

# Get the Picture

Chicago's photography galleries steal the focus with trailblazing exhibits *By Elio Iannacci*

You can't call Chicago camera shy. Here, you can zoom in on more than a dozen galleries and museums that showcase photography year-round. This month, top-notch venues exhibit both traditional and avant-garde work. Whether you're a longtime shutterbug or newfound photo fan, you'll love what the lenses have captured.

Housed within the landmark Historic Water Tower is the **City Gallery** (806 N. Michigan Ave., 312-742-0808), a remarkable space open seven days a week. Featuring an assortment of Chicago-themed shots by local photographers, this gallery is a must for those who want to see the many worlds Chicago artists inhabit. Get ready to witness a broad range of subjects here (think everything from hot dog stands to street fashions).

Now on view at the City Gallery is *Los Puertorriquenos en Chicago* (through Sept. 29). The images were captured by local sharp-shooter Carlos Flores and mark the City Gallery's first-ever exhibit concentrating on Chicago's Puerto Rican community. Flores' incomparable collection spans more than 30 years, beginning in the 1970s, when he photographed everything from cultural celebrations to political demonstrations.

Nearby, in Chicago's ever-expanding River North gallery district, the jewel-in-crown **Schneider Gallery** (230 W. Superior St., 312-988-4033) is an art arena dedicated to contemporary photography from more than 20 artists. Its must-see show, simply titled *Sleepless* (through Aug. 30), examines the phenomenon of after-hours pho-



GEORGE CIARDI'S "2937" (OPPOSITE PAGE) IS PART OF THE "SLEEPLESS" GROUP SHOW AT SCHNEIDER GALLERY.

GARRY WINOGRAND'S "WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT, 1964" (AT LEFT) IS ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY.

"IRREVERENT BOY" (BELOW), BY AN UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER, IS ONE FACET OF THE ART INSTITUTE'S "UNKNOWN MAKER: THE ART OF THE AMERICAN DAGUERRETYPE."



tography created by eight drastically different artists. The show's premise is simple: photographers who can't sleep take their camera out on the town and snap away. The results are far-reaching, with subjects ranging from nightclub divas to industrial-landscape sunsets. Contributing photographer Deborah Wian Whitehouse, whose color-infused series "Saturday Night" is the most striking, investigates what she defines as "an invitation to transformation."

Another River North gem, the **Catherine Edelman Gallery** (300 W. Superior St. 312-266-2350), is one of the Midwest's oldest and most accomplished photo galleries. Having presented work from some of the finest photographers of our time (Annie Leibovitz, for one) in its 16-year occupancy, this space constantly redefines itself by supporting challenging exhibits. This month's *Killer Shots* group show (through Aug. 30) is a visual commentary on war.

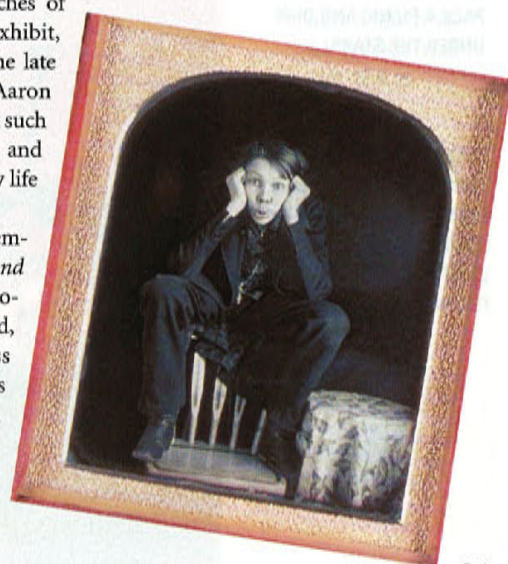
Always wondered how the first photographs came into being? **The Art Institute of Chicago** (111 S. Michigan Ave., 312-443-3600) is the place to find out. Its latest exhibition called *Unknown Maker: The Art of the American Daguerreotype*, presented in photo galleries one and two through Sept. 28, introduces the inventive world of Parisian artist Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, the man behind the world's first commercially practical photographic technique.

This truly unique gallery experience features more than 160 examples of copperplate photo images. Each are coated with a layer of silver and are presented in a dimly lit space, to stunning effect. The photographers are anonymous, and subjects range from portraits of quirky people to snapshots of animals in humorous scenarios. "In many ways, this exhibit is like the flip side of digital photography, so it's still very relevant today," says the Art Institute's assistant director of photography, Elizabeth Siegel.

Next stop: the über-hip West Loop gallery district's **FLATFILE** photo gallery (118 N. Peoria St., 312-491-1190). Run by longtime photo lover and gallery director, Susan Aurinko, FLATFILE contains photographs taken by student, emerging and professional artists from around the world. Here, you'll find atypical work in a duo show titled *Uncovered* (through Aug. 22). Expect the out-of-the-ordinary. Photographer Ann Simmons-Myers takes on issues of censorship with her draped-nude black-and-white series called "Shrouded," while Joan Truckenbroad uses materials such as multi-colored fabrics to transform digital photo work.

A final spot for photo gazing is the **Museum of Contemporary Photography** (600 S. Michigan Ave., 312-344-7104), where more than 6,500 pictures are kept and preserved (among them works from groundbreaking photographers such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Steven Meisel and Herb Ritts). Now through Sept. 27, two shows shatter conventional clichés of modern photography. One exhibit, titled *Siskind*, is dedicated to the late New York photographer, Aaron Siskind. Ordinarily dull subjects, such as road tar, pavement cracks and weathered asphalt, are given new life through Siskind's lens.

Also at the Museum of Contemporary Photography: *Winogrand 1964*. A striking show of 185 photographs by Garry Winogrand, this collection criticizes mass consumerism. Winogrand's exploration of image is in turn stylish and outlandish, with every photo exuding the ever-so-provocative nature of contemporary photography. **17**



"2937" PHOTO COURTESY SCHNEIDER GALLERY; "WHITE SANDS NATIONAL MONUMENT, 1964" PHOTOGRAPHY BY GARRY WINOGRAND (CI) COLLECTION CENTER FOR CREATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY, THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA; "IRREVERENT BOY" COURTESY THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO