



ART

GROUPE

Hordes of art groupies shimmying in all styles, sizes and dark sunglasses will have several art festivals and celebrations to choose from in the next two months.

One of the main stops will be **ArtChicago 2003** (at Navy Pier from May 8-12, www.artchicago.com), one of the Windy City's most internationally renowned cultural events of the year. What's all this frenzy and the fracas actually about? For starters, numerous galleries from Chicago — ranging from River North's chicest, such as the Ann Nathan Gallery, right down to West Loop's trendiest, like the Rhona Hoffman Gallery (whose booth will feature works from celebrated artists like Lina Bertucci, Spencer Finh and Nancy Spero) — are all sharing space under the Pier's newly designed 90,000 square foot tent.

As well as showcasing Chicago's finest art spaces, ArtChicago brings in international galleries, such as the prestigious Moscow-based XL Gallery (whose booth features the likes of Russian artists Oleg Kulik and Tanya Lieberman) and Japanese-based galleries like Gallery Move (whose eclectic list of works are contributed by artists Nenki Ikegami, Sohei Ohta and Akane Kirimura). The opening night — a \$125 ticketed affair called *Vernissage '03* — takes place on May 8 at the Festival Hall.

For those who want to go beyond the Pier's collection of artwork, **ArtBoat 2003** takes place on May 10 on a 140-foot yacht docked steps away from all the Navy Pier commotion. With work from over 30 of the most underrepresented contemporary artists from in and around the Midwest, the *Anita Dee II* boat will display three levels of work regularly housed in up-and-coming Chicago galleries like Heaven, Jesus Chrysler Gallery and the Bucket Rider Gallery. Tickets are \$40 and the fun begins at 2 p.m. Click onto www.artboat.org for more information.

Aside from all the ArtChicago and ArtBoat hullabaloo, worthwhile artistic check points include the Mexican Fine Arts Center (312/738-1503, www.mfacmchicago.org) in May and June. Celebrating this year's **Del Corazón Festival** until June 6, the MFAC's long list of diverse cultural events, curated by art historian Hayden Herrera (author of the best-selling book *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo*) includes an extensive line-up of contemporary visual and performance artists. Among some of the highlights are the Taco Shop Poets (whose mantra, "Read tacos. Eat poems," defines their highly hyperbolic writing style and stage delivery) on May 17 and artist Carlos Cortéz Koyokuikatl with the launch of his catalog of woodcut and linocut art work entitled "Soapbox Artist and Poet" (on May 24). Another must-catch performance during the fest is by poet Gary Soto, who will be reading from his poetry collections on June 6.

Lastly, another fantastic art event taking place (until June 29) in the city is the highly anticipated group show entitled **Thin Skin: The Fickle Nature of Bubbles, Spheres, and Inflatable Structures**. Held at the Chicago Cultural Center (78 E. Washington St., 312/744-1424), this 22-artist exhibit plays with the notion of the bubble and its fragile context in the world. The work featured in the exhibit comes from well-known art masters like Andy Warhol and lesser-known greats such as Swedish-born Annika Von Hauswloff and aims to dismiss all the derogatory meaning behind the word "bubble-head."



Tom Friedman, "Untitled"

scene/heard

Mark Your Calendars...

May 10-12: See the bleeding edge of alternative, contemporary art at the Stray Show, taking place in a warehouse space at 1418 N. Kingsbury. Visit www.stray-show.com for all the juicy details.

May 15: Good art, good booze, good cause. Purchase a piece from the third annual ABC Gallery Benefit at Pazzo's (311 S. Wacker), and a portion of the sales goes straight to the Children's Memorial Hospital research programs.

May 30: Aron Packer Gallery launches two new shows. In its gallery one: Mitch O'Connell's "Pwese Wuv Me" series of paintings and light boxes. In gallery two: Glen C. Davies' series of paintings entitled "Sideshow (Museum of Mystery)." Call 312/226-8984 for more details.

June 6: New York City photographer David Maisel launches his new group of stunning color photographs at the Schneider Gallery. Call 312/988-4033 for more information.

Short & Sweet

Name: Lorraine Hart

Place of birth: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Current work on display: Color photographs at the Chicago Cultural Center's "Made In Chicago: Seven Photographers Interpret Local Products" exhibit running until June 30.

You began to investigate photography while you were a pre-med student. Why the sudden change of study? Medicine and science as well as photography are about detail. A lot of what I learned in the sciences was about curiosity, watching and observing. Photography is about measuring your light, your materials and working with the appropriate scientific groundwork. With the right groundwork, magic can happen.

Which discipline of photography do you consider your strongest? I consider myself a portrait photographer. The last person I apprenticed with was photographer Mark Hauser. When I started working with him, I thought I was at home. With Mark, a portrait is about someone's face, being, essence and core.

Where there any turning points in your career that directly relate to your art? Before I went to Italy, I photographed primarily in black and white. When I visited Florence and Tuscany and saw great works of art, it was like a revelation for me. My main influences are painters. Classic Renaissance Italian painters. There is something about that Renaissance world view that says that people are beautiful and God-like. When I approach a project, I see what is best in that person, what is most pious and beautiful. I can make anyone look like a god.

What relevance do you think your work places in the art world? Right now the world is not in a good place. The arts are not in a good place. Creativity is struggling with everything else in the world. Look at what we are doing as a nation — we are policing the world. It is all about results. This is a dark time right now. There is a necessity of place and being today. To look at someone and capture the best of that person is something we all need. It gives everyone hope.

Why did you choose the three particular models you photographed for your current show? Things tend to be Euro-centric. Whenever women from different cultures are used, they are always this token minority thrown in. They become an addition or an afterthought. I thought that Katrina Markoff's [the owner of Vosges Chocolates whom Hart was commissioned to work with] view of the world [starts with] Europe and looks East from there. She takes wasabi and curry, tempers them with coconut and makes chocolate. The Vosges logo is "Travel The World Through Chocolate" so I chose to Egypt, India and Japan through the photo shoot. I wanted viewers to see an image that wasn't Anglo-centered.



"Rose 2," "Cup" and "Cumin" by Lorraine Hart