

THE RADAR ART

BY JESSICA COGHAN
 PORTRAITS BY JOSEPH MORAN

Right: *Buy Me a Dress* Peter Savil, 1995, from New York's Franklin Parrish Gallery.
 Below: *Beats*, Marilyn Murphy, 2007, from the Carl Hammer Gallery. Both paintings will be featured at this year's Artropolis.



POP MART!

Four days, 16,000 works of art and too many events to count. Make way for Artropolis

To paraphrase the writer Tom Peters, if you're not overwhelmed by the sprawling, lovely Artropolis art fair running April 25-29, you haven't been paying attention. That's far from a knock on the hugely ambitious project, which, since being purchased by the Merchandise Mart two years ago, has undergone an amazing, enormous, breathtaking revitalization. But with more than 16,000 pieces of artwork from 780 exhibitors at five distinct branches of the show, and literally hundreds of events, things can get a little hairy for even the most organized art enthusiast. Read on for a user's guide to Artropolis' five

branches and a look at a few among the almost inconceivable number of events that are being offered. Whatever your artistic poison is, one thing is for certain—for those with even a passing interest in art, this is one stellar event, and not to be missed.



ART CHICAGO

Art Chicago is the largest fair in Artropolis, featuring 180 exhibitors from 56 cities and 18 countries representing more than 2,000 artists. According to fair director of sales Tony Kaman, this high level of participation is proof that Art Chicago has reclaimed its prominence from the glory days of the '80s and '90s. He also credits the appeal to "all [Chicago] has to offer as a marketplace and cultural Mecca." At a time when art fairs are approaching ubiquity, the Merchandise Mart recognized the need to make Art Chicago a premier art experience. Recently, they undertook a complete renovation of Art Chicago's new home, the entire 12th floor of the Mart. Unlike other fairs of comparable caliber, Art Chicago will feature gallery-like spaces, making the art not only look better, but, hopefully, sell better. Expect a stunning lineup of galleries—including New York's renowned Zwirner and Wirth, Yvon Lambert and Reebling Hall. Chicago holds its own, too, with a strong presence including Monique Meloche Gallery, KN Gallery, McCormick Gallery and Richard Gray Gallery. You're just as likely to find yourself face-to-face with an Andy Warhol or Picasso as with the work of a younger generation of famous names such as Matthew Barney, Sally Mann or Damien Hirst.

NEXT FAIR

If you want up-to-the-minute zeitgeist, however, head downstairs to the first annual NEXT Fair on the 7th floor. With an extraordinary lineup of younger, yet still-established galleries, artists and collectives, the NEXT Fair is a much-needed addition to Art Chicago, which, according to Chicago dealer Carrie Seerist, will no doubt "attract more contemporary collectors to Chicago." Organized by local gallerist Kavi Gupta and New York-based Christian Viveros-Faunt, NEXT is a project-driven fair. CONTINUED...

...CONTINUED heavy on curated work and installations. Galleries must be invited to participate in NEXT. Chicago is strongly represented here, too, by independent curator Bertran Projects and paperback press and gallery The Green Lantern. Also at NEXT, don't miss New Insight—a group show of academically driven work by some of the country's top graduate students, curated by Susanne Chez of the University of Chicago's Renaissance Society.

THE ARTIST PROJECT

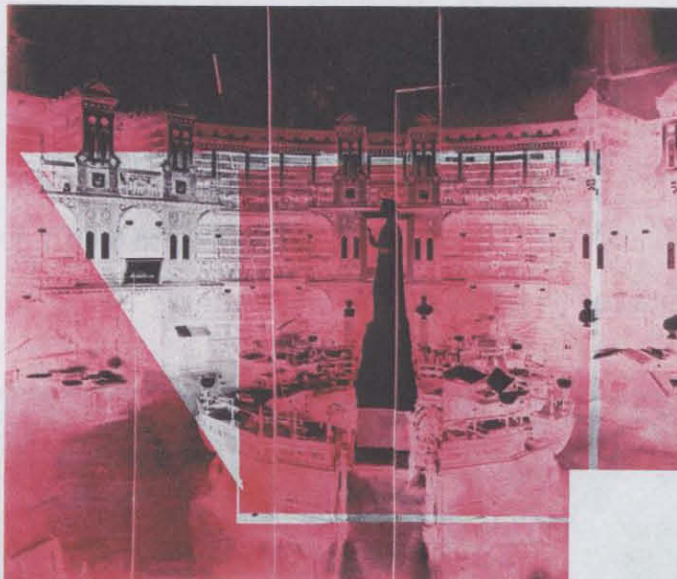
On the 8th floor, The Artist Project celebrates the independent spirit of undiscovered and unrepresented artists, with 300 artists showing in individual booths. Decidedly democratic—it's just as much an opportunity for budding collectors as for budding artists—it presents a huge cross-section of genres ranging from mixed media to photography to sculpture. The indisputable highlight is the Around the Coyote Video Lounge. The lounge will present work celebrating the democratization of video through increasingly affordable equipment and websites like YouTube. With a focus on dramatic narrative and stunning visual content, the show boasts a dynamic lineup of artists who might just be the next big thing.

INTUIT SHOW OF FOLK AND OUTSIDER ART

Those who seek the quirky, unusual and downright visionary work of outsider artists—artists who are nearly always self-taught and work outside of art world discourse—should spend some time at the Intuit Show of Folk and Outsider Art on the 8th Floor. Look for work from such notables as late Chicago artist Henry Darger. The art promises to be full of singular works and unexpected encounters.

INTERNATIONAL ANTIQUES FAIR

Okay, so this isn't our beat, but this antiques show on the Mart's 8th floor features more than 100 prestigious dealers from around the world, and is the largest show of its kind in the Midwest. It's not only a great event in and of itself, featuring everything from Asian pieces to rare books, it's also a welcome mental break—even for die-hard art lovers—from the deluge of artwork at Art Chicago.



Clockwise from left: *Untitled (simulation 3)*, Chris Dorland, 2007, from the Rhona Hoffman Gallery; Carrie Secrist of the Carrie Secrist Gallery; *Launch*, Kahn/Selesnick, 2007 from the Carl Hammer Gallery; Monique Meloche of the Monique Meloche Gallery. All pictured artwork will be featured at this year's Artropolis.



Carrie Secrist



Monique Meloche

ARTROPOLIS

Conceived by the Mart to bring pretty much the entire city into the fold, Artropolis delivers a plethora of lectures, events and world-class VIP programs that will light up the city—all told, the initiative includes more than 80 of Chicago's top cultural institutions and hundreds of individual events. Lectures and discussions at Art Chicago Speaks and NEXT's Talk Shop provide idea-driven platforms that are topical and relevant, and feature a who's who of the art world, from *Aperture* magazine managing editor Michael Famighetti to renowned architect David Adjaye. Also, there will be numerous tours of important collections at both museums and private homes. Last but not least, there will be fabulous parties, both private and public. Interested in attending, but not sure where to start? The best way to map out your Artropolis weekend is to visit their comprehensive website, www.artchicago.com. Needless to say, there's a lot to take in! ■

