



**NEWSLETTER FEATURE:  
CITY OF ART**



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**Artists and galleries from around the world converge in Chicago**

by **Ben Madeska**

Let's face it: You've been out of college for a while now, and the Bob Marley poster that really pulled your dorm room together doesn't quite have the same cachet now. And that framed Warhol poster? It isn't fooling anyone. You finally have a car with a bumper that doesn't need duct tape to stay on and maybe you're even paying into a retirement fund -- it's time to upgrade the art on your walls.

Artropolis, Chicago's celebration of art, antiques and culture, takes place this weekend, April 25-28, throughout the city. A centerpiece will be Art Chicago 2008 at the Merchandise Mart, an international fair featuring more than 2,000 leading and emerging artists, historic and current, from 180 galleries. With this much work on display, from paintings and photos to sculptures and videos, there will be plenty of art to match every taste and every pocketbook. "It's a great place to pick up a minor work from a major artist, or a major work from a minor artist," says Paul Morris, vice president of Art Fairs.

Even for those not looking to buy, Artropolis offers a fantastic chance to take in a truly staggering selection of fine art around Chicago. Impossible to miss is a series of sculptures outside the Merchandise Mart, in the tradition of the Picasso at Daley Plaza and Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate (or "the Bean," as it's affectionately known) in Millennium Park. "Chicago is, in many ways, the most exciting city in the world for architecture, and the Merchandise Mart has embraced this history for outdoor sculptures," says Morris.

Other exhibitions include "NEXT," a curated invitational looking at some of the most important recent developments in contemporary art and an excellent opportunity to pick up some real cutting-edge work. On the other end of the spectrum is the 11th Annual Merchandise Mart International Antiques Fair, featuring decorative arts from around the world and through the centuries -- rare books, jewelry, furniture and more. Further events, including music and dance, theater performances and guided tours, will take place at venues across Chicago.

One of the best things about Artropolis is that it makes the art world accessible to everyone, no matter their knowledge level of art. The art scene in Chicago has a reputation for being more open to newcomers than other cities, and Artropolis takes this to another level. So if you've been afraid of rubbing elbows with the black turtleneck-wearing crowd, this is a great opportunity to indulge your interests. "Art Chicago is the opposite of elitist," Morris says. "I think it's one of the most generous art fairs on the planet. It's a great starting point because it's all here."

As the MCA banners say, "Fear No Art," to which Morris adds, "even if you're afraid, come and find out what you're afraid of."

**Artropolis takes place April 25-28 throughout the city; visit [artropolischicago.com](http://artropolischicago.com) for more information**