 luminous photos by Shimon Attie, now on view at the Cleveland Institute of Art.



"At Portico of Octavia" was created through on-site slide projection.

Jews have lived in Rome on the fringes of society since ancient times. In "The History of Another," Attie unearths the stories of long-forgotten Jews from the Roman ghetto, allowing them to serve as metaphors for people who are displaced, ignored and persecuted.

The Los Angeles native projected fragments of archival photographs (1890-1920) of anonymous Roman Jews onto archaeological sites near where they once lived and worked. He then photographed the created images in brilliant color. The result, achieved without any digital manipulation, is magical.

Black-and-white wraiths sit on walls, peer around columns, and recline against doorways. Their ghostly presence among the ruins of Rome and the modern structures of today suggests that time is not linear but cyclical.

The exhibit "reflects on memory and how it enriches our experience of the present," Attie, 47, told the CJN in a phone interview.

Uncovering the stories of these marginalized people and pulling them into the present, Attie says, "reanimates these sites with images of their own lost history." The viewer, trapped between present, past and

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future, "is pole vaulted forward and backward simultaneously."

Sometimes, the viewer looks over an unknown Jew's shoulder and sees the glories of Rome just as he or she appears to do. Other times, the figures look straight at us, daring us to ignore their presence.

Working at dusk, in a 10-minute window of time when the sky is still bright blue but the lights illuminating the ruins have been turned on, Attie captures purple shadows, glowing yellow archways, and dazzling white columns. The figures, transplanted from the early 1900s, mesh with their new locations so perfectly they surrealistically morph into present-day visitors.

Attie, a recipient of the prestigious Prix de Rome, conceived and created the photographs while a fellow at the American Academy of Rome in 2001-2002. It was his second extended sojourn in Europe.

From 1991 to 1996, Attie lived in Berlin. When he first walked the city's streets, he sensed the absence of the Jews lost in the Holocaust. "I felt their presence very profoundly," he says. "Yet, I saw so few visible traces of them."

This void inspired his "Writing on the Wall" project. He projected slides of pre-war photographs of kosher butcher shops, bookstores and schools from Berlin's Jewish quarter onto their contemporary counterparts. For a few nights, these forgotten Jews repopulated their old neighborhood.

Similarly, in Dresden, Cologne, Amsterdam and Copenhagen, Attie created projects about those individuals murdered and victimized in the Holocaust.

When he moved back to America in 1996, Attie left behind his preoccupation with World War II and the Holocaust. He doesn't want to be considered a Holocaust artist and says his Rome project has absolutely nothing to do with that subject.

However, he admits there is no way to ignore that tragic period of history in any artwork created on the European continent, especially ones that deal with memory and the past.

While Attie was growing up as a secular Jew, he says



his parents had many friends who were either Holocaust survivors or European immigrants. He frequently heard stories about the Holocaust and the annihilation of the Jewish community and its culture.

The figures in his Roman photographs aren't identifiably Jewish; thus, they can represent any outsiders looking for home. Still, the tall, silver-haired artist, elegantly dressed in a charcoal chalk-striped suit and gray T-shirt, told an audience at the Cleveland Institute of Art that as a Jew, he felt a personal connection to the anonymous individuals peopling his photographs. To him, it is important that these figures are Jewish.

His latest project, which opens next November in Norway, focuses on the story of the Oslo peace accords, a historic step in mediating the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The work, which he describes as enormous, 328 feet long and 12 feet high, will be projected onto a vertical curtain of water running through Oslo's central park.

"Eleven years ago, the Oslo accords almost changed our world," Attie says. "The project tells it as a Nordic fairy tale, with humans, trolls and mythic beings." The funders, a large Norwegian company Attie won't identify, want the project to overlap with the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony.

Attie majored in psychology in college and earned a master's degree in that field. He worked as a psychologist while he attended art school. Whatever drew him to psychology also led him to become an artist.

"I'm someone for whom memory is very, very important," Attie says. "I don't make a clean separation between past and present the way other people do."

*"Shimon Attie: History of Another" remains on exhibit in the Reinberger Galleries of the Cleveland Institute of Art through December 23, Mon.-Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is free. 216-421-7407.*

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## United States: our selection A-Z

### California

**Los Angeles** When it came to architecture, the French conceptual artist Yves Klein had some unique and prescient ideas: transparent walls made from compressed air and air-conditioned environments are just two of the ones explored in **Air architecture** (12 May-29 August) at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture. The show looks at the distinctive theories and projects designed by Klein between 1957 and 1962. As an artist interested in weightless, limitless spaces and in working with natural elements, Klein developed a unique approach to architecture, believing that his designs for living environments could reconnect people to the natural world, and ultimately transform society. Drawings, texts, photography, sculpture and films are on loan from the Yves Klein Archive in Paris.

The Getty Center has organised an exhibition which examines the origins of Italian Renaissance glass and ceramic production. **The arts of fire: Islamic influences on the Italian Renaissance** (4 May-5 September) looks at the diffusion through the Italian city-states of skills, technology, and styles developed by the Islamic world in the 10th century in Asia Minor, the Middle East and North Africa. The techniques used to produce the delicate fine glass known as crystal can be traced to 10th-century Syria and the subsequent arrival of Egyptian and Byzantine glass-makers in Venice in 1300, while the origins of Italian majolica pottery can be found in 10th-century Persia and the eventual spread of skills throughout Europe by migrating artisans. The exhibition brings together a selection of objects on loan from the Middle East and Italy (right, ewer, Italy, c.1500, enamelled and gilded glass), demonstrating the impact of Islamic design and technology on the manufacture of Renaissance luxury goods.

**Memories of a dog**, a series of powerful vintage images by Japanese photogra-



### Rolling on

**Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles**  
**A minimal future? Art as object 1958-1968**  
Minimalism re-evaluated in the context of Modernist abstraction, Pop art and conceptual work (until 2 August)

**Albright-Knox Art Gallery Buffalo**  
**Rodin: a magnificent obsession, sculpture from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation**  
70 bronzes by the French sculptor (until 3 July)

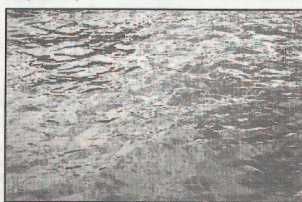
**National Gallery of Art Washington D.C.**  
**Courtly art of the ancient Maya**  
Over 175 objects, many recently excavated and on view for the first time outside Mexico. Objects date from AD 600 to 800, a period considered the highest point of Classic Mayan culture (until 25 July)

**Boston Museum of Fine Arts**  
**Gauguin in Tahiti**  
Paintings, sculptures, drawings and prints produced between 1891 and the artist's death in 1903 (until 20 June)

of ceramic figures, vessels, textiles and wooden artefacts dating from 1100-1450. The Chancay people occupied the central coast of Peru until 1450 when they were subsumed into the Inca Empire. The show brings together a selection of objects with geometric ornamentation and stylised animal and human motifs, all from the gallery's inventory.

### Midwest

**Chicago Roni Horn** (25 May-5 September) at the Art Institute of Chicago presents the New York artist's series of photographs documenting the surface of the river Thames in London. These photolithographs, also collected in Horn's book, "Another water", are accompanied by the artist's poetic ruminations about the quality of the water, and a collection of selected texts (including police "dead-body reports") which often refer to crimes that took place on or near the river. The exhibition will be installed throughout the museum, in galleries, lobbies, corridors, lavatories and administrative offices (below, "Some Thames (1999-present)", 2000)



**Shimon Attie: the history of another** (6 May-2 July) at the Museum of Contemporary Photography presents a series of photographs describing Roman Jewish life that were taken during the artist's residency at the American Academy in Rome in 2001-2002. Using Rome's ancient ruins as the backdrop, Attie projects turn-of-the-century images, such as street vendors and children of Jewish descent, onto the city's historical landscape. The end product is a series of photographs that seem to rescue the past from obscurity while exploring issues of memory, place and identity.

A rare exhibition of pre-Columbian art is on show at the Douglas Dawson Gallery. **Chancay: art of ancient Peru** (until 5 June) includes a selection of ceramic figures, vessels, textiles and wooden artefacts dating from 1100-1450. The Chancay people occupied the central coast of Peru until 1450 when they were subsumed into the Inca Empire. The show brings together a selection of objects with geometric ornamentation and stylised animal and human motifs, all from the gallery's inventory.

Focusing on the theme of nothing and nothingness in art, the exhibition presents over 60 works by artists created from the 1970s to the present. The subject of "nothing" is broadly interpreted by the curators who have chosen a wider range of works from Bas Jan Ader's depiction of grief (right, "I'm too sad to tell you", 1971, 16mm film transferred onto DVD) to Richard Prince's portrayal of vacuous consumer culture, Robert Barry's displacement of art from predictable museum contexts, and Yayoi Kusama's representations of infinity.



**Wellesley** Three video installations by the former Turner Prize winner (1999) Steve McQueen are at the David Museum and Cultural Center (until 29 June). McQueen uses extreme and unexpected camera angles in videos that are typically projected onto one or more walls. On view here are video installations "Exodus" (1992-97), "Drumroll" (1998)—the work that earned McQueen the Turner—and "Prey" (1999). Earlier this year McQueen was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum in London to travel to Iraq and produce a video in response to the war. His trip should result in an exhibition later this year.

**South Hadley** The crescendo of grand style that is the Italian Baroque often eclipses its softer manifestations. **The intimate Baroque: small paintings from the John Ritter B. Collection** (until 1 August) at the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum dispenses with the images of large-scale theatrical altarpieces, frescoes, and extravagant church façades to focus on 17 diminutive works made for private patrons. Works on display date from the 16th to the 18th centuries and include portraits, and genre, religious and pastoral paintings.

**Washington, D.C.** Works from Islamic Spain are on show at the Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. **Caliphs and kings: the art and influence of Islamic Spain** (8 May-17 October) looks at changing aesthetics from the time of the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula (710-797) through the final phases of Arab influence in Spain in the 16th century. The 89 objects on loan from the Hispanic Society of America in New York, provide viewers with a look at the technical mastery of Islamic craftsmen and highlight the shared visual language of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish communities through motifs and themes which recur on the ceramics, textiles, books, maps and other fine art objects (above, plate from

