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## Essentials

## Info &amp; map

- event: "Mildred's Lane"

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## Art

## Info &amp; Map

## Review

Time Out New York / Issue 672 : Aug 13–19, 2008

## "Mildred's Lane"



Critic's Rating

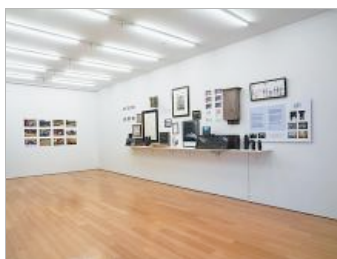


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## Alexander Gray Associates, through Sept 6

Avant-garde radicalism meets Yankee independence at Mildred's Lane, a ten-year-old artists' colony in the Delaware River Valley. Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett opened the 96-acre facility to their colleagues in 1998, with the goal of creating "new modes of being in the world" through research, art-making and everyday life.

At the colony's rural Pennsylvania farmhouse, students and established artists gather for performances, dinners, readings, screenings, seminars, exhibitions and architectural installations. But in Chelsea, the small slice of this utopian undertaking that has been trucked in for the summer is wilting in the urban glare.



**Installation view**  
Photograph: Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates

While rigorous intentions may have motivated Puett's *Mildred's Lane Birdhouse*, Monique Milesen's *Mildred Patterns* or Athena Kokoronis's Baked Goods, those works look merely quaint in the gallery. Allison Smith's self-portrait as a Civil War soldier, *Allison Smith, Mustering Officer (The Pennsylvania Muster of 2004)*, and John Haskell's Watts Tower series, an homage to Simon Rodia's vernacular monument, suffer similar fates.

The colony's idealism seems deflated and defeated in these objects: Outside their original context, deprived of the farm's human element, they are lifeless curiosities, adrift without social, environmental or pedagogical purpose. Still, there is something to be said for fighting the good fight. While many artists have given up the avant-garde project of closing the gap between art and life, the community at Mildred's Lane dares to reimagine it for the coming century.

— *Nuit Banai*

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