

CHICAGO COLLECTION



Ann Nathan Gallery, 212 West Superior Street
Caleb O'Connor, Focus, oil on linen, 84" x 88"

PRIME-TIME VIEWING

An invigorated Art Chicago energizes the city's spring gallery scene

By Ann Wiens

Chicago is a world-class destination for art viewing 365 days a year, with phenomenal museums, an incredible civic commitment to public art, and outstanding galleries that run the gamut from blue-chip salons to gritty, artist-run collaboratives. For a few days each year, however, Chicago becomes the destination for art viewing, as art dealers from around the world gather here for an annual international art exposition, bringing the gaze of the global art community with them.

In 2006, the reigning spring fair, Art Chicago, was purchased at the eleventh hour—literally days before the opening—by Merchandise Mart Properties, one of the largest show producers in the world, with a portfolio that includes The Armory Show in New York and Volta in Basel, Switzerland. Chicago dealers were by and large pleased with the results in 2007, and seem wholly optimistic that this year's fair, April 25 through 28 at the Merchandise Mart, may be the best in years.

"I think the show's going to be quite invigorated over last year," says Roy Boyd, whose eponymous gallery has participated in dozens of fairs over the years. "They've remodeled the space to accommodate Art Chicago; it will look more like galleries and less like booths."

"They made a phenomenal turnaround last year," agrees Frank Paluch, director of Chicago's Perimeter Gallery, adding that the fair organizers "have a really well-oiled machine."

Tony Karman, director of sales and development for the show, is enthusiastic about the caliber of galleries participating in the 2008 show. "It's the most extraordinary collection of contemporary and modern dealers from around the world in many years," he says. He credits the strength of the showing to "Chicago's strong civic pride and long international art tradition, and the leadership of Merchandise Mart Properties President Chris Kennedy and the Mart organization."

Art Chicago, with 180 exhibitors from 56 cities in 18 countries, will be joined at the Mart by the NEXT Art Fair, a curatorial project-based showcase of emerging talent; the Merchandise Mart International Antiques Fair; The Artist Project; and Intuit, a showcase of self-taught, outsider and folk art. The shows are the centerpiece of the citywide Artropolis celebration of art, antiques and culture.

While these showcases take place over just a few days in April, they have an invigorating effect on the Chicago art scene that permeates the entire season, making spring—especially, perhaps,

spring 2008—among the best possible times to peruse the city's art offerings. Any of the following galleries offers a good place to start your explorations.

RIVER NORTH

ANN NATHAN GALLERY

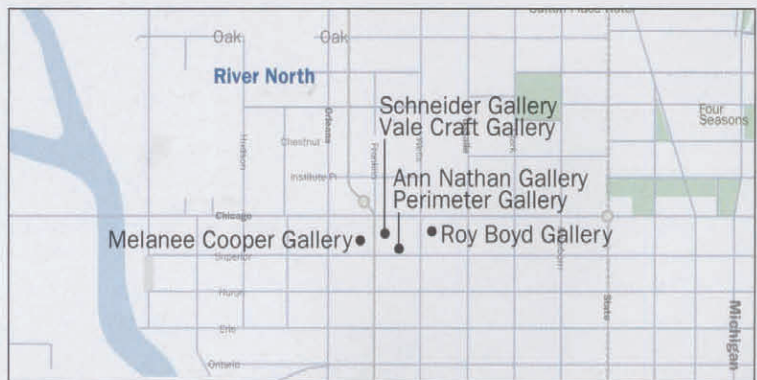
212 W. Superior St., 312.664.6622
Tuesday - Friday 10 to 5:30, Saturday 11 to 5
annnathangallery.com
Although Ann Nathan has maintained a gallery in River North for more than 20 years, it remains consistently fresh. Credit is due to Nathan's unflinching passion for the art she exhibits—there is always a mix of works by well-established artists alongside her latest

discoveries in media ranging from intimate ceramic sculpture to monumental oil paintings.

COUNT ON FINDING: Paintings, often heroic, realist and narrative, demonstrating an extraordinary level of skill. You'll always find a fine selection of "Shaker-in-steel" furniture by Jim Rose, some masterful ceramic sculptures and a well-edited collection of works by notable self-taught artists.
WHAT'S NEW? Through March the gallery will continue its show of the figurative works of Sangram Majumdar and Ben Duke. In April the gallery will present Caleb O'Connor and other artists in Art Chicago and will host a group show in its gallery through May.

MELANEE COOPER GALLERY

740 N. Franklin St., 312.202.9305
Tuesday - Friday 11 to 5, Saturday 12 to 4
melanecoopergallery.com
Melanee Cooper displays in her eponymous gallery a passion for contemporary painting that emphasizes the lush, tactile possibilities of the medium. Her gallery specializes in works with rich surfaces and interesting textures, whether the style is figurative, landscape, abstract or something that defies categorization.
COUNT ON FINDING: Paintings by several artists working in the luscious but tricky medium of encaustic: a mixture of pigment and hot wax. The



How to Get There

RIVER NORTH

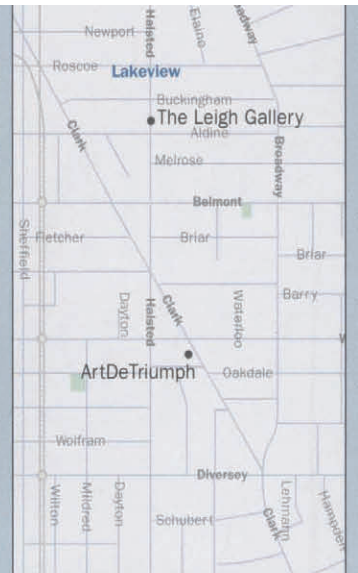
River North is approximately one-half mile from Michigan Avenue and a leisurely 10-minute walk. A taxi ride should take less than five minutes and cost on average \$6 with gratuity. CTA buses running east and west between River North and Michigan Avenue include 65-Grand (along Grand Avenue) and 66-Chicago (along Chicago Avenue).



ArtDeTriumph & Artful Framer Studios,
2936-38 North Clark Street
Nancie King Mertz, *Long Shadows on Lake Shore*



The Leigh Gallery, 3306 North Halsted Street



Lakeview Art Galleries

ARTDETRIUMPH & ARTFUL FRAMER STUDIOS

2936-38 N. Clark St., 773.832.4038
Tuesday – Friday 11 to 7,
Saturday 10 to 6, Sunday 12 to 5
artdetriumph.com or
nanciekingmertz.com

Nancie King Mertz is an extraordinarily prolific artist, as you'll see when you visit ArtDeTriumph, the gallery and accompanying framing studio, Artful Framer Studios, where she presents an ever-changing show of her latest works. King Mertz paints about 100 original works each year, depicting her own sweet home Chicago as well as scenes from her world travels. After each original is sold, her husband/partner Ron Mertz produces high-quality giclée prints and cards of the

image, so admirers on any budget can bring their favorite scene into their lives.

COUNT ON FINDING: Original oil paintings and pastels, as well as collectible giclée prints by Nancie King Mertz. Each year, she travels to a new part of the world to paint en plein air, bringing home scenes from her travels. Classic Chicago scenes prevail, from images of the Art Institute lions and Millennium Park to landmarks such as the Chicago Theatre.

WHAT'S NEW? In April, Nancie will travel to southwestern China for three weeks to sketch and paint in some of the ethnic minority areas where many of China's 80 ethnic groups live and maintain their traditional culture. Working alongside

American and Chinese artists, she will create works that will be exhibited in both countries. Back home in May, she will open an exhibition at the gallery of new paintings of the Chicago scenes for which she is best known.

THE LEIGH GALLERY

3306 N. Halsted St., 773.472.1865
Wednesday – Monday 11 to 6,
Closed Tuesday
theleighgallery.com

Jean Leigh, an artist herself, opened this gallery in the heart of Chicago's bustling Lakeview neighborhood 2-1/2 years ago to offer visitors and neighborhood residents a "nice, fun, happy, casual" place to see art. The gallery is as friendly and inviting as the effervescent Leigh herself,

with an environment that quickly dispels any intimidation that new collectors or those with limited art backgrounds might feel.

COUNT ON FINDING: A diverse selection of works by more than 60 artists, the majority of them local (so you might run into an artist or two when you visit).

Most media are represented, as are styles ranging from Abstraction to Realism. **WHAT'S NEW?** Michael McKee, whose pastel landscapes are incredibly vibrant, is a new addition to Leigh's roster of artists, and Ann Powell's soft, dreamy landscapes, bordering on the surreal, are featured this season. Artists bring in their latest works almost daily, so the selection is ever-changing.

Art openings and events calendar

SPECIAL SHOWINGS, EVENTS AND EXPOSITIONS SPOTLIGHT CITY'S ART SCENE

CONTINUING

February 8 – March 29
Melanee Cooper Gallery, solo show: Allen Bentley.

February 14 – mid-April
Kamp Galleries, group exhibit: George Ames Aldrich, Charles Frances Browne, Francis Chapin, Paul Cornoyer, Charles Dahlgreen, Frederic Milton Grant, Louis Grell and more.

February 15 – March 8
Perimeter Gallery, Beverly Mayeri and Charles Kurre.

February 22 – early April
Galleries Maurice Sternberg, fine American and European Painting, 1850–1950 through a collection of carefully selected pieces by important artists of this period.

February 29 – April 18
Roy Boyd Gallery, Marco Casentini: new works.

MARCH

March 7 – April 13
Schneider Gallery, "Into the Dark" exhibit of contemporary night photography: Thomas Kellner, Wu Qi, Ursula Sokolowska, and Arion Kudasz.

March 14
Ann Nathan Gallery: Enrique Santana and continuing; Sangram Majumdar and Ben Duke.

March 14 – April 12
Perimeter Gallery, Warrington Colescott: watercolors and etchings, Rhonda Gates: new works, and Joseph Piccillo: recent drawings.

APRIL

April 18
Spring gallery opening receptions in River North and West

April 18 – May 27
Roy Boyd, gallery group exhibit in participation with Art Chicago.

April 18 – May 30
Melanee Cooper Gallery, solo show: Alicia LaChance.

April 18 – May 30
Perimeter Gallery, Shoichi Ida Memorial Show: mixed-media works.

April 18 – May 31
Vale Craft Gallery, spring group show of fine crafts including ceramics, glass, fiber art, jewelry and mixed-media sculpture.

April 18 – June 13
Schneider Gallery, Chinese contemporary photography: Wu Qi, Jian Jiang, and Qiu Zhen.

April 24 – April 28
Ann Nathan Gallery, Art Chicago.

April 25 – April 28
Atropolis, Merchandise Mart.

MAY

May 30 – July 8
Roy Boyd, Sculpture and drawings by Jay Kelly, representing his first sculpture exhibit in Chicago.

MARCH APRIL MAY



Art Chicago 2008

Art Chicago 2008, the centerpiece of ARTropolis, offers curators, collectors, artists and art enthusiasts a multifaceted assortment of art in a variety of media including: painting, photography, drawing, prints, sculpture, video and special installations, all thoughtfully displayed on the 12th floor of the Mart. Art from more than 180 dealers from 56 cities in 18 countries will be on display.

Art Chicago will be joined by three additional art exhibits—The Artist Project, an exhibit dedicated to independent artists displaying new works, NEXT, an invitational show of emerging dealers, highlighting cutting-edge works in contemporary art, and Intuit, a showcase of self-taught, outsider and folk art.

Single-day tickets are priced at \$20 and multi-day passes are \$25: multi-day passes for students and seniors are \$15. For additional information please visit www.merchandiseart.com or www.artropolischicago.com.



David Hockney, *Woldgate Lane to Burton Agnes*, 2007, oil on canvas. Photo courtesy of Annelly Juda Fine Art

ARTropolis,

Chicago's celebration of culture and the arts, returns to the Merchandise Mart on April 25–28, 2008, showcasing contemporary and modern art from over 2,000 of the world's acclaimed and emerging artists as well as more than 80 cultural partners. ARTropolis features something for everyone—from the novice art enthusiast to the veteran collector. This carefully edited group of international dealers is chosen by a selection committee representing some of the most renowned names in the arts community.

material imbues a luminous, vibrant surface to the works that is unattainable with paint alone.

WHAT'S NEW? From mid-April through May, new works by Alicia LaChance are on view. While LaChance's color-drenched canvases are thoroughly contemporary, she utilizes the ancient technique of fresco, staining wet plaster with pigment, then painting, layering, scraping and lacquering the works resulting in intensely rich surfaces.

PERIMETER GALLERY
210 W. Superior St.,

312.266.9473
Tuesday – Saturday 10:30 to 5:30

perimetergallery.com
This gallery has been a cornerstone of the Chicago scene for 25 years and appears set to continue that strong tradition with a consistently high-caliber program featuring works by well-established and new artists alike.

COUNT ON FINDING: Works by the top ceramic and fiber artists working today, and paintings, sculpture and works on paper by many mid-career and established artists including Chicagoans such as Don

Pollack and Neil Goodman.

WHAT'S NEW? During Art Chicago, the gallery will feature a memorial exhibition of works by Japanese artist Shoichi Ida, who has had several exhibitions at Perimeter over the years and is extremely well-respected in Japan. This spring the gallery will also feature local abstract painter Rhonda Gates, and New York-based painter Elana Gutman.

ROY BOYD GALLERY
739 N. Wells St.,
312.642.1606
Tuesday – Saturday 10 to 5:30, Monday by

appointment
royboydgallery.com
Ask anyone long familiar with the Chicago art scene to make a list of the major players in the city's contemporary-art evolution, and Roy Boyd Gallery will be on that list. Owners Roy and Ann Boyd have a deep-rooted passion for the art they present, and their love of the art—and fondness for the artists they consider their “family”—is apparent in their choice of works and the enthusiasm with which they share their passion.
COUNT ON FINDING: Abstract paintings and

sculpture by established and emerging artists, although representational works make an appearance now and then. This is a great place to find works by mid-career Chicago artists such as Joan Livingstone, Dan Devening and William Conger.

WHAT'S NEW? Through April 15, look for new works by Italian painter Marco Casentini. Known for his geometric, nearly monochromatic paintings, he is now showing multicolored works that wrap around the sides of the canvas, bringing it into three