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JAN TICHY

Selected Press

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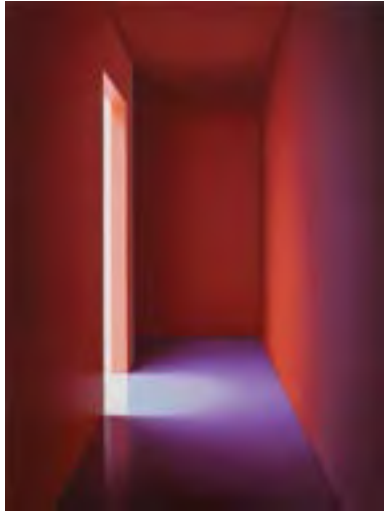
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LIGHT³

JACK SHAINMAN
JUNE 5 - JULY 25

FRIDMAN
JUNE 12 - JULY 11

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Light, ephemeral and protean, was objectified in this transformative exhibition. Curated by Lilly Wei and titled "Light³," it focused on the work of Jan Tichy, Ethan Ryman, and Stephen Dean. All used, rather than represented, light, and manipulated it within the contexts of painting, sculpture, and installation. Dean's two multicolored pieces, *A Frame* (2013) and *Prayer Mill* (2009), were installed in the light-filled front of the gallery. Both are freestanding metal-and-glass structures based on utilitarian objects—a ladder and a postcard stand. Their panels of dichroic (two-colored) glass, simultaneously reflective and translucent, seemed in constant flux. The black framework in *Prayer Mill*, in which the panels are the postcards, functions as a wiggly drawing in space.

Ryman's white boxes, hung in lines and grids, appeared transformed by light into mini-paintings with almost invisible stripes of tape set just inside or outside of the frames. And Tichy, best known for "painting with light" on architectural structures, presented a site-specific video projection, *Installation no. 20* (walls), 2014, in a deep slice of space in the back room. Tichy's poetic work was so spare as to be almost invisible. He was also represented by two striking, enigmatic neon-red flares that were hung at the level of the spread hands of a standing figure holding them.

MONA MOLARSKY

AMANDA CHURCH

LEFT: ©PIERRE DORION/COURTESY THE ARTIST AND JACK SHAINMAN GALLERY, NEW YORK; RIGHT: COURTESY FRIDMAN GALLERY

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Light³

Fridman Gallery, New York

12 June – 11 July 2014

by KELLY ROBBINS

Light³ at the Fridman Gallery in New York, curated by Lilly Wei, is a must-see for anyone interested in the multiple ways in which light challenges our perception of colour, form and structure. The exhibition features the work of Stephen Dean, Jan Tichy and Ethan Ryman, three artists with very different sensibilities, who employ light as a means of defamiliarising what we see. Studio International had the opportunity to speak with Dean and Tichy about their work at the gallery. Ryman answered our questions via email.

A French-American artist who is known for isolating colour through various mediums, Dean has two freestanding works in the front room nearest the natural light from the gallery's windows. At first glance, *Prayer Mill* (2009) seems oddly casual. It is a found black metal postcard rack holding 40 disparate colour panels of dichroic glass. This piece is best observed up close where its visual familiarity dissolves into a multidimensional abstraction, a joyous cacophony of colour complexity – the result of light reflecting between panels.

"All the ideas that I develop, I begin with watercolour," explains Dean, "so the watercolour is omnipresent in the work. Then it builds up and becomes a sort of strange totem made with really hi-tech glass and a postcard rack."

Directly opposite is Dean's *A Frame* (2013), a black aluminium ladder with 14 panels of dichroic glass. Like *Prayer Mill*, this piece is in a constant state of flux. It seemingly changes colour and reflects light differently in response to viewer relation. Whereas the visual information of *Prayer Mill* exists within the parameter of the structure, aesthetically, *A Frame* is more outward bound: from a distant perspective, the light projects multiples of the ladder's form and glass on to the wall. Up close, when you look through one coloured pane to another of a different colour, a sort of density and saturation develop. Even the black frame changes colour when you peer at it through the glass. Both works, despite their 3D structures, bespeak a painterly awareness, drawing attention not to the details of their form, but to manifestations of colour.

Dean relates the nature of these works to painting: "For me, the way I make these pieces, it's like a form of painting, but it's not in the idea of turning painting into a three dimensional space, but about the looking. There is so much about looking to begin with that they're sort of constructed in a very visual way."

Four works by Ryman are mounted in various relationships to the far wall of the front room under a warm, luminous light. Constructed of painted wood panels and recessed frames, these works are a lyrical exchange between light and shadow, form and colour.

Configuration 1 (2014) comprises nine square recessed frames. They are arranged in a grid and painted various hues of white. Uniformly, light casts shadows both across their horizontal planes and around the frames along the wall. Here, shadow, a 3D element, contributes to the 2D picture plane. "I wanted to make a situation where the viewer could flatten the work and see 3D forms in two dimensions," explains Ryman. He not only "flattens" the work for viewers, but also blurs the distinction between the work and the wall on which it is mounted.

In Blue Shift (2014), a quadripartite, two vertical stripes of blue masking tape parallel the corner of the wall, acting as subtle counterpoints to two hollowed shadow boxes that are mounted perpendicularly to the wall on either side of the tape. Shadow plays a central role in this piece as it mirrors the frames, projecting their silhouettes. From every viewpoint, new forms and juxtapositions of the frames and blue tape emerge. "I wanted to draw attention to the idea that, if you look at something aesthetically, as in an abstract painting, it doesn't matter so much what something is, it only matters what it looks like," says Ryman.

Over the course of five days, Prague-born, Chicago-based artist, Tichy ventured behind the gallery's perfectly lit, pristine white walls to the stygian darkness of the storage space for the creation of his site-specific, time-based light projection, *Installation No 20* (walls). Emptied of tables and chairs, the storage space is essentially a long, dark, narrow hallway, which Tichy transforms into a deeply engaging and intimate architectural performance. Using two synchronised video projectors, he animates the space with specks of light that expand and trace the minutiae – the cracks and uneven surfaces one typically encounters in such spaces, but rarely notices.

"There is something tangible in the notion of these rips, something I would want to breathe life into," explains Tichy.

He also "breathes life" into the architectural nature of the space: light travels up the exposed wood beams of one wall while projecting geometric shadows across the other; light illuminates the cement floor all along the hallway, transforming the radiator into an ethereal radiating sculpture. Sometimes the

light reads like sunlight, as if it is emanating from a natural source. “The notion of sunlight exists here more than in some of my other pieces because of the wood beams, which makes the light seem yellowish on this side.”

Light moves and shifts seamlessly in this piece at an even tempo like a musical score. “I’m following the shapes of what is here, of the structure, and of the light as well. When I am working on these pieces, I’m thinking about them because of the space and the time and movement, like music.” Since the hallway is so narrow, this piece requires its viewers to stand still and observe the 12-minute projection in solitude.

“Architecture is built for us,” says Tichy. “It is always in relation to the human body. But this space wasn’t built for the human body, right? It is meant to be a storage space, but actually it’s still something we can enter.”

Dean, Ryman and Tichy are poets of light, which, as curator Lilly Wei states in the press release, is their “means to comprehend and engage with the world”. It is the driving force of change – of colour diffusion, shadow and architectural space. Light, as Dean describes it, “is a great medium by itself, impalpable and ever-present”.



Stephen Dean. A Frame, 2013. Aluminium structure and dichroic glass, (14 panels of 11 1/4 x 14 3/4 in) 92 x 56 x 17 in.

simpler title: *AB 130* (2012).

Other small works, in striking autumnal colors, were somewhat hidden in the back of the gallery. In these pieces, there was a rigid separation of shape and color, making for a starker effect reminiscent of the Color Field painters. The results were more contemplative, less ethereal. The smaller scale enabled viewers to focus on

the way the relationship between photographer, camera, and audience played out. In *AB 109* (2012), a green bar floats against a darkened background, looking mysterious and totemic, showing how the fewer the elements swirling around, the better and richer the photographs appear. —**Ali Pechman**

Jan Tichy

Richard Gray

Born in Prague and educated in Israel, Chicago-based artist Jan Tichy has spent his career demonstrating architecture's potential both to embody and to reinforce sociopolitical

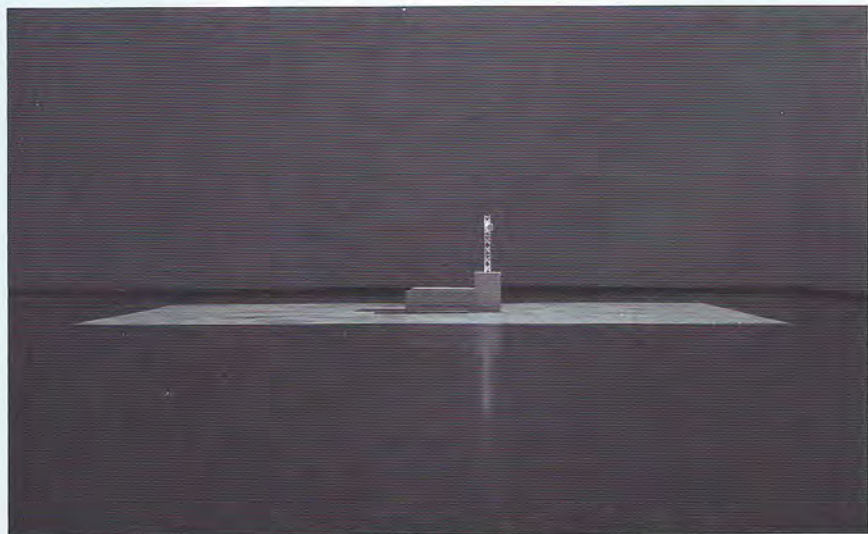
agendas. For his exhibition "Politics of Light," conceived in collaboration with arts nonprofit No Longer Empty for an abandoned storefront at 196 Stanton Street, he applied that critical attention to an exploration of light as a metaphor for seeing. Through sculpture, video,

photography, and installation, he emphasized the possibility of manipulating light's illuminative power, suggesting that what it is allowed to reveal may not be all there is to see.

Located in a dark, windowless chamber as an anchor to the show, *Installation no. 18* (2013) offered a site-specific elucidation of the space's irregular topography. Playing on a slow-moving, 15-minute loop, two digitally projected squares of light panned across the walls, progressing horizontally and vertically. Occasionally, the squares intersected with the room's architectural nuances—protruding casings, overhangs, staggered alcoves—and were transmuted by those physical interruptions into unexpected new geometries.

A small architectural model titled *1391* (2007) was exhibited in a cavernous gallery downstairs. Installed on the floor and spotlighted from above, the white-paper replica was based on the military prison Camp 1391—a secret torture chamber known as Israel's Guantanamo—whose existence was hidden from the public until 2003. Since the prison has been airbrushed from aerial photos and removed from maps, it remains largely a mystery, so the artist had to assemble his semi-imagined version bit by bit from plans and drawings. Ironically antiseptic given the institution's violent history, Tichy's structure asserts the material reality of places and ideas that might seem to exist only in our minds—until light assaults and banishes the darkness.

—**Emily Nathan**



Jan Tichy, *1391*, 2007, ceiling digital video projection, paper object, adhesive, ink-jet print, dimensions variable, installation view. Richard Gray.

Art & the Public Sphere

Volume 1 Number 2

On the Public

- 1 Art is produced in relation to other people.
 - 1.1 Art does not enter into a relationship with the public; art is formed in the relationships between people.
 - 1.2 In art, generosity is not a function of meaning; it is the refusal to mystify one's own conditions of possibility.
 - 1.2.1 Producing art 'in public' is not the same as producing art for a public.
- 2 The public does not exist.
 - 2.1 For an artist, to imagine a public is to seek a guarantee for what one does.
 - 2.2 For an artist, to imagine a public is to imagine oneself in a place of exception.
 - 2.3 To imagine that art is for a public is to imagine a particular function for art and a method by which it functions.
- 3 The public are diverse, multiple, contradictory, fractured, fragmented, inconsistent, changeable and perverse.
 - 3.1 Each individual is diverse, multiple, contradictory, fractured, fragmented, inconsistent, changeable and perverse.
 - 3.2 Art must manage without a public.
- 4 What might follow if one thought of art as the search for collaborators rather than as the search for a public?

**'PROJECT CABRINI GREEN', BY JAN TICHY, 28 MARCH–29 APRIL
2011, CHICAGO, IL, USA**

Reviewed by Steven L. Bridges

Watching a wrecking ball chew through a monolithic 134-unit housing project is at once breathtakingly beautiful and horrifyingly violent; the power and force of the destruction is truly sublime. From a certain, safe distance, the massive slabs of concrete and rebar crumble and cascade down upon one another without even the slightest reverberation. To experience the violence of the sight without the corresponding sound lends to the overall discomfort of the disjointed experience. Thankfully, metaphor intervenes and draws meaningful parallels for one's consideration: where have the people gone who once lived here? What stories do they have to tell? What were their lives like? I watch their apartments fracture and crack open, but I do not see them. I do not hear them, either. The discomfort returns, emanating from the disjuncture between sight and sound experienced through the controversial gentrification process undertaken in one of the most notorious public housing projects in the United States: Cabrini Green, located on Chicago's near north side.

The demolition of the last high-rise building began on 28 March 2011, a little over three months after the last tenants were evicted. The building had been the home to hundreds of low-income Chicago families over its 50 plus years of existence, and up until that cold, bitter day, stood emblematically tall as a symbol of the many failures of public housing in Chicago and the nation at large. Recognizing the historical significance of this moment, artist Jan Tichy created 'Project Cabrini Green' in an attempt to reconnect voice and



Figure 1: Jan Tichy, Project Cabrini Green, April 2011. Photo courtesy of Jan Tichy and Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago.

visibility and to offer a different account of Chicago's ill-fated Cabrini Green housing projects. Through Project Cabrini Green, this last building did not fall like a tree in the forest; the building fell, and untold thousands bore witness to the event.

The razing of the mid- and high-rise apartment blocks in Cabrini Green was many years in the making. The process of gentrification was officially launched in 2000 as part of the city's Plan for Transformation, carried out by the Chicago Housing Authority under Mayor Richard M. Daley, but it was not until 2006 that the demolition began on the larger Cabrini Green housing projects. Initially there was a great deal of public outcry over the demolition, which amounted to a lot of talk and very little action. The demolition commenced without much hesitation. Five years later, with the last high-rise prepped and primed for demolition, interest peaked again, but this time the media had a very different thread to spin: the transformation of a piece of the Plan for Transformation into a public, light art installation.

For Project Cabrini Green, Tichy used the existing architecture of the last remaining high-rise apartment block as the staging for a chorus of pulsating lights emitting from LED light kits, installed in each of the 134 apartments. The flickering, inhaling and exhaling lights 'told' the stories, poems, letters and musings of some 110 Chicago youths addressing issues of home, family, gentrification, displacement, decay and rebirth. Through the coordination of a series of short workshops, Tichy – along with his partner Efrat Appel and his team of collaborators from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC, where Tichy also teaches) – introduced issues of public art, activism and the history of the Cabrini Green neighbourhood to groups of Chicago youth. The workshops culminated in a written text performed by the participant, recorded, and (digitally) translated into a corresponding pulse of light. These photo-ponic pieces of information were then installed into self-contained LED light containers, and installed into each of the apartments. With their own battery source and internal timers, the kits would turn on each night at



Figure 2: Jan Tichy, *Project Cabrini Green*, April 2011. Photo courtesy of Jan Tichy and Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago.

7 p.m. in order to periodically perform the pieces of the participants, falling back to 'sleep' around 1a.m. Spanning the month-long process of demolition, the building 'awoke' each night, speaking without sound, voices echoing in the pulsating lights.

In addition, there were a number of other components to the project that are pertinent to the discussion of what constitutes the public within public art practices. Beyond the physical site, Tichy and his team also created an interactive website (<http://www.projectcabrinigreen.org>) that included a 24-hour live feed of the building, and a virtual model of the building that contains the students' recordings as text and sound that play aloud alongside the corresponding pulse of light. This component of the project was also developed into a live interactive sound piece on display at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Chicago. Here, Tichy and his team of collaborators created a scale model of the building out of plexiglass, and developed a software program to respond with the same pulsating light to the sounds within listening distance of the microphone contained within the model. This model, the live video feed, the website and a small book edition of the written texts were put on display in an atrium at the museum that was purposefully selected because one could gain access to the work without having to pay admission to the museum proper. Additionally, with its glass atrium walls, the live video feed and model were visible to passers-by. These two additional points of access are significant in that they further expand the notion of public, as I will detail in the following paragraphs.

As it relates to a project such as this, the meaning and significance of what constitutes the public within public art practices is pluralistic and riddled with various contingencies. Project Cabrini Green involves numerous public permeations: the physical site, the workshops with Chicago youth, the website, the installation at the MCA, the accompanying book, the media coverage and (not to be overlooked) the accidental encounter, word of mouth and rumour. In order to begin to break down the different iterations of publicness in this project, one can posit a difference between public participation and public reception, with the term 'public' here being imbued with different modes of interactivity. Relating to the aesthetics of communication, the term 'public' delineates a type of experience, albeit an experience that requires further qualification. Thus, different publics experience the project in different ways; the articulation of a public coincides with its proximity to the project (e.g. real vs. virtual, participation vs. reception), which hinges on the channels of communication that mediate the transmission of the experience.

However, these categories are not immutable or succinctly definable. These proposed analytical boundaries are actually highly porous – themselves crumbling facades – as individuals have different experiences with multifaceted projects such as this, particularly as they move through the various channels of communication. Take the participating public for instance. Each of the four youth organizations that Tichy worked with during the workshop phase of the project (i.e. Cabrini Connections, Marwen, After School Matters and ThaBrigade Marching Band) have diverse cultural directives, from after school tutoring to visual arts education, writing and musical instruction. As a result, the workshops were not conducted without careful reflection and fine-tuning from one organization to the next. Each of the groups of youth participants required a distinct mode of address, with certain aspects of the workshops requiring more in-depth explanation and working through than others (Jan Tichy and Efrat Appel 2011, personal communication). For example, at

Marwen – the organization that I was working for at the time of writing this review, and with which I assisted in the coordination of the two-day workshop there – the students possess a good understanding of the visual arts and easily grasped the light art/projection component of the workshop. However, unlike their peers from the writing programme at After School Matters, or the rhythmically attuned students from the Marching Band, Marwen students required more hands-on instruction during the writing and performance components of the workshops. In this way, one can begin to further break down the category of public participation. For the backgrounds and personal histories of the youth participants and the place from which their participation grew forth, greatly contributed to the shape of their experience with the project.

Speaking again to the porous nature of the proposed categorizations, I also witnessed first hand how many of the students were affected by actually seeing the work in person – as well as on the Internet, in print form and at the MCA – and how this bearing witness changed and reformulated their overall experience. These participants were in turn a part of the public reception; they were an audience to their own work as part of a much larger and multifaceted collaborative methodology. It became clear that despite their active participation in the workshops, a gap existed between their understanding of the process in which they participated and the final assemblage of parts. For many of them, the experience of standing on the site could be described as a ‘moment of presence’ to borrow from Henri Levebre (Shields 1999: 58–60), wherein constructed reality gives way to an intimate and personal reality, connecting one’s own subjectivity with the subjectivities of others. Additionally, the experience of listening to the sound of their own voices streaming across the Internet provoked contemplation as to the vastness of the Internet and its reach. Who and how many people will hear the sound of my voice?

Looking more specifically at the public reception of the project, it becomes evident how each transmission of the project delineates a type of public as experience. The artist and his collaborators were keenly interested in opening up multiple dimensions of access to the project and its content, developing different forms of visibility and audibility. Some people explored all of the many facets open to them, from the physical site to the Internet to the MCA, while others were only able to access one or two of these points of reception. The website played a unique role in disseminating information about the project, both through its interactivity and archival nature, but also through the live feed, which allowed anyone with access to the Internet the opportunity to view the daily demolition and nightly light display. The artist, using Google Analytics to track and analyse traffic across the site, saw a total of some 15,000 hits during the month of demolition, with people accessing the site from all over the world (Jan Tichy and Efrat Appel 2011, personal communication). This public, although relatively unknown and only loosely accounted for, points to an issue of public art practices frequently overlooked and difficult to pin down: the afterlife of such projects, an understanding of how they continue to maintain and permeate social consciousness.

Sifting through the various public constituencies, it is clear that Project Cabrini Green comprised a diversity of publics. But hitherto I have used the notion of proximity primarily to relate a kind of spatially determined, experiential nature of the term ‘public’. What is missing here is some acknowledgement of the temporal dynamics that are also at play in the articulation of publics. Duration and posterity are two key factors that come to mind with regard to this point. One must here consider the level of engagement – how

often and for how long – and this relates to both the participants and the public reception. But the question of posterity is perhaps the more interesting with regard to the question I raised before about the afterlife of such projects. While many aspects of this project were ephemeral in nature, the artist took a great effort throughout the entire process to document the processes and to reformulate this documentary material into new artistic forms that continue to breathe life into the project. Certain elements contract due to their unique time signatures, while others continue to expand and create new publics. But this relates to something more than just to the project itself; Tichy's artistic intervention also contributes to the history of Cabrini Green by activating the physical site and public memory. In doing so, Project Cabrini Green offers points of focus – at once aesthetically and socio-politically charged – that move beyond rhetoric and cliché, combating that other dangerous edge of the time continuum: amnesia.

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CONTRIBUTOR DETAILS

Steven L. Bridges is a curator, writer and arts educator based in Chicago. He is currently a curatorial assistant at the MCA Chicago, and previously worked as the coordinator of exhibitions at Marwen, a non-profit organization that provides visual arts education to under-served Chicago youth.

THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS: FILIP GILISSEN'S *IT'S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE ON*, A 2011 SINT-LUKAS BRUSSELS UNIVERSITY COMMISSION, AND OTHER RECENT WORKS

Reviewed by Frances Loeffler

'All's for the best in the best of all possible worlds.' This is the maxim of the excessively optimistic Dr Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759). He continues to use it, even after he has been hung, surgically dissected and whipped with a heavy thong. The satirical novella was written to expose what Voltaire saw as the naïvety of Leibnizian optimism in the wake of such dire events as the Seven Years' War and the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. In our own time of recurring natural disasters, ongoing political conflicts and widespread economic recession, the notion that we are living in 'the best of all possible worlds' can seem equally farcical. But the Panglossian view persists. Today, it is perhaps most often encountered as a sales and marketing strategy, or in the form of self-help manuals and New Ageism. Optimism has become not just a philosophical question but also a consumer product.

It's All Downhill From Here On (2011–ongoing), *I Feel Like Going On* (2011), *The Only Way is Up* (2010) and *The Winner Takes it All* (2010), the

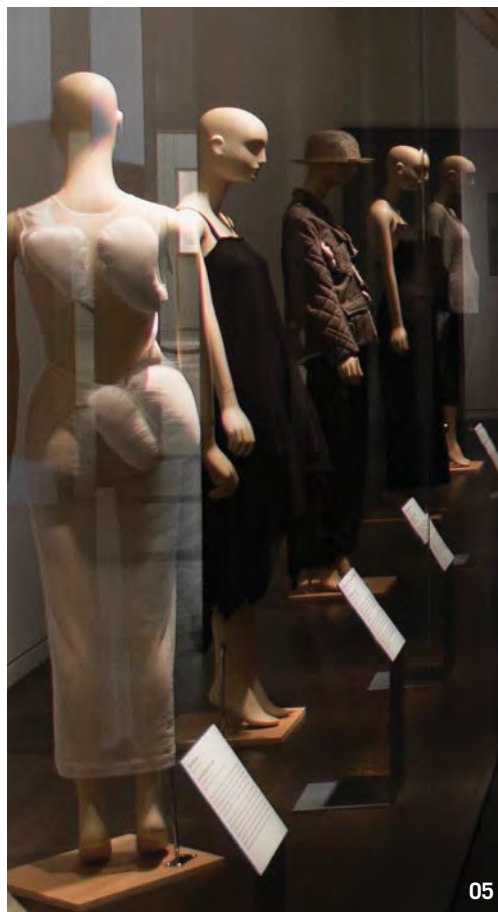
Material Translations: Japanese Fashion from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Ando Gallery, 3 November–7 April, Art Institute of Chicago, 111 South Michigan Avenue Chicago, IL 60603, T: (312) 443 3600, www.artic.edu

This sensitive exhibition of Japanese fashion from the FRC archive shares with the Institute's summer exhibition, *Fashioning the Object*, (Selvedge, issue 48, 2012) an interest in how fashion is displayed.

This time fashion makes its appearance in Gallery 109, the museum's Ando Gallery, designed by the Japanese architect Tadao Ando as his first U.S. commission in 1989. This contemplative space, tucked away in the Asian galleries, leads the viewer into the dark oak flooring and grid of 16 foot square columns organized in four rows, bound on two walls with low lit L-shaped display cabinets behind glass. To get a close glimpse of the fashion, viewers must navigate a route through Ando's pillars, forcing us to reconsider the edges of ourselves and the interiors we occupy. This demand establishes a useful frame of mind to consider the Japanese fashion on display – works that for some may be quite familiar, but are always deserving of further attention.

Twelve mannequins behind glass wear now iconic names from the pick of Japanese fashion design: Rei Kawakubo, Issey Miyake, Junya Watanabe and, the relative newcomer of the selection, Jun Takashi. Distorted silhouettes, unexpected material combinations that expose construction techniques and asymmetry are apparent throughout. Rei Kawakubo's 1983 sack dress is on display, which we are briefly told, "characterizes the aesthetic of poverty". (New York Times photographer Bill Cunningham in the 2010 documentary about his life, reflects more bluntly that Kawakubo's gesture takes considerable inspiration from the garb of the homeless – a source with the potential to be understood far more contentiously than an "aesthetic of poverty".)

Also from 1983 is a Kawakubo creation that works much like a puzzle piece and can be oriented up or down left or right to find the comfortable fit. Fourteen years later, Kawakubo's approach continued to question the status quo. Her 1997 Lumps and Bumps collection includes an elastic and nylon dress that shines an irreverent light on what the garment is intended to conceal and reveal by offering up protuberances in unexpected locations. The exhibition



wall panel reminds us that dancers from the Merce Cunningham Dance Company wore similar garments, to the consternation of some during performances of *Scenario* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music the same year.

Miyake has a similar disregard for conventional proportions and priorities when dressing the body, using pleats that treat the body surface as a series of planes. This approach is taken to extremes in his now familiar *Pleats Please* collection, which dressed the female form in origami inspired shapes of crisp pleating. Alongside presenting a unexpected visual hierarchy for the female form, (breasts and hips are no more of a visual priority here than elbows or knees) *Pleats Please* surfaces catered to the time-poor business traveller by providing designs that refused unsightly creasing caused by travel or packing. This makes them particularly deceptive designs when seen on the hanger where they lie flat and belie the unexpected volume that appears when worn.

One of the most recent examples on display is Jun Takashi's pants and jacket from 2005 set alongside Rei Kawakubo's hat from the same year. Both – through material choice and construction technique – continue the aesthetic tradition established by experimental Japanese fashion design by refusing to conform to expectations. Here hymo, a material more usually sandwiched in a garment interlining, is used for Kawakubo's hat fabric, while Takashi intentionally misaligns hems and employs padding to distort the silhouette and challenge the values of garment construction.

One unexpected treat to this exhibition is the site-specific video projection, *Installation no. 16*, created by Czech-born, Chicago-based artist Jan Tichy. This intervention introduces yet another subtle request for contemplation by way of a bright white light that moves in various configurations across Ando's grid of wood columns. At times a lunar eclipse is suggested: elsewhere the light is reminiscent of car headlights bouncing on an interior wall or the feeling of sitting within a human sized camera obscura. For a viewer such as myself not particularly familiar with the vast architecture that makes up the Art Institute, this intervention offered a compelling prompt to rethink the now iconic fashion on display. ●●● Jessica Hemmings

04 and 05 Gallery installation



Jan Tichy at the Museum of Contemporary Photography | Art review

"1979:1–2012:21" revisits the MoCP's collection

By Lauren Weinberg

Published: November 22, 2012



With almost 500 prints, Dorothea Lange—the photographer whose *Migrant Mother* became an icon of the Great Depression—is the most represented artist in the Museum of Contemporary Photography's collection. The museum's largest piece is Chinese artist Shi Guorui's *Shanghai 22–23 Oct 2005*, a camera-obscura photograph of the Shanghai skyline that is more than 12' long. Its smallest, Walker Evans's untitled 1928–29 photo of a metal grate, is a mere 1" x 1.25".

Until "1979:1–2012:21: Jan Tichy Works with the MoCP Collection" took the measure of the museum's holdings, visitors had little sense the MoCP owns almost 11,000 photographs, videos and other works. But this ingenious exhibition hints at the nature and broad scope of these assets, while reminding visitors that any collection is skewed by personal taste—and luck: Lange's work came to the museum from her stepdaughter, who lives in Chicago.

Last year, Tichy, a Chicago artist who teaches at SAIC, began working to make the MoCP's collection more accessible. Aided by graduate photography students from local schools, he revamped the museum's website, making it easy to search the archive by artist, keyword and medium. He transformed the MoCP's large windows at the southwest corner of Michigan Avenue and Harrison Street into the new Cornerstone Gallery, where flat-screen monitors flash digital exhibitions organized by guest curators.

Tichy also contributes videos of his own to “1979:1–2012:21,” which are unfortunately outshone by the photographs he highlights. However, this show convinces viewers that curating can be an artistic pursuit.

The title, which refers to the museum’s first and most recent acquisitions, reflects the structure of its first section. Tichy pairs several photographs, including Shi’s and Evans’s, based on the collection’s extremes. Others are linked by form or subject matter. Tichy’s choices demonstrate that conceptual and documentary photographs coexist in the collection, which encompasses abstractions as well as images of people, landscapes and infrastructure. One of my favorite pairings pits the tough teens in Diane Arbus’s *Two Girls in Matching Bathing Suits, Coney Island, N.Y.* (1967) against the more vulnerable-looking subject of Rineke Dijkstra’s portrait *Maya, Herzliya, Israel, November 21, 1999*, offering two different but equally striking views of young womanhood.

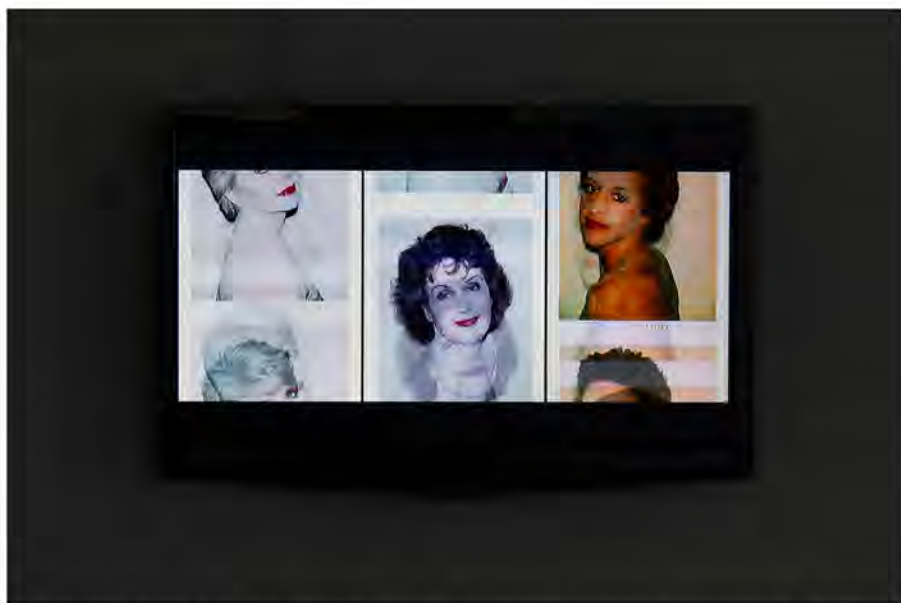
On the mezzanine level, Tichy presents a dozen “significant yet relatively under-used” photographs recommended by museum staff who have worked with the collection for at least five years. Chicago-based Terry Evans’s lovely but disturbing color photo *Field Museum, swan, 1891* (2001) captures the taxidermied bird bent double, its graceful neck wrapped to its body with translucent fabric. It hangs near Harlem Renaissance photographer James Van Der Zee’s regal portrait of *A Member of Garvey’s African Legion with His Family* (1924). I wish Tichy had shared the MoCP employees’ explanations for their recommendations, but in choosing these 12 from a larger pool, he subsumes them into his curatorial and conceptual vision.

Local photographers—including Chicago School leaders Aaron Siskind and Harry Callahan, their influential students Ken Josephson and Barbara Crane, and younger contemporary artists such as Jason Lazarus—are ubiquitous in “1979:1–2012:21.” Tichy fills the Print Study Room with a salon-style selection from Changing Chicago, a 1987 initiative that commissioned 33 hometown photographers to document the city. Their explorations of race and class couldn’t be more timely. By excavating the MoCP’s archives, Tichy renders them more relevant than ever before.



photograph

Jan Tichy: 1979:1 - 2012:21 at the Museum of Contemporary Photography



Still of Jan Tichy, *Polaroids (Warhol)*, 2012, video. Courtesy Museum of Contemporary Photography

It is the special paradox of an artwork-on-paper public collection that its holdings must sit in storage, out of view and mostly inaccessible, for long-term safekeeping. Light is the generative material of photography, but light exposure is a photographic print's slow death. At 33 years old, the [Museum of Contemporary Photography](#) is asking a lot of introspective questions, just as any ambitious and self-reflective 30-something might do. Specifically, how can it transform its identity, which is rooted in the dustbin of conventional museum practices, into a relevant, engaging public persona? In answer, the MoCP has commissioned multimedia artist Jan Tichy to pry through the museum's 11,000 collected works, its print study room, its programming, its staff's biases, its legacy and its future.



Still of Jan Tichy, *Changing Chicago*, 2012 video. Courtesy Museum of Contemporary Photography

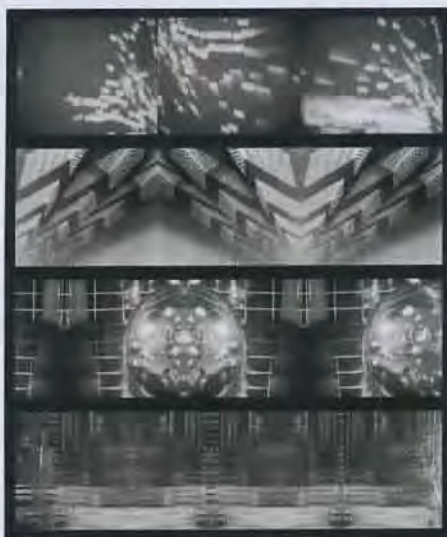
Institutions wishing to analyze the efficacy of their public access typically commission expensive consultant groups, who often return generic recommendations. To its credit, the MoCP entrusted Tichy to find the cracks, strengths, and redundancies in its galleries, collection, and website, for which he produced a museum-wide intervention (on view through December 23). His creative solutions are critical rather than practical. To provide access to the museum's 11,000 photos in storage, Tichy produced a video that's a 7.5-minute scream (*Collection*, 2012) through all 11,000 artworks, organized from lightest to darkest tones. The eye cannot keep up, nor can the video monitor, so that images blur and layer like shape-shifting ghosts.

A particularly successful intervention by Tichy takes place in the museum's educational print study room, where he has covered the walls with prints from the historic *Changing Chicago* series, a 1987 initiative in which 33 photographers documented Chicago life and society. On any given day in the study center, which is frequented by photo instructors and classes, lessons are now framed by more than 200 images of vernacular city scenes by classic Chicago photographers. Tichy added his own works, too: seven video portraits of contemporary Chicago street life that celebrate the pleasures of people watching.

The commissioning of Tichy for this museum-wide overhaul seems, at first, curious. Tichy, a Czech artist formerly of Tel Aviv, has lived and worked in Chicago for only five years; what should we learn about our own history from an outsider? But it turns out Tichy was the ideal interloper, for Chicago's photography scene, and the city's lasting international contributions have come primarily from non-natives. Aaron Siskind—whose iconic work Tichy manipulates in the show—moved from NYC to Chicago in 1951 and revolutionized the city's camera presence. The MoCP's own founder, Charles H. Traub, is from Louisville, Kentucky. Indeed, Chicago is an immigrant city and a diverse cultural hub—and, as Tichy shows us, its museums are open for everyone.

By Jason Foumberg
Fri, 11/09/2012

Artist Insights: Jan Tichý



Born in Prague, artist Jan Tichý lives and works in Chicago and teaches at the School of the Art Institute (SAIC). This fall, several impressive projects coincide at area art institutions throughout Chicago at the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Expo Chicago, the Art Institute of Chicago, and Richard Gray Gallery. CGN's Laura Miller met with Tichý to hear about all that's happening for the artist-educator this season.

LM: Tell me about working with the Museum of Contemporary Photography for the past year on a project involving their collection.

JT: Last year MoCP curator Karen Irvine asked me to consider new ways of interpreting their collection of more than 12,000 images and to create an exhibition that would explore it from a different perspective. MoCP was one of the first museums to upload digital images of their collection to their website as a way to connect with the public. I realized soon that the access and search tools are quite inappropriate for an interaction with this amazing digital archive. So, I considered ways to improve the access to the online collection and decided to create a think tank of Chicago MFA students (Columbia College, SAIC, UoC, UIC) that would bring updated perspectives on how to identify and develop strategies for better online interaction. We introduced tagging applications, web design strategies and interactive elements that will hopefully give better access to a greater community.

While coming to work at MoCP I realized that the museum itself is not really accessible from the street, despite its prominent Michigan Avenue location; many Chicagoans don't even know about it. So, I proposed to establish a digital gallery on the outside of the museum. Two large monitors will be installed on MoCP's exterior walls at the corner of Michigan and Harrison. The digital galleries will display exhibitions from the collection, curated specifically for that purpose by a wide range of curators from around the world. My exhibition there this fall will explore the collection using my own



Left:
Things To Come
(1933-2012),
video installation,
6 hours, 20 min,
Jan Tichý
& László
Moholy-Nagy.
Photo credit
Jan Tichý.

Right: *Cornstones*
Digital Galleries -
MoCP, curated
digital exhibitions
from the collection.
Photo credit
Jan Tichý.

time-based tools of video and projection and will hopefully expose some hidden jewels.

What else can we expect from you this fall?

At Expo Chicago I'm really excited for the U.S. premier of *Things To Come* (1936-2012), a three-channel video installation made from 80 seconds of never before exhibited film footage that László Moholy-Nagy created in 1936 in London. H.G. Wells commissioned Moholy-Nagy for five and half minutes of footage for his visionary sci-fi film *Things To Come* and used just above a minute, not even giving credits. I came across the only existing footage through his daughter Hattula Moholy-Nagy when working on an exhibition design for his show at Loyola University Museum of Art three years ago. It took me some time to realize the potential hidden in these film snippets; using Moholy-Nagy's analog techniques in digital media with the initial H.G. Wells criteria, I hope to bring new life to it.

I have older works in group-exhibitions this fall at the Museum of Contemporary Art and Richard Gray Gallery. For the Art Institute of Chicago's Ando Gallery, I'm working on a site specific installation to coincide with an exhibition of contemporary Japanese garments from SAIC's Fashion Resource Center. Outside of Chicago I'll be participating in this fall's Architecture Biennale in Venice in the Israeli Pavilion and working with No Longer Empty in NYC.

You've been involved in several large-scale collaborative projects with local college students, community members, and art institutions - 2011's powerful Project Cabrini Green, 2009's Lighting the Crown Hall at the IIT, now the MoCP project, among others. How do these collaborations evolve?

As an artist and educator I believe in a creative collaboration between faculty and students as one of the models of successful art education, a theory that Moholy-Nagy was practicing in Chicago 60 years ago. I also share the belief, formulated and practiced by curator and educator Mary Jane Jacobs, that in the contemporary art world, art schools offer a great platform to develop professional

art productions. *Project Cabrini Green* is a good example of how this model benefits students, the institution and the community as well as an artist and a commercial gallery. The project required huge amounts of time and involvement. Together with Efrat Appel we collaborated with 25 dedicated students and faculty from SAIC to develop and create all the different layers of the project and worked with over 100 teenagers from four after school programs in Cabrini Green to create the content. It wouldn't be possible without the active support of Richard Gray Gallery and the administration of SAIC. Including the MCA and CHA there were over 200 people involved in the project.

How did you make the transition to Chicago?

It was actually very easy, maybe because I moved from Prague to Jerusalem when I was 19. During my MFA studies at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Tel Aviv, I participated in a collaborative project in Helsinki initiated by SAIC. Eventually I was accepted to their Sculpture program. I finished my MFA at SAIC in 2009 and stayed to teach at the Department of Art and Technology Studies. I fell for Chicago from the beginning, and the city was kind to me. I had the extraordinary opportunity to create projects for a few signature buildings like Crown Hall, the Hancock, Spertus, Montgomery Ward, and Cabrini Green. There are more under way (Chicago Cultural Center in 2014.)

After living, working, and exhibiting around the world, how do you find Chicago for art?

The way Chicago is built - physically, socially and culturally - there's space and opportunities for many cultural activities, and plenty of people want to do things. I serve on advisory boards of ACRE and threewalls, non-profits that provide the local art community with accessible spaces and rich programming. These organizations, like many other independent art spaces, apartment and pop-up galleries, are the vital source of culture for the community and an important spawn of the next generation of cultural producers.

www.jantichy.com

Jan Tichy

GORDON GALLERY 2

4 Natan Hachacham Street

August 23–September 15

In March 2011 the last high-rise building of Cabrini-Green, a public housing development on Chicago's Near North Side, was demolished and 134 deserted apartments turned into rubble. In its prime, the complex had housed over 15,000 people. Over the years, however, gang violence, neglect, and poor conditions drove residents away. Days before the demolition began, Jan Tichy installed 134 flickering LED boxes in the empty spaces of the final standing building; during the monthlong process, these boxes blinked every day from 7 PM to 1 AM with unique patterns. The lights could have been read as SOS signals. In fact, their beat was determined by a conversion of human voices: local youth reading poems they had written about destruction and urban decay. The poems were penned during a series of community workshops Tichy organized with his partner, Efrat Appel. The poems, the nearly 700-hour-long video, the LED boxes, the workshops, and the intervention in the public space have all become part of Tichy's "Project Cabrini Green," 2011.

This exhibition marks the debut of the work in its full capacity in Tel Aviv, and the small spaces of Gordon Gallery are filled with voices of teenagers reading their poems. A computer allows visitors to choose which poem to hear. A different computer provides a visualization of the building's grid. Behind a black curtain, some surviving LED boxes are placed on the floor. Suddenly, one of them flickers and offers a latent message—an echo of destruction that takes hold of the space. The various threads of this project seem to connect to one another through this dying box: As "Cabrini Green" delves into questions regarding gentrification and social stratification, it also presents a surprising emergence of the past. The beaten box thus appears as what is on the verge of unavoidable downfall.

— Rotem Rozental



Jan Tichy, *Project Cabrini Green (feed)*, 2011, video, color, 700 hours. From "Project Cabrini Green," 2011.

JUN 11 2012

ART NEW ENGLAND

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Volume 33, Issue 4

Auerbach Library
WADSWORTH ATHENEUM
600 MAIN STREET
HARTFORD, CONN. 06109

REVIEWS: *Connecticut*

JAN TICHY/MATRIX 164

Wadsworth Atheneum • Hartford, CT • www.wadsworthatheneum.org • Through August 5, 2012

Facing towards the wall, the five nineteenth-century portrait busts that internationally exhibiting Jan Tichy (b. Prague, active Chicago) has arranged in his *Installation No. 14 (Austin)* are like a line of displaced aristocrats, apprehended at the border as they flee the revolution at their backs. In the darkened room they seemingly peer into the past, disdainful of us, the mere passersby.

Tichy is here referring to the institution of the Wadsworth itself as well as one of its most inventive twentieth-century directors, A. Everett ("Chick") Austin. One segment of *MATRIX 164* is a domestic illusion, where a video projection manufactures both a window and a history, framed by two actual eighteenth-century paintings of the Archangel Michael and a Venetian festival. There are fragile boundaries of place and time, with a latticed ceiling image that duplicates a real space elsewhere in the building, and a Mies van der Rohe chair that straddles being a seat and an exhibited object.

Another room contains a miniature dream city with a continuous narrative of light. It

expands from what might be a single illuminated memorial event to the traffic motion of night streets to Weegee flash photographing mafia corpses or spelunkers with headlamps in the caves of an abandoned Oz, then starship scanning beams playing across the base of the landscape. All this bright animation is cadenced by a theremin soundtrack that ends in a nearly unbearable buzz.

In the final space, there is a film noir prelude in which one wall that initially presents as a nighttime cityscape transforms into a wasteland that might be an unmarked battlefield, with power lines in the distance. On the opposite wall, the metamorphosis of a tide line along the shore yields only flickers of brightness at the wave crests. Both of these opposing programs at either end of the room alternate with doors of light sliding open and closed, like Barnett Newman's zips in motion. Those vertical patterns of division are countered within the gallery space by filaments stretched diagonally



Jan Tichy, *Installation No. 14 (Austin)*, 2012 (detail). Two HD video projections and objects from the collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum. Projection running time: 10 min. Photo: Allen Phillips/Wadsworth Atheneum.

from floor to ceiling that transmit the movies as beads of light along the transparent strands. On the two remaining walls, images of a carved Egyptian figure of Horus face off with a moth that is duplicating itself in a mirror. This is a bleak memory's biography.

—Stephen Vincent Kobasa

Jan Tichy: Matrix 164 At Wadsworth

Czech-American Artist Creates Multidimensional Video-Audio Installations

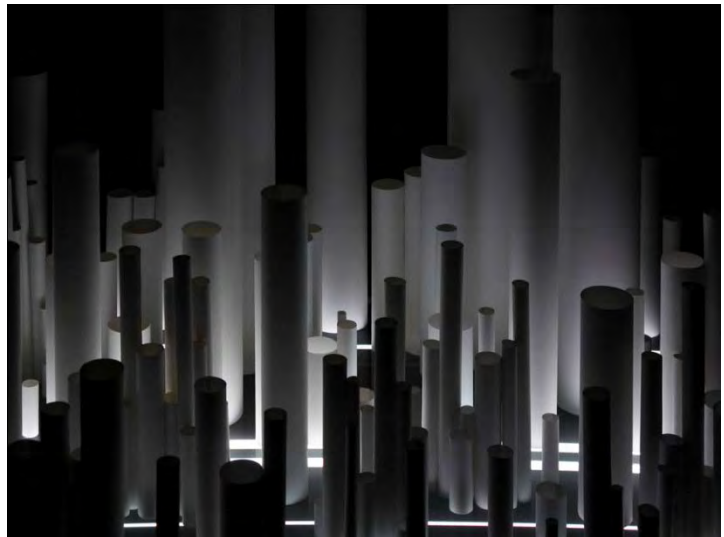
By SUSAN DUNNE, sdunne@courant.com

The Hartford Courant

9:46 AM EDT, April 18, 2012

Is "Installation No. 6 (Tubes)" a cityscape? It is an organ? It is just an abstract organism? Jan Tichy, the creator of the artwork, says it is any of those, all of those, none of those.

"The composition is open enough that a person can read it in different ways," Tichy says.



The art installation sits in a very dark room furnished with two benches. The work is composed of an old television, sitting screen upwards and playing a continuous 10-minute loop of static, like when old TVs had problems with horizontal hold. On top of the TV are a artistically arranged series of white tubes, varying in height and width. The shining white lights of the static shine upwards through the tube construction. All the while, magnified audio static crescendos, creates an otherworldly visual and aural impression.

Tichy is the newest artist in the Wadsworth Atheneum's MATRIX series. "Jan Tichy: Matrix 164" is made up of three installations. It will be up through Sunday, Aug. 5.

Tichy, a native of Prague who is based in Chicago, says he often appropriates images of urban landscapes into his work. "I use architecture to speak about history, society, politics in an abstract form," he says. "But I want to leave it open for interpretation. ... I want to explore the connection between light and sound."

He does the same in the next room, the exhibition's largest and most complex installation, and also the most site-specific. "Installation No. 14 (Austin)" is an homage to Arthur Everett "Chick" Austin, the Atheneum's director from 1927 to 1944.

For that installation, a projector casts an image of sunrise at Austin's home on Scarborough Street in Hartford. (The film was shot over three hours, but has been compressed to 10 minutes, on a loop.) That dark corner projection area is flanked by two classic paintings — "Feast of Santa Maria Della Salute," 1720, by Johan Richter, and "The Archangel Michael," 1700, by

Cristóbal Villalpando — and five classic marble busts, installed tightly together and with their faces to the wall. Across the room, on a platform, sits a Brno chair designed by Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe, which was used in the Austin era as office furniture and later was added to the museum's collections. Above the chair is a projected light design resembling the ceiling of the Avery Court.

Tichy says he put that installation in the first room that visitors enter for a reason. "You have to pass through this room three times. Eventually you will have to see it from all three angles," he says. "You walk through to get to this room and you see it from one angle. Then you go to the room on the other side and see it from another angle. Then you come in to see it and see it from this angle."

Tichy was inspired to make the film when he came to the Atheneum and discovered it was the country's oldest public art museum, and that Austin was a revered figure at the Wadsworth. "I'm interested in collections. What does it mean to make a collection? Who decides what? What is preserved for future generations, creating a history for them?" he says. "Being the oldest museum provides a full range of American museum practice, and Chick Austin was an interesting entry point."

The two paintings were acquired during the Austin era; at the time of its purchase, the Richter was believed to be the work of Luca Carlevarijs.

And as for the turned-away busts? "We rarely see them this way, from behind," Tichy says. "That's not something you're supposed to see."

The exhibit's final piece, "Installation No. 11," features two wall-sized screens, facing each other, running video on 10-minute loops. One shows the Judea desert. The other shows the Mediterranean sea. As the recognizable images fade from view, they are replaced by abstract images, shot through with lines projected through cords strung floor-to-ceiling. Like the marble busts, several photos of a falcon statue face toward the exhibit door, and one photo of a moth faces the falcons.

"All his work springs out of darkness," says Patricia Hickson, the museum's Emily Hall Tremaine Curator of Contemporary Art. "The moth is symbolic, a creature that lives in dark but is attracted to the light, but the light destroys it."

Tichy says his fascination with light-based installations was a gradual process. "I started with photography, looking at the world through a lens. At a certain point, I moved to video, staying at two dimensions but adding the dimension of time. Then sculptural elements started to emerge."

"JAN TICHY: MATRIX 164" will be at Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, 600 Main St. in Hartford, until Sunday, Aug. 5. Hours are Wednesday to Friday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Details: <http://www.wadsworthatheneum.org>.

The New York Times

Art in Review

‘Young Curators, New Ideas III’

By HOLLAND COTTER

Published: August 20, 2010

P.P.O.W., 511 West 25th Street, Room 301, Chelsea

Vagueness has been in vogue this summer, and many group shows have been in puzzler mode, with gassy themes, an abstract look and a hermetic affect. In some cases, like “The Evryali Score” at David Zwirner, the mode worked. In most it didn’t. The best you could hope for was an artist who stood out, as Patricia Esquivias did in the otherwise wan “Mass Ornament” at Gladstone.

P.P.O.W.’s “Young Curators, New Ideas III” is made up of six puzzler mini-shows, all installed in the gallery, all based on exhibition proposals submitted to the overseeing curator, Amani Olu. The proposals, posted on the gallery’s Web site (ppowgallery.com), are dense expositions of ideas that include the overworked (critiques of celebrity, originality, modernism), the rarely tackled (equine husbandry) and the academic-arcane (the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle in quantum mechanics). Too often, the proposals are more interesting to read than the shows are to look at.

In one exhibition, called “Personal/Public/Private” and conceived by Liza Buzytsky and Andrew Russeth, four artists, including Ms. Buzytsky, ostensibly restore personal content to certain discredited modernist forms like painting. But the show is indistinguishable from the many other riffs on formalism that have represented the summer’s other group exhibition trend.

In “Quantum Limbo,” the curator Stamatina Gregory presents the work of two artists, Julia Oldham (collaborating with Eric Corwin and Maxime Clusel) and Brian Clifton. Ms. Oldham and Mr. Clifton refer to the uncertainty principle in physics in their work — video in her case, painting in his — but neither clarifies or dramatizes a difficult subject. Instead, they essentially give us a proposal with visual footnotes, the equivalent of mystifying classroom demonstrations.

Sort of that way too is Bryan Graf’s dissection of landscape photography in the solo show of his work organized by Kate Greenberg and Hilary Schaffner. But he lets you follow his ideas being considered from piece to piece so you can feel included in the process. That sense of inclusion is still more immediate in an installation by Jan Tichy. (Gabriella Hiatt is the curator.) Here, through a play of abstract video projections, the white-painted space you’re standing in very slowly — one inch at a time, it seems — goes very dark. The piece hints at a link between spreading darkness and an oil spill, though less specific readings offer themselves too.

This doesn’t seem to be true of a third solo show, presented by the curator Erin Dziedzic and consisting of a photographic installation by Craig Drennen. The installation is based on a well-known 1986 piece called “Talent” by David Robbins, which consisted of glamorous studio headshots of several artists — Jeff Koons, Cindy Sherman, Jenny Holzer and so on — who were becoming stars at the time. Mr. Drennen has applied disfiguring glops of paint to prints of the portraits, as if to undercut the notion of fame, which, of course, they were meant to send up. There are other things going on — the proposal mentions Mr. Drennen’s immersion in Shakespeare — but it’s hard to know what.

I’m inclined to say the same of work chosen by the curator James Shaeffer: drawings, exhibited as digital prints, by Victor Vaughn, that deal with a bond between horse and man, and photographs of nude extraterrestrials by the intriguing artist-team called AIDS-3D (Daniel Keller and Nik Kosmas). What there’s no mistaking, though, is that the work of both Mr. Vaughn and AIDS-3D can be downloaded free from the Internet, so that what’s on the gallery wall is no better (or worse) than what I pull from my printer.

The subject of what is gained and lost in art in the age of mechanical reproduction is ancient by now. But the question of what art’s future might be on the accessible, untamable Internet is still a bit new. And cyberspace remains, so far, a curator-challenging frontier. **HOLLAND COTTER**

THE ART NEWSPAPER

UMBERTO ALLEMANDI & CO. PUBLISHING

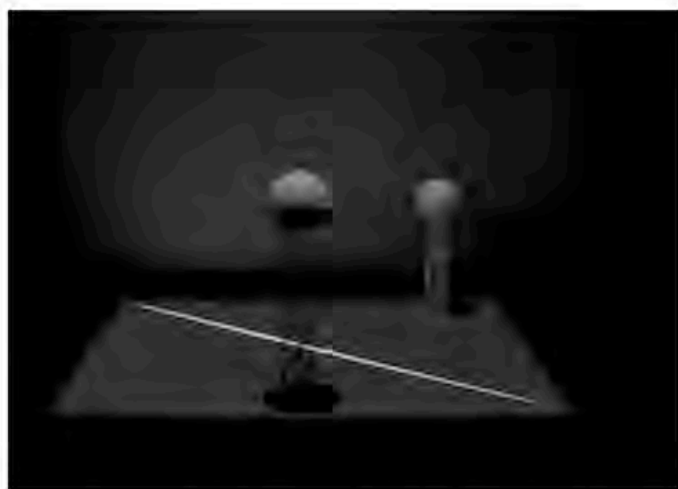
LONDON NEW YORK TURIN VENICE MILAN ROME

ART BASEL DAILY EDITION 18-20 JUNE 2010

Art market report

It's about more than Matisse

Blue-chip dealers have been using Basel as an opportunity to build the potential stars of the future



Chicago's Richard Gray gallery is giving Czech artist Jan Tichý a platform by presenting his 2008 architecturally inspired *Installation No. 4 (Towers)* at Art Unlimited, priced \$25,000

“You want to give the artists a platform”

While millions of euros-worth of work by the world's most famous artists such as Picasso, Miró and Matisse were changing hands in

Basel this week, there are also lesser-known

names on show with several dealers using the fair to launch their latest signings.

New York and Brussels-based dealer Barbara Gladstone (A1) is devoting prime positions on her stand to the latest artist to join her roster: Cecilia Edefalk, 56, who is well known in her native Sweden, but much less so elsewhere. The dealer is showing the works in advance of Edefalk's debut exhibition with the gallery in New York this September. “There is such a high quality audience here,” said Gladstone. “We've got a lot of advance interest thanks to Art Basel.” The gallery sold out of her works, priced at \$10,000 each.

Using a similar strategy, Chicago's Richard Gray gallery (E7) presented Czech artist Jan Tichý's 2008 architecturally inspired video installation at Art Unlimited. The artist joined the gallery last year. The piece, *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*, an edition of five, is priced at \$25,000. The gallery sold two sets, with a third on reserve to an unnamed museum. “Does this strategy make financial sense? No,” said Paul Gray, whose gallery is best known for selling million-dollar modern and postwar works of art. “But it's not all about that. You want to give them a platform.”

His blue-chip sales made so far at the fair, including a 1947 grey-hued Picasso for around \$4m and a small bronze Giacometti bust for over \$2m, afford the gallery the opportunity to expose Tichý's work to a potential audience of 60,000.

The contemporary galleries are employing similar tactics. London-based Frith Street is showing an installation by the Raqs Media Collective, a group of Indian multimedia artists. “We made quite a commitment by bringing such a large piece, but we really wanted to introduce the artists,” said Charlotte Schepke. The gamble paid off—the work, *The Knots that Bind are the Knots*, 2010, sold to the insurance company Hiscox's collection for €45,000.

Casey Kaplan (N19) sold work by three new artists, including a sculpture by Marlo Pascual, *Untitled*, 2010, of actress Lucille Ball impaled on a coat-rack, which was the focal point of the stand. “We're doing a solo show of Pascual's work at Frieze so it was really important to have a striking work out front,” said Kaplan. The piece sold for \$18,000 to a trustee of the Dallas Museum of Art.

Los Angeles dealer Patrick Painter (P17) debuted sculptor Anthony James at the fair, whom the gallery will feature in an autumn show. “We wanted to generate some early buzz and to place some work in Europe,” said Michael Briggs of the gallery. James' *Birch*, 2010, a large installation sold for \$125,000 to a German collector while a smaller piece, *Birch Wall*, 2010, sold for \$75,000 to a Swiss private collection.

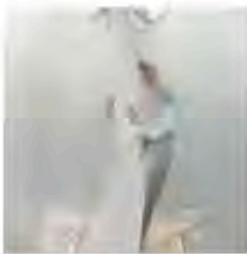
But Art Basel's reputation for being the place that dealers bring works by the best, from modern masters such as Pollock and de Kooning to contemporary artists including Damien Hirst and the late Louise Bourgeois, remains unchanged, and overall the mood yesterday was positive. “It feels healthy, there is geographic and aesthetic diversity: dealers are making a big effort,” said Richard Armstrong, the director of the Guggenheim Museum, New York.

There have been strong sales across the board, although buyers continue to be more selective than in the boom. “The market's much better,” said Andrew Richards, director of New York's Marian Goodman Gallery (B13). “But it's never going to go back to where it was—that was a freak moment in time.” Pace Gallery (B20) also reported sales including Sterling Ruby's eye-catching, large-scale painting *SP110*, 2010, for \$80,000. “The volume of sales has been very high,” said gallery director James Lindon, although works above \$2.5m are taking longer to sell.

There were fewer Americans, perhaps because the fair does not overlap with the Venice Biennale this year. But those who did make the trip were caught up in the atmosphere. New York collectors Doreen and Gilbert Bassin came to the fair intending not to buy, but wound up with works by South African artist Mikhael Subotzky and the late US artist Dash Snow. “The gallerists are happy when they are selling, and they are selling,” said Doreen Bassin.

Despite the troubled euro, collectors from the continent were out in force. Dealers offering non-Western art also found demand. Shanghart (K17) sold Zeng Fanzhi's large, turbulent landscape for over \$1m to a European collector. “Last year we wouldn't have dared to bring such big, expensive work,” said Shanghart's Lorenz Helbling.

Lindsay Pollock
Charlotte Burns



Sergio Prego
Ikurriña Quarter
2010
Art Unlimited
Courtesy Galeria Soledad
Lorenzo, Madrid
Photo by Gerrit Gohlke



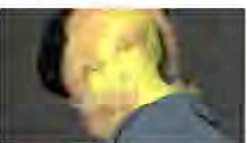
Sergio Prego
Ikurriña Quarter
2010
Art Unlimited
Courtesy Galeria Soledad
Lorenzo, Madrid
Photo by Gerrit Gohlke



Michael Beutler
Pipeline Field
2008
Art Unlimited
Art 41 Basel
Courtesy of Galerie Christian
Nagel, Cologne, Galerie Barbel
Grasslin, Frankfurt am Main, and
Pierre Bismuth, Team Gallery,
New York
Photo by Gerrit Gohlke



Dan Flavin
*Three sets of tangent arcs in
daylight and cool white (to Jenny
and Ira Licht)*
1969
Art Unlimited
Art 41 Basel
Courtesy of David Zwirner, New
York
Photo by Gerrit Gohlke



Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys
video still
Dépendance, Brussels
Art Unlimited
Art 41 Basel

UNLIMITED, WITHIN LIMITS

by Gerrit Gohlke

Perhaps the time has come for a competition at Art Basel. Critics, collectors, art dealers and the public are invited to come up with a new title for the fair's prestigious "Art Unlimited" section. As is well known to anyone who has visited the fair, "Art Unlimited" features massive installations that can reach the ceiling, or dedicated video chambers that resemble small movie theaters, work often made by our most famous artists, or better, by young artists of promise.

Even Basel veterans still marvel at the vast hall, its seemingly endless architecture, divided by noble white cubes. Yet in 2010, "unlimited" seems to mean "not limited to the grandiose." Though still an "Olympic freestyle," much of material seems cheap -- PVC, cardboard -- and so much of it is on video, and familiar, having already been seen elsewhere, in other museums or at other biennials. For 2010, "Art Unlimited" offers an invitation to a concentrated enjoyment, where grand works invoke modesty and humility.

For instance, **Sergio Prego's** *Ikurriña Quarter* is an immense tube of milky plastic, big enough to walk through, that winds through the space, doubling back around a fairground column. At its end it is formed into what looks like a vacuum package. This tube contains nothing -- except maybe invisible politics. People familiar with the Iberian Peninsula see in the sculpture part of the Basque flag. Prego himself speaks of an undefined free space with political subtext. Yet one gets the impression that the sculpture, despite its size, is a somewhat useful utensil and therefore fits right in at Art Unlimited.

Michael Beutler's *Pipeline Field* uses a pile of tubes the artist caught sight of at the harbor in Rotterdam, and is a mixture of junkyard, sculpture study and atelier. The material with which the *Field* was made still stands around, like abandoned looms or work benches between shining surfaces of the turned tube elements. No pipeline is being built. No materials of Russian oil projects are left to rot.

Here the pathos of the minimalistic large sculpture is translated back into the succinct language of urban room and industrial wasteland. The public likes it. The segments don't even have sharp edges. The artwork does not intrude. The pants legs are safe.

And so Art Unlimited becomes a theoretical game about form and counter-form, about gestures and the avoidance of same, about the adequacy of utilized materials. It's about the economy of language, and sometimes about the hidden, controversial meaning.

While all the world is entranced with **Dan Flavin's** 1969 *three sets of tangent arcs in daylight and cool white (to Jenny and Ira Licht)*, nearby glows quietly a kind of corrugated black wall by Andrew Dadson. His *Black Painted Light* consists of painted UV-tubes, where the light only peeks through here and there in unpainted spots. The painting is about 12 feet wide and tries to swallow all ambient energy. Flavin, the most boring of the Light and Space Minimalists, tries to spread it out wide and geometrically in the room.

In the entry hall, **Yayoi Kusama** invites us into a small, cute wonder-chamber titled *Aftermath of Obliteration of Eternity* -- the latest version of her dark, mirrored rooms lit by small colored lanterns, where the viewer stands on a kind of runway in the middle of a shallow square pool seemingly suspended in a cosmos of luminous spots, a universe of simple light sources. Now over 80, Kusama shows no unnecessary pathos in her installations. The intimacy of the design removes all thoughts of kitsch. Things are as they are and don't pretend to be anything else.

This goes for all works that really want to make a statement. This year only a dozen or so are really impressive. However, these show what real potential there is in art when the guidelines are strictly adhered to.

With works by David Maljkovic, Yuko Shirashi, Jan Tichy, **Harun Farocki** and the astounding Belgian duo Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys, one is forced to open one's eyes to really look, and to feel astonishment and respect for the real and unreal.

David Maljkovic helps one understand how among these visions of utopia a human being becomes a traveler in his own mind and memory. *Out of Projection* should be an antidote to TV. Accompanied by soundtrack that stays in the background, elderly couples stand, sit, wait, look, wander through a strange world of forest paths, test roads, asphalt, concrete and nature. But with Maljkovic they are not in no-man's-land, but on the worksite of their former employer, Peugeot.

Visions of future car models are the only prerequisites in a film where faces, biographical traces and the physical closeness of the couples become the opposite of technology.

On a smaller screen the employees are questioned, yet their voices cannot be heard. Maljkovic has made a small revolutionary theater, where archetypal movements prevail over the industrialized work environment and their fantasies. Visitors should be offered something to drink or a piece of cake so that they will sit down and really enjoy the 18 minutes of this artwork.

Secret projects such as these offer enough after just a few minutes. **Jan Tichy** created an astronomic observatory, or rather a planetarium. Within a nine-minute period paper balls seem to turn into stars, though it is just a matter of form and light. Prague, the birthplace of Tichy, who now lives in Chicago, was once the center for this kind of study of art and science. Here in Basel, amid all the hustle and bustle, this work tries to teach people to really open their eyes and pay attention.

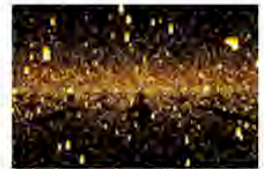
Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys have pushed this particular project to the utmost. They show a film full of awful-looking dolls, like figures created for an amateur puppet show. Tasteless costumes and embarrassing close-ups of ugly decor are set up as if to torture the public. No relief can be found save for the language, which word for word creates a story, although without much point, solution or sense. Yet, it serves us as framework, guide and signal. Monotonous, grandfatherly anecdotes are enriched with stereotypical details. Still, one forgets the bad jokes that make no sense, because these automated voices become a hypnotic tool against our addition to the spectacle and its effects.

These figures have no biographies, still they are old, ancient. We think of them as relics. They speak of an era in which art could define its own time and contents. Art Basel does have an assortment of defiant works, even though they are hidden. Simple, it is possible. This section has something to offer, not only politically, but also in support of the entire branch. Awareness to set limits will also be beneficial for Basel.

The fair management will accept suggestions for a new title for Art Unlimited until the end of the month.

Translated from the German by Christa Blissett.

GERRIT GOHLKE is executive director of Artnet.de.



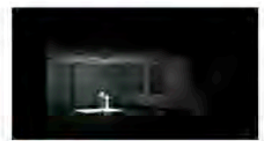
Yayoi Kusama
*Aftermath of Obliteration of
Eternity*
2009
Gagosian Gallery



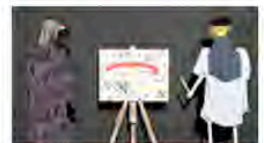
David Maljkovic
Out of Projection (still)
2009
Metro Pictures



David Maljkovic
Out of Projection (still)
2009
Sprüth Magers Berlin London



Jan Tichy
Installation No. 4 (Towers)
2008
Richard Gray Gallery



Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys
video still
Dépendance, Brussels
Art Unlimited
Art 41 Basel

Night Watchman

JAMES TRAINOR ON JAN TICHY



Jan Tichy, *Dimona*, 2006, paper, posters, text, video. Installation view, Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, 2009.

DIMONA: IT IS A BEAUTIFUL NAME for something that long refused to exist. Built secretly in Israel's Negev Desert in 1956, the Dimona nuclear facility was initially the stuff of rumor. Even US intelligence agencies didn't uncover its purpose until the 1960s, and for decades it was absent from any publicly available photographs or maps. To this day, the Israeli government will neither confirm nor deny that it is an atomic-weapons factory, preferring an official policy of "nuclear ambiguity." It was this paradoxical pinpoint uncertainty, the structure's quantum mechanical status of something simultaneously there and not there, that led Czech-born Israeli artist Jan Tichy to scour the Internet and other sources for images of the non-site in order to construct a paper model of it. This he placed in his installation *Dimona*, 2006, a pitch-black room with a narrow beam of light slowly passing over the model like a scanner, revealing one section at a time but never allowing a view of the whole.

Indeed, Tichy's entire project rests on this oscillation between site and non-site, known and unknown, seen and unseen. Growing up in cold-war Prague, Tichy learned the lesson of the proxy: He made paper models of skyscrapers, castles, even hot-air balloons, the cut-fold-and-paste kits of monuments and places reconstituting things of which he could have no direct

Cities never remain pristine, and Tichy revels in their accumulated residues and opacities.

experience himself. But he also mastered another lesson: how to lead a double life. The son of a man who was a nuclear physicist by day and an opponent of the Communist regime by night, Tichy learned to develop a public face and a private one, as part of a family of insiders that secretly remained moral and political outsiders. With this came the early realization that things are rarely as they seem, that apparently concrete structures can be paper-thin, as flimsy as any Potemkin village (or the Czech regime, which crumpled and dissolved without a shot during the Velvet Revolution).

When he immigrated to Tel Aviv in the mid-'90s (having discovered only in his late teens that he was Jewish), then studied at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, Tichy took this sense of double identity with him. The artist began engaging an array of sites that, like Dimona, have an ambiguous existence. His brooding, shadowy sculpture and light installations model such entities as Facility 1391, a secret high-security prison dubbed the Israeli Guantánamo, and the Dahaniya/Yasser Arafat International Airport in Gaza, whose terminal, control tower, and runways have been repeatedly bombed, demolished, and rebuilt in a Sisyphean cycle of erasure and reconstitution. But unlike a Thomas Demand or a James Casebere, Tichy avoids the polemical charge of specific sites (and the narrow political readings this might invite) in favor of fostering a pervasive sense of unease, a twilight perception of hazy spaces and realms.

Nor coincidentally, then, Tichy is attracted to the nocturnal—to what it conceals and perhaps divulges. Working in the studio until the wee hours, he got to know Tel Aviv by wandering home through its sleeping streets, his senses becoming attuned to its nighttime textures and narratives. He also began to notice that the airspace above the dormant Israeli metropolis was alive with bats. What began as a hobby became an amateur chiropterological study. Over a period of years, the artist photographed and catalogued the nightly acrobatics of Tel Aviv's hidden inhabitants. Like the bats themselves, Tichy was fairly blind, shooting into the dark sky and guessing at the trajectories of his quarry, never sure of capture until an image—floodlit and unearthly—resolved itself. But perhaps the most remarkable sight to appear in *Bats*, 2002–2007, presented as a series of eighty slides, is that of the creatures bombing the newly restored Bauhaus quarter of the city with a relentless spattering of guano. They ignominiously stain the brilliant

stucco walls of the White City—as the modernist core of Tel Aviv is called—the largest and densest concentration of Bauhaus-style architecture in the world, built when German-Jewish architects fled to the city in the 1930s and began to reimagine it in idealistic, Zionist-utopian terms. Tichy's *Bats* is a paean to the somewhat tarnished aspirations of that ideal dream metropolis, an ode to its inverse echo—the darkness that engulfs and undergirds even the most pristine cities.

As exiles go, of course, the Bauhaus brain drain was also a windfall for the US. While Harvard got Walter Gropius, Chicago got László Moholy-Nagy and Mies van der Rohe—bitter rivals, the former founding the Institute of Design and the latter helming the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). Three years ago, Tichy left Tel Aviv to teach at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and his recent work has plunged into the conflicted legacies of modernist space that pervade his gritty new adoptive city: first with four installations at the Art Institute's Sullivan Galleries in the former Carson Pirie Scott department-store building, as part of the group show "Learning Modern" in September 2009, and one month later in a miniretrospective mounted by the Richard Gray Gallery on the gutted twenty-fourth floor of the iconic John Hancock Center.

For *Delineations*, 2009, in the Sullivan Galleries, Tichy, in collaboration with Helen Maria Nugent, built four room-size boxes. Like souped-up versions of El Lissitzky's radical exhibition displays of the 1920s, each of these spaces was activated by a different set of animated light projections. In one dark chamber, dots became lines, lines broadened into planes, and flat planes became complex folds as the beams of light were



From top: Jan Tichy, *Bats*, 2002–2007, one of eighty 35-mm slides from a two-channel slide projection, dimensions variable. Jan Tichy in collaboration with Helen Maria Nugent, *Delineations* (detail), 2009, five-channel video projection, acrylic screens, dimensions variable.

refracted into magenta parallelograms by transparent panes of Plexiglas (a material nod to Moholy-Nagy, Tichy's hero in the local clash of modernist titans). In another room, animations slowly cycled through series of oscillating ledger-book grids and gradually corrupted rectilinear patterns—deceptively simple abstractions that suggested a continuum of architectural reference points, from the finicky proportions of Adolf Loos, to Miesian steel skeletons, to soul-crushing public housing, to drab multistory parking garages. At the same time, the work's site in Louis Sullivan's famous Scott building marks the intersection of State and Madison streets—the 0,0 point for Chicago's gridiron plan, the great axis and grand meridian of the American heartland. Here, at this singular point, the grid and the box converge: As Tichy recently remarked, "The Scott department store was a giant box for selling more boxes," and these industrially standardized parameters of structure and container determined the scale of the commodities held within.

Delineations seems to restage these strictures of industrial production and the utopian projections that haunt them.

But it was in his acerie high above the streets, in the John Hancock Center, that Tichy seemed to have at last come home. Given the entire eerily vacant floor to work with (an imploding economy and a glut of office space making pop-up space possible), the artist blacked out all the windows, submerging the hastily stripped offices in a perpetual stygian night. If Warhol let the nighttime light of the Empire State Building determine the median exposure level in his epic *Empire* (1964)—beginning with the blinding glare of the setting sun and ending in complete darkness—in Tichy's high-rise netherworld, blackness became the baseline. Unmoored from day or night and the wintry workaday world far below, the passage of time was measured only in the circadian rhythms of each installation.

Installation No. 4 (Towers), 2008, offered a new twist on the term "black site." Set at the far end of a large but nearly pitch-black expanse of office space, with no sound but the ambient thrum of the building and its

strained creaking in the January gusts, two scale models of towers stood like sentinels. They could have been reconstructions of anything—microwave beacons, water towers, oil rigs—but their vaguely familiar structural typology seemed without discernible purpose. (Why were there two? Why was one smaller than the other?) This mise-en-scène gradually revealed itself within the surrounding gloom. An animated digital projection first defined a band of light between the two towers, then grew and brightened to describe a rectangular field. Initially bathed in this harsh white light, as if being clinically scrutinized from some fixed point in the sky, this unnatural and fleeting dawn cycled down into a cold lunar dusk. The gloaming quickly gave way to a still darker disk of shadow, cast by neither tower but by some larger unseen object, which slowly bled outward like an oil spill, engulfing the towers and plunging the scene back into eclipse. Indeed, one observer, an Iraqi native, insisted that these were the unforgiving extremes of light and dark-

ness of the Mesopotamian desert; in any case, one need only recall Colin Powell's UN Security Council presentation of evidentiary satellite imagery—depicting either a weather-balloon facility or a WMD laboratory in Iraq—to realize that seeing and knowing are two very distinct things.

Installation No. 8 (Hancock), 2009, was the counterweight to *Towers*, a digital light projection commissioned for the site that turned a segment of the Hancock's signature steel X cross-bracings—awkward, massive diagonal beams—into something ethereal, almost vertigo-inducing. In a small office, a triangle of light began to emerge in the corner behind a load-bearing diagonal that ran through the space from floor to ceiling. This expanding geometric plane suggested both recessional space and a sudden illuminated rupture in the skyscraper's skin, simultaneously articulating the steel beam itself as a powerful sculptural element. A precise scrim of bright light then began to rise along the bracing column, making it appear to levitate and detach itself from the titanic masses it bore. The effect made possible, even somehow inevitable, a sleight-of-hand congruence between the Light and Space perceptual conundrums of James Turrell and the heavyweight earthbound geometries of Tony Smith.

Chicago, like Tel Aviv, was also once called the White City—a moniker it earned with the construction of the lustrous site of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, six hundred acres of plaster of paris that imagined this midwestern metropolis as a City Beautiful rising from the ashes of the Chicago Fire of 1871. Cities never remain pristine, though, and Tichy revels in their accumulated residues and opacities. Last summer, in the collective pedagogical spirit of Moholy-Nagy, Tichy collaborated with his students to turn Mies's iconic Crown Hall at IIT into a giant steel and glass light box, projecting animations and films onto the glass from within. For a single night they succeeded in marrying the two adversaries in the sanctuary of Mies's former stronghold, invoking the shadows—the exiled aspirations, the hidden narratives, the literal obliterations—that modernist visions had been built on. It was a little joke, embedded in a gesture of creative reconciliation—one of many ironies that arise when you swap one penumbral city for another. □

JAMES TRAINOR IS A WRITER, EDITOR, AND TEACHER LIVING IN NEW YORK.

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CALENDAR GALLERIES ART ARTISTS COMMUNITY

An Education

by Robyn Farrell Roulo

Moholy: An Education of the Senses

Loyola University Museum of Art
820 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611
February 11, 2010 - May 9, 2010



"Moholy: An Education of the Senses", focuses on the art and ideas of the celebrated modernist and Chicago transplant László Moholy-Nagy (American, b. Austria-Hungary, 1895–1946). Comprised of a range of media, the exhibition provides a view into the galvanizing thoughts and innovative practice of the Bauhaus artist, highlighting his influence on modern art and Chicago.

A quote from the artist at the start of the exhibition, aptly heralds, "Thanks to the photographer humanity has acquired the power of perceiving its surroundings, and its very existence with new eyes." Graceful curation and avant-garde exhibition design transforms the galleries of Loyola University Museum of Art (LUMA) into the epicenter of Moholy-Nagy's exploration of art, science and creative expression. Experimental photographs, films, prints, drawings, paintings, writings and books on design all provide the framework to perceive the collective time capsule with "new eyes."



Established in 1919, the Bauhaus school in Germany was a hotbed for ideas, revolutionary curriculum and home to some of the most inventive minds in field of art and design. Under the vision and direction of architect Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus school produced more than an innovative model for education. The marriage of art, craft and technology produced a prolific offspring of pivotal figures that shaped the landscape of art and design in the 20th Century.

Responding to pressure from the Nazis in 1933, the school was forced to close its doors, introducing the movement and its luminaries to the rest of the world as they eventually emigrated away from Germany. Gropius, Josef Albers, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and László Moholy-Nagy settled in the United States, bringing Bauhaus ideals to American institutions. Moholy-Nagy's career as an educator in Chicago began with an invitation to direct the New Bauhaus-American School of Design (1937-1938), which lasted only one year. The artist then decided to open The School of Design in 1939, later re-organized as the Institute of Design (1944), and now part of the [Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago](#).

It was during the years in Chicago that the Moholy-Nagy was able to found a community dedicated to creating a better society through sensory experimentation and creative expression. He was a painter, photographer, typographer, sculptor, designer, writer and filmmaker. After visiting LUMA, it seems that the artist's most important role was that of an innovator. His call to utilize new technology and engage the senses in search of new perception is a central theme of the exhibition. The collaboration of curator Carol Ehlers with exhibition designers SAIC Professor of Architecture Helen Marie Nugent and artist Jan Tichy produces a platform for Moholy's pedagogy to engage Chicago's audience. Each gallery presents a new experience with light, sound, space and vision. Loosely organized in chronological order, Galleries 1-5 play host to an "education of the senses."

Upon entrance to the exhibition, Moholy-Nagy's most recognizable media is on view. Early experimental films and photographs illustrate the artist's objective to reconfigure one's perception of the world in order to achieve social change. Tear away pads of didactic text are available at the viewer's disposal. In Gallery 1, the text explains the importance of recognizing the photographs and films as a "visual experience," not a linear narrative. Architecture, figures and inanimate objects are obscured and abstracted, as the artist strove to alter the viewers' perception with experiments in exposure, cropping, shadow and light.

Gallery 2 highlights Moholy's dabbling with lightplay, displaying photograms, works on paper and a multimedia video installation. Most notable is *Ein Lichtspiel Schwarz weiss grau* (*A Lightplay black white gray*), 1930, a black and white film projected onto a paper screen that winds throughout the center of the space. Nugent and Tichy have built an environment that compliments the surrounding artwork. The articulation between space and light is evident with the motion of the projection, surrounded by static images on the walls. Gallery 3 is aptly titled "Constructing a New World," as it features a grouping of mixed media, highlighting Moholy-Nagy's work with space, forms and creativity within a larger collective. *Konstruktionen: Kestnermappe 6* (*Construction: Kestner Portfolio 6*), 1923 is a group of geometric lithographs that demonstrate the artist's work with Constructivism.

Activated every half hour for only two minutes and a half, is *Light Prop for an Electric Stage* (*Light Space Modulator*). First conceived by Moholy-Nagy in 1922 and completed in 1930, the impressive sculpture commands both attention and space in Gallery 4. The modulator produces an all encompassing atmosphere of sound, movement and form. *Light Prop* is comprised of multiple mechanical parts that create a play of light and shadow, what the artist referred to as "total theater." The presentation of the re-constructed work (2006) is the first exhibition of the modulator in Chicago since the artist's lifetime.

The final gallery, Gallery 5, represents a culmination of Moholy-Nagy's theory and practice. Film, photomontage, paintings, drawings and color slide projections form a finale of expression. Sound and color collide in elegant fashion. Two-dimensional drawings and a copy of Moholy-Nagy's book, *Vision in Motion* (1947), are stagnant in contrast to the swiftly cut images from the student film, *Do Not Disturb* (1945) and erratic lines and bursts of color radiating from the slide projection, *Untitled (Color Light Show)*, 1937-1946.

László Moholy-Nagy was one of the most prolific and versatile artists of the 20th Century. His contributions laid the groundwork for modern photography, art and design, and his ideas and institutions continue to influence artists today. In 2009, Institute of Design alumnus Barbara Crane received much deserved attention in the survey *"Challenging Vision"* at the Chicago Cultural Center (October 2009-January 2010), which I reviewed on *ArtSlant*. In March, *ArtSlant*: Chicago Editor Abraham Ritchie spoke with one of the exhibition's designers, artist Jan Tichy, exploring the influence and ideas of Moholy-Nagy with Tichy's work and recent exhibitions, *"Installations"* at Richard Gray Gallery (October 2009) and *"Ground Level Projects"* at the Spertus Institute (through June 27, 2010). Currently on view at Stephen Daiter Gallery is the exhibition, *"Passing the Torch: Students of Callahan and Siskind,"* a celebration of work from students of the master photographers from Chicago's Institute of Design. There is less than a week left to view "Moholy: An Education of the Senses," so make your way over to LUMA, located at 820 North Michigan Avenue.

--Robyn Farrell Roulo

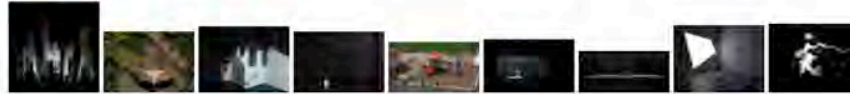


(Image credits, from top: László Moholy-Nagy © Courtesy of Loyola University Museum of Art; László Moholy-Nagy, *Untitled (Ellen Frank)*, 1929, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, NY, © 2009 Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn. László Moholy-Nagy, *Spring, Berlin*, 1928, Gelatin silver print, Courtesy of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, NY, © 2009 Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York/ VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn)

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'rak'rüm (noun);
the back room of an art gallery
where artists and art lovers hang

Jan Tichy



Jan Tichy, *Dimona*,
2006. , Digital video projection, 250g paper objects, stack of
approx. 4,000 A1 posters, 3x3L. Running time: 8 minutes.
© Courtesy of the artist and Richard Gray Gallery.



The Slant on Jan Tichy

Chicago, IL, March 2010-- Jan Tichy's installations and artworks are strongly formal but can also carry a social message, as hidden objects are revealed from the darkness to be abstract forms or constructions of more significance. Connections emerge from the different media that Tichy employs, presenting ongoing investigations into social conditions and politics, as well as being aesthetic investigations in themselves.

Tichy's practice has expanded to include exhibition design, designing "Moholy: An Education of the Senses," on view in Chicago at the Loyola Museum of Art, which starts our conversation below. Tichy's work itself is also on view currently in Chicago in the "Ground Level Projects," at the Spertus Institute, and in Portland at the Portland Art Museum's exhibition "Disquieted."

Abraham Ritchie: I wanted to start with the Lázló Moholy-Nagy exhibition, that you were the exhibition designer for. As I was viewing the exhibition, it struck me that there are some really interesting similarities between Moholy-Nagy's practice and yours, particularly [seen in Moholy-Nagy's] Light Prop that spins and bounces light off of the walls. Do you take interest in his practice? I know in your interview with Kathryn Hixson you did mention him briefly at the end of it, so could I hear more about him?

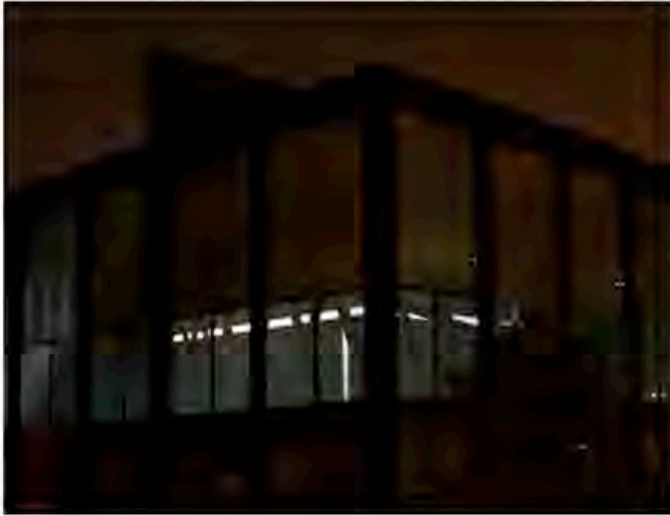
Jan Tichy: Moholy-Nagy, I first knew about him a long time ago. When I was teaching the History of Photography [class] in Israel he was part of the syllabus, but basically, you know, as a part of the photography timeline. With the photograms, he's somewhere near Man Ray.

When I came to Chicago, I rediscovered him as an artist and as an educator. I found him through his writings on sound; he was basically the first DJ, in 1921. He was writing in Berlin about using the gramophone as a tool of producing sound, rather than reproducing already made music. That's in the sense of taking the vinyl, scratch it, play it, scratch it again, listen to it. This was really interesting to me while I was thinking about the relationship between image and sound.

There are a couple of things that I would feel that [Moholy-Nagy and I] share. Most of my current practice is sculptural and installation, but I come from photography and that's where I bring the light from. I think Moholy's light is from photography as well, the photographs, photograms, films, sculptures, designs, and so on.

I rediscovered Moholy in Chicago and I started to read his educational writings and for myself as a teacher-artist I found his writing, as well as his art, very relevant to what I am doing and to how I see art education. In the Richard Gray show there was a small piece called *100RAW* [seen at right, all image credits at bottom]. It was a video of images [accompanied by] sounds of their own image files that were translated into sound. It was kind of a reaction to Moholy's writing on sound, it was almost an homage.





Last year in the summer, I was conducting a workshop with international MFA students at the IIT campus as part of the “Bauhaus Labs” projects that Mary Jane Jacobs and Justine Jentes put together here in Chicago. Again, I was using his teaching methods and looking at his ideas about light and architecture. We were doing this project in Crown Hall, the Mies van der Rohe building [installation view seen at left]. There’s an interesting connection between Moholy and Mies, these two guys who, basically, came from the same place, to the same place, at the same times, for the same reasons, but were so different. Their arrival in Chicago changed the landscape here-- the art and the architecture. They were such different personalities, and they never talked, they were basically ignoring each other. So it was interesting to bring Moholy’s ideas into this Mies temple.

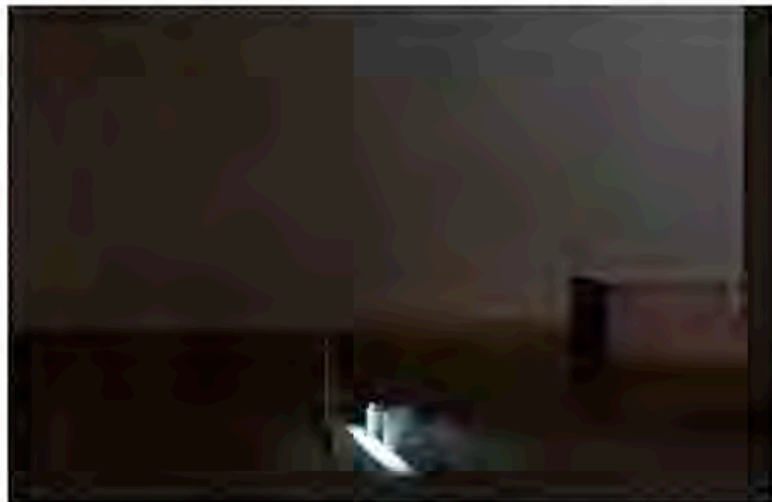
[...]

AR: You mentioned contrast, the [way you bring “the light”], and the way that you control it. That really was noticeable at the Richard Gray exhibition and the pieces elsewhere. Technologically you could use color in these pieces since you are using a LCD projector, so it’s not like you are limited by the technology, you are choosing to use black and white, or light and dark. I wanted to delve into that. What’s the greater significance of using black and white and working within that kind of light? Is it an aspect of controlling the light, does it lend itself to control easily? It also seems to link back to ideas of photography, which is your background.

JT: We can start with photography. Technically in both of the photography processes whether taking the picture or developing the picture, it’s basically starting from nothing, from darkness. Then the light starts to draw the image and you are controlling how much light can enter. The same goes for a studio shoot. If you have a studio, you start with darkness, next you turn the lights on.

In the sense of light, these are very natural processes, day and night. That is the background I am coming from, I was working with photography and video and at a certain time I realized that I could use video projection as a time-based light.

The first installation that I used this technique was *Dimona*, which is from a series of politically charged pieces [that use light and] paper cut models [seen at right]. There was one at the MCA [Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago], 1391, which is the Israeli Guantanamo prison and is now on display at the Portland Art Museum. With *Dimona* there’s a paper cut model I have built-



AR: And this is the model of a nuclear reactor?

JT: Yes, it’s a nuclear power plant in Israel that is used for the production of nuclear weapons.

It’s a secret site and a thing that is deeply taboo in Israeli society.

The projection, which was part of a floor-to-ceiling installation, was a strip of light scanning the object and revealing the object from the darkness and introducing [an element of] time. That was the beginning of using light produced by a video projector on a time-based level. Then more formal issues were introduced and more narrative elements, but the work has stayed in the black and white realm. It’s not that I didn’t check other options, or that I don’t use color, since I work in color in photography and video pieces.

I used objects from paper, porcelain, or painted MDF and these were always materials that were white, orb-like, some may have been in between, sometimes black, but mostly white. The projections allow me to activate them as very clear light reflectors but also as a narrative and expressive element.

AR: So there is a metaphorical weight to the light itself [..]

We've been mentioning the exhibition "Installations" at Richard Gray [2009] where you were actually able to have an entire floor at the Hancock building to yourself, due to the vacancies in that building. You had this floor to yourself and you set up installations in several rooms all around this floor.

What was really interesting about that exhibition was the role that you moved architecture into when planning a work and using each element. I remember that the Hancock's X-braces, which give the building its strength, were used a particular way for one of your projections. How do you approach a space when you're planning an installation? Does it take some time to get to know a space? What role does the architecture have?

JT: My pieces range from a white-cube environment to site-specific pieces that deal with a specific place and architecture. Most of my works on some level use architectural language, or the ideas of architecture, or formal aspects of architecture, so the connection is always there even if we are talking about a piece that was made in a studio environment for a white-cube setting. Bringing it into a place, architecture is always an issue.



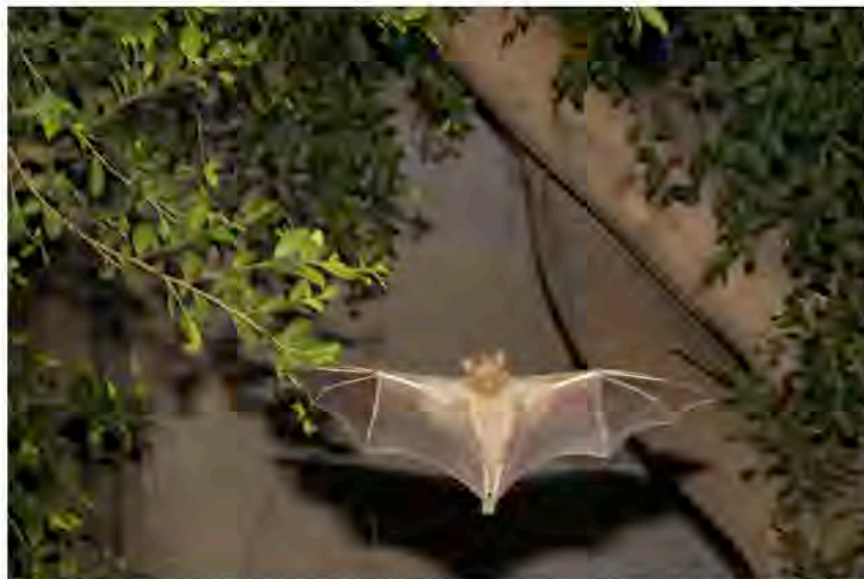
With the show at Richard Gray Gallery, there were two or three critical elements. One was luck, that there was this space, this very particular space in a very particular building and my works already have architectural contents, some of them

even formally relating to structures like the Hancock tower. So the starting point was good. The other thing was that, unlike other places or shows, I had basically all the time that I wanted to be there and to prepare it. I basically moved into the tower with my studio and was working there for three months, not just on that show but on other projects too. But that allowed me to really be there, to really feel it, to know the spaces, to know the tower, to know the spirit and really feel the architecture.

From the earliest moment it was clear to me that apart from the pieces I brought that were already done before, from the last two and a half years, it was clear to me that the space was asking for site-specific intervention. So there was one piece that basically took one of the architectural elements, that part of the X-brace, and worked with it as a sculptural element.

Or there are spaces like the Spertus Institute, the exhibition that just opened, where I was working in a very architecturally open environment that the piece just had to take into account. Therefore for this very particular space, it's a very site-specific installation that takes into account the specifics of the place, of the physical architecture, of the light, of the concept of the institution itself.

Many times the space or the building can [indicate things] to me, so I really enjoy working with different spaces.



AR: There seems to be an interesting thread running through your work of this revealing of things that are in darkness and unknown that you bring into light, whether through actual physical light or through capturing an image, and I'm thinking of Bats [above] or 1391 particularly here.

How do ideas of hidden knowledge, or the revealing of knowledge through exposing an object, come out? You seem to have a lot of analogues running through your work: bats, secret nuclear reactors, secret prisons.

JT: With my art I try to talk, to touch, to somehow be in a dialogue with my audience. Things like exposure or revelation or charged spaces, are ways to discuss other issues. These tools are again connected back to photography, exposure and things that are hidden and that point of revealing something. These dualities that you can find between the light and the darkness go much further than what's there. This is in the sense of what we were talking about earlier; the exposure can be physical with the light but also be an exposure of ideas, or things that are hidden. I guess that's one way of how to get into the hidden places of the audience, to let them reveal through the pieces things about themselves. We think about the way we see things and react to them, this can happen during viewing the work.

AR: To wind up our conversation by way of Moholy-Nagy, he described the artist in terms of politics, "artists, writers, scientists and philosophers become the revolutionaries of a realistic utopia, awakened from the mere enjoyment of their craft to essential duties and responsibilities toward the community."



We've talked about several works that have both overt and subtle political content. There's a lot of discourse and opinion about the artist and what their political responsibilities are or should be, especially coming out from the Bush Administration and the many, many controversies that surrounded that administration. I wanted to ask you, how you view politics in your work and your approach?

JT: It's true that every work has some political aspect, though some are really hidden for particular viewers. At the same time I hope that all the works have strong visual qualities. It seems like through [my visual] tools I can start to discuss the issues that I have found relevant for me and my audience.

I do believe that art can cause change, on various levels. Basically I do believe that. I wonder if that is because of my personal history, since I had the chance to witness three very significant political moments.

I witnessed the Velvet Revolution in 1989 in Czechoslovakia where I grew up. I grew up with a deep awareness of the system and the dictatorship. The revolution in '89 was something that I was personally involved in. At the age of sixteen and seventeen [I was] experiencing such a thing as the collapse of a regime and, in the case of Czechoslovakia, it was in a good direction, the end of dictatorship, the beginning of democracy.

Then when I moved to Israel I was there when the Oslo Accords were signed. Suddenly you could go to Palestine and Palestinian cities and there was a lot of optimism in the air. But I witnessed the other sides, when all the things went downhill. I was a student at the Jerusalem School of Photography, I was for ten years living in a city that was terrorized on a regular basis.

Two years ago, my studio was on Columbus Drive [a street neighboring Grant Park], so I experienced the election of Barack Obama. It was right there! So I do believe that things can change, I think that things are moving, so maybe my optimism comes from this personal experience.

I do believe that art can function as a tool to reach out, on many different levels, if it's with conceptual issues in a white-cube environment or if it's working with the community [directly]. I believe that artists can, or should be, involved and there are so many levels on which it can be done. I think, in that sense, the arts are a very open platform.

--Abraham Ritchie, Chicago City Editor

(Images credits, from top to bottom: **Jan Tichy**, *100 RAW*, 2009, Digital video with sound on wall-mounted LCD monitor, 8 1/4 x 12 1/2 x 1 3/4 inches, Running time: 5 minutes; **Installation view of Lighting the Crown Hall**, 2009, Collaborative project with 15 digital projections., Running time: approx. 45 minutes; **Jan Tichy**, *Dimona*, 2006, Digital video projection, 250g paper objects, stack of approx. 4,000 A1 posters, text. Running time: 8 minutes; **Jan Tichy**, *Installation No. 8 (Hancock)*, 2009; **Jan Tichy**, *Bats*, 2002-2007, Two-channel slide projection of eighty 35mm slides onto adjacent walls, Running time: 8 minutes; **Jan Tichy**, *Recess*, 2009, Single channel high-definition digital video projection, Running time: 10 minutes; All images courtesy of the artist and Richard Gray Gallery)



Art & Design

Art review

"Moholy: An Education of the Senses"

By Jonathan Kinkley

Loyola University Museum of Art, through May 9.

When the Nazis drove the faculty and students of the Bauhaus abroad in the 1930s, Germany's loss was Chicago's gain. Along with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, László Moholy-Nagy (1895–1946) brought the design school's modernist fusion of form and function to the Illinois Institute of Technology. His artistic journey from 1920s Berlin to Chicago's Institute of Design shines in a poetic homage at LUMA, elegantly curated by Carol Ehlers.

Moholy-Nagy called for an "education of the senses," believing sensory awareness was necessary for building a better world. His aesthetic approach is incorporated into the show's layout, ably designed by SAIC interior architecture professor Helen Maria Nugent and artist Jan Tichy. They display the Hungarian-born artist's films in unconventional ways, projecting them onto the floor or screening the same piece on multiple surfaces.

The show's spare, uncluttered presentation underscores the imaginative qualities of Moholy-Nagy's photographs and prints. His abstract photograms—made without a camera—are notable for their experimental arrangements of shapes and lines, and his lithographs' geometric compositions reflect his advancement of Russian Constructivism.

The centerpiece here is a Rube Goldberg–esque "light machine" called *Light Prop for an Electric Stage (Light Space Modulator)*: a kinetic sculpture of metal, mirrors and glass that casts curious light patterns on the walls. This device enabled Moholy-Nagy to create his 1930 abstract film *Lightplay: Black-White-Grey*, a disorienting montage of churning shapes and shadows. Ehlers's informative curatorial narrative, combined with Moholy-Nagy's own words, and Nugent and Tichy's careful illumination, ensure his works are seen in their best light—in every sense.



Moholy-Nagy, *Spring, Berlin*, 1928.
Photo: Courtesy of George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film, Rochester, NY, © 2009 Artists Rights Society (ARS) New York/VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

The Oregonian

Review: 'Disquieted' at the Portland Art Museum

By D.K. Row, The Oregonian
February 22, 2010, 7:00AM



"In the Midst of Dreams" by Jaume Plensa

The first work viewers encounter in "Disquieted," the gloriously ruminative new art exhibit at the Portland Art Museum, is a fiberglass, resin and marble sculpture of three white looming heads, their eyes closed and faces glowing from the light inside. Each head is etched with words that alternately connect and disconnect with the viewer's emotions - "Ignorance," "wrath" and "desire," for example.

Nestled over beds of fabricated rocks, the heads by Spanish artist Jaume Plensa awe, confront and remind us of a world that's too much with us these days, a world so overwhelming that it pulls us into anxious reverie - hence the work's title, "In the Midst of Dreams."

Such, too, is the draw of this exhibit organized by the museum's chief curator, Bruce Guenther, and featuring 38 works by 28 contemporary artists, ranging from such revered figures as John Baldessari, Paul McCarthy and Barbara Kruger to a generation of artists who emerged a little after them, including Chihō Aoshima, Takashi Murakami and Andreas Gursky.

The show's roster of artists might suggest a survey of contemporary art. But "Disquieted" isn't. It's Guenther's meditation about a world of international conflict, technological revolution and social, economic and political upheaval. It's also a show that expresses the power of art to articulate the heap of world events. And, above all, it's an expression of the calming power of beauty and artistic feeling.

To some who might not read the show's fine print credits closely, the exhibit isn't a major event produced by another institution, thus visiting Portland temporarily. "Disquieted" is a homegrown, first-class effort highlighting artists from all over the world. Guenther tapped his extensive art world network to bring work by artists who are no longer part of the avant-garde but entering into the historical canon. Besides those already mentioned, there's also work by Bill Viola, Tracey Emin and Lari Pittman, among others.

Unfortunately, the budget-lean museum didn't have the money to produce a catalog - virtual or print - so subsequent generations could experience the show. That's disquieting.

Some might find the title "Disquieted" a push back. But the show's actually an invitation to the viewer. Two wars, the Great Recession and social and political agitation have forced even the least existential of us to wonder: Who are we? Where are we going? What does it all mean?

In other words, the exhibit is an opportunity to think about the state of the world. For some, that might be painful. But for this critic, it's a journey through white cubed rooms limned with the hopeful quiet that only art provides.

It's also a far-reaching journey of social and political issues spanning recent decades but whose presence has intensified since Sept. 11.

Charles Ray's eight-foot-tall sculpture of an imposing woman in a power suit is another example of this extraordinary artist's freakish virtuosity, but also, in this case, his in-your-face inquiry of gender power issues.

Artists Ellen Gallagher and Glenn Ligon separately, and in different ways, use text to explore racial politics and identity. And, in Gallagher's collages, the cut-and-paste process that defines art nowadays. Like our increasing multicultural world, art is a mixed-race population.

Meantime, another African American artist, Sanford Biggers, humorously, cuttingly appropriates the minstrel legacy that still rattles African American relations in this country with his lightbox of a big smiling mouth.

Photographer Gregory Crewdson's works aren't photos but constructed realities, or fantasies, where characters are snapped in cloistered rooms and engaged in almost Hitchcockian mystery. Born in 1962, Crewdson's articulating the weary ennui of a generation that's increasingly displaced from history and looking toward fabricated worlds for comfort and meaning.

Phenomenal Japanese artists Murakami and Aoshima scale up the notion of fantasy and virtuality to offer a view of the universe, not just the world. Murakami's delectable, dark abstract painting, "Warp," travels to a black hole, literally, while his disciple, Aoshima, meshes manga, anime and 19th-century Ukiyo-e print traditions in a tsunami of expression with her frieze-length color print. Theirs is an "Avatar"-like world before the movie came along.

Gursky's architectural photo of thousands of workers making chairs in a Vietnamese manufacturing plant is another cryptic indictment of corporate industrial practices by this German artist. Like all of Gursky's gorgeous photos, it's also artistic manipulation. The photo transforms industrial joylessness into a busy Manhattan dayscape.

Israeli Czech artist Jan Tichý's video projection "Facility" may be the exhibit's most spooky political statement. A shadow of a building moves slowly, painfully, next to the model of a small, white structure. The model is a replica of a building that houses detainees of the Israeli government, and the shadow mimics the course of the real building's shadow over one day. This is an artwork of enormous suggestion.

Like Tichý's video installation, Viola's slow-motion "The Quintet of the Astonished" moves at an ant's pace, revealing every detail and movement of five actors as they react emotionally - to something. It's a thing of riveting magnificence, this video that seems more like a Dutch Renaissance painting in its symphonic accumulation of details and moments.

Some might ask: What's the point? Not only of Viola's work but of this exhibit that directly and indirectly addresses so many heavy currents of the day. How do we put our arms around this story with so many narrative lines?

We can't, entirely, because the world truly is so much in these 38 works of art, which announce that we are not "Masters of the Universe," as Guenther put it.

But Guenther offers up some soothing existential tonics, namely art that also touches people emotionally, induces feeling and humanity. And, no matter what you think of each work, they're each beautifully made. Beauty matters in this - and Guenther's - world.

Those are sustaining, albeit modest, ideas to count on as events, technology and political ferment render us even more Lilliputian in size and power. We can count on ourselves as we move forward in an uncertain world. And we can count on the strength and beauty of human expression.

Don't believe the title. "Disquieted" is a comforting show.

-- D.K. Row

Jan Tichy

Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago, USA

The John Hancock Center is perhaps Chicago's most iconic skyscraper, a black trapezoid rising 100 stories beside the city's shimmering lake. It is here, on the 24th floor, that Richard Gray Gallery (itself based in the building) found a vacant 30,000-square-foot office complex, likely forsaken by the current economic troubles, as the evocative location for Jan Tichy's sprawling installation. The lift door dings open to reveal an empty office suite. The lights are off. The ground is concrete, but filing cabinets remain. A low mechanical hum from the lift shaft produces a form of eerie, constant silence. Within this darkness, the nine video installations by Tichy emit their own light: phantasms amid the shells of former conference rooms and corner offices.

In *Installation No. 4 (Towers)* (2008), a gash of animated light creeps open on the floor. The slit extends itself slowly, a wavering mirage. Finally, it opens fully to cast a moonlight glow over two nondescript, white paper sculptures of towers. In the American Midwest, these structures would be placid water towers standing proud in small towns; in the Middle East they are oil rigs or military surveillance posts. Later, the animation depicts a lone wolf strutting past the towers: a dark omen.

Tichy's politics are emotional rather than ideological, moody but not impassioned. Born and raised in Prague, he left in the aftermath of the 1989 Velvet Revolution and emigrated to Jerusalem. There he lived through the recent Israel-Palestine conflict, and in 2007 emigrated again. Presently, he lives and teaches in Chicago. As Tichy often considers the conflicts and complexities of the urban experience, the Hancock Center's corporate ruins are a fitting setting for his work.

In *Bats* (2002-7), 35mm slides depict bats captured mid-flight at night. The high-pitch sound emitted from Tichy's flash equipment as it powered up attracted the bats, so he mimicked the noise with his mouth, luring them into his lens' purview. Seen from below, the flighty creatures reveal their odd little bodies in a glowing beam of light, their shadows cast long against Tel Aviv's architecture while the city's residents sleep. Similarly, Tichy lures viewers into his political commentaries, suspended in theatres of light and shadow, where ethereal objects, such as bats, garner meaty symbolic contours.

But Tichy pulls a quick change, diverting the sensory bath with an optical shift. He frames each scene from a distant vantage point, from outside the action. In one video we observe a children's playground from a nearby rooftop; another uses aerial maps; yet another shrinks the Chicago skyline through a camera obscura's pinhole. The tower installation, too, forces a bird's-eye-view. The simultaneous immersion and disengagement serves to dramatize how viewers participate in the political landscape. We crave a spellbinding, affective experience but often meet a cold narrative ellipse.

'Pictures' (2006) is a series of seven videos from a Tel Aviv slum where the artist worked. Each static camera position documents a tableau of the city's margins at night: a fire endangers a horse, a neighbour paces behind open curtains, searchlights crisscross the hazy sky. Like postcards, they are formally tight, even beautiful. From a distance, the decaying slum is momentarily wrapped in aesthetic delight. We're thrust eye-first and heart-long into contradiction.

Jason Founberg



Jan Tichy
Bats
2002-7
Two-channel
slide projection

Art in America

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

JANUARY '10

CHICAGO

JAN TICHY

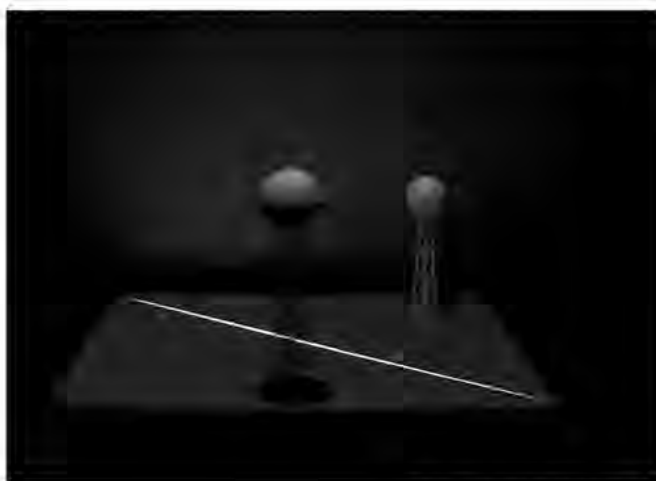
RICHARD GRAY

ON VIEW THROUGH JAN. 9

Jan Tichy's multimedia installations are meditations on landscape and light, ambiguous topologies at once familiar yet haunting and unknown. Although the Czech-Israeli artist, trained at Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, has shown internationally, this was his first major survey. It was presented in the gallery's temporary project space, the 24th floor of the John Hancock Center. The nine works, each sited in a separate area or room, together created a constellational effect, a mapping both spatial and psychological of the darkened interior.

Several pieces combine changing digital video projections and abstract fabricated objects to exploit the plastic and metaphoric potentials of light. In *Installation No. 7* (2009), projected white lines move inch by inch into and out of a corner of the room and across the surfaces of cast porcelain domes, evoking small hills or shelters, clustered on the floor. The lines eventually come to rest on a variety of box forms, also cast in porcelain, hung in a loose pattern on the wall. Suddenly from this configuration issues the video image of a mysterious leaking liquid, followed by flashes of white light that imply danger.

Throughout this body of work, strong contrasts between black and white suggest various natural phenomena or human threat. In *Installation No. 5 (Threshold)*, 2008, three unidentified aerial maps slowly materialize, only to fade to black, within white fields projected onto three walls. Some 100 paper cylinders, each several inches in diameter, are attached perpendicular to the walls, lending the piece an architectural presence. Handcrafted paper models appear in other works—such as *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*, 2008, which features two 3-foot-tall water towers standing on the floor. Bathed in white light, the towers become totems in a flat, empty space devoid of any specific landscape referent. Then a projected black orb engulfs the scene.



Jan Tichy: *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*, 2008, digital video projection with paper objects, 9 minutes; at Richard Gray.

Tichy's syncretic practice succeeds in its fluid integration of diverse media, yet holds its strongest allegiance to photography and to the light experiments of Moholy-Nagy. In several works, photographic images are transferred to video, or video sequences are presented like photographs within framed wall-mounted LCD monitors. Cloaked in darkness, these pictures convey generalized impressions, rather than detailed portraits, of places like Chicago and Tel Aviv.

For the site-specific *Installation No. 8 (Hancock)*, 2009, the artist transformed a corner space into a high-tech imitation of a camera obscura. The inverted silhouettes of three residential towers situated just outside the gallery window were projected inside as digital animation within small floating raindrops on one of the building's diagonal support members. As elsewhere, transitory images became objects, and objects became moving images within measured plays of shadow and light.

—Susan Snodgrass

Jan Tichy

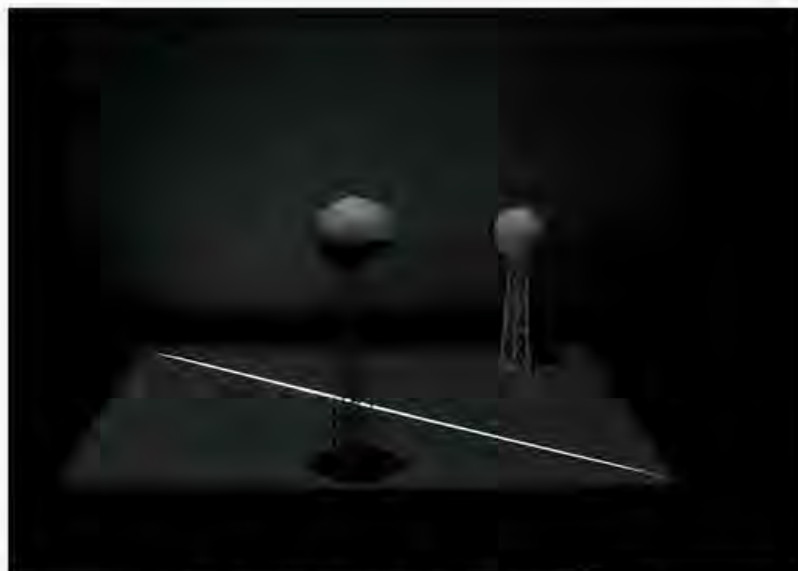
Richard Gray

Chicago

Jan Tichy's nine recent video installations got the sort of space they deserve here, benefiting from a vacancy on the 24th floor of the John Hancock Center (just one floor below Richard Gray's regular gallery space). The scale of the rooms and their murky emptiness provided an ideal environment for the artist's nearly sublime works that integrate light, sound, and sculpture into meditations on our built environments.

The best of the works incorporated vague and disjointed narrative elements to imbue the constructions with various overlapping meanings. In *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*, 2008, a video is projected over two paper models of water towers sitting on the floor. The piece includes geometric shapes in light and shadow that bring out the structure's stark beauty, while the silhouette of a coyote casing the perimeter of the piece evokes a sense of a place set apart.

In *Installation No. 7* (2009), digital video projection is superimposed onto porcelain mounds on the floor and rectangular forms on the walls. Tichy says the idea for the mounds came to him after studying the design of nuclear-waste-disposal sites. While the arrangement on the floor does suggest a



Jan Tichy, *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*, 2008, digital video projection with two 250-gram white paper objects, 39 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 102 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 78 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", 9 minutes. Richard Gray.

topographical map, the forms are not intended to correspond to any specific location. In this environment, the video's shifting and ephemeral light brought to mind the building up and erosion of land masses across geologic time. At times, one or two objects on the wall appeared backlit; at another point, a line of light was traced just above the junction of wall and floor, then dropped into a thin space separating the two planes, so that it seemed for a moment as if light were seeping in from the other side of the wall. These fleeting experiences are as gratifying as any grand spectacle.

—Ruth Lopez



Art & Design

Art review

Jan Tichy

By Lauren Weinberg

"Installations," **Richard Gray Gallery**, through Jan 9.



Tichy, *Installation No. 8 (Hancock)*, 2009.

On the 24th floor of the Hancock Center, in the empty former offices of an insurance firm, nine installations by Jan Tichy wait in the dark. One floor below Richard Gray Gallery, the Chicago artist's exhibition represents an eerie, fascinating alternative to the cheerful pop-up galleries filling other local vacant properties. Tucked into isolated rooms behind thick curtain his video- and photo-based pieces' glowing screens provide the show's only light.

Most of Tichy's work is neither grim nor spooky. It suits this unusual venue because it concerns light and architecture. (In June, the artist oversaw SAIC and IIT's collaboration *Lighting Crown Hall*, which turned the modernist landmark into a giant video installation.) For *Installation No. 7* (2009), the SAIC M.F.A. applies porcelain monoliths and hillocks to the walls and floor of a small room. A projected animation interacts with these forms, illuminating individual elements before casting a diffuse light over them like the sun rising over a mountainous landscape. We've rarely seen video and sculpture integrated so effectively.

Society's manipulations of both images and the natural world inspire *Installation No. 5 (Threshold)* (2008), a stop-motion animation of three aerial photos of oil rigs and pipelines. The work's title refers to a Photoshop command that converts color photos to high-contrast, black-and-white images. During the animation, Tichy resets the photos' "thresholds" until darkness extinguishes the white pixels, as though the man-made structures have overwhelmed their environments. But the Czech-Israeli artist doesn't treat the built environment as a black-and-white issue. *Installation No. 8 (Hancock)* (pictured, 2009), a video of raindrops on the skyscraper's window, brings the skyline indoors, hinting at the obscured but splendid view.



Art

Jan Tichy: Installations

Jan Tichy, *Installation No. 7*, 2009

Call it populist schadenfreude, but there's something spectacular about an artist taking over a floor of the John Hancock building where an insurance firm used to reside. By arrangement of Richard Gray Gallery, Prague-born artist [Jan Tichy](#) has planted nine installations throughout this deserted space: in a cavernous room, in tucked-away offices, at the end of a long, sinister corridor. Videos or photographs are central to most of the works, but Tichy is equally a sculptor of darkness and illumination, using his projections as "time-based light sources" as often as vehicles for imagery. Circling around the subject of architecture and its [relations to power](#), Tichy's work picks up an added charge in this unconventional setting, this momentary crack in the city's commercial structures.

– *Karsten Lund*

When

Oct 9 – Jan 8, 2010

Mondays–Fridays (10am–5:30pm)

Where

Richard Gray Gallery

875 N Michigan Ave

Suite 2503

312.642.8877

Israeli modernism

S m a d a r S h e f f i

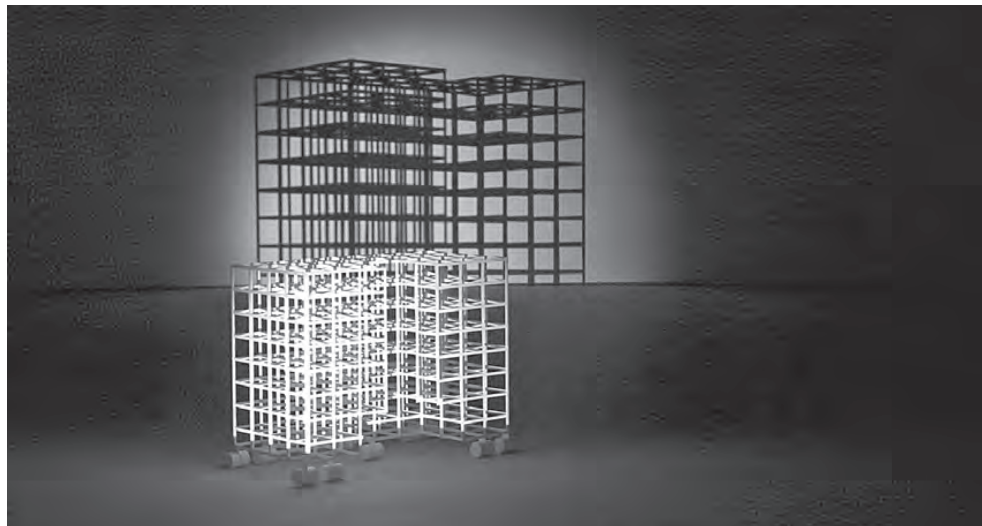
Group exhibition "Family/Tree," Helena Rubinstein Pavilion, Tel Aviv

The "family" that is featured in the exhibition "Family/Tree," presently shown at the Helena Rubinstein Pavilion in Tel Aviv, is a rather successful bunch: Artists whose work has garnered recognition in New York, which is still regarded in Israel as a supreme authority in all art-related matters, a lighthouse for civilization that has retained its elevated status despite the emergence of new art centers.

This is a well-crafted show, underpinned by an inner logic and a cohesive point of view, despite the fact that the works on display were selected from a single collection, varied as it may be. Curator Ellen Ginton succeeds in shedding light on an interesting development in Israeli modernism, especially the relationship between the works of Nahum Tevet (a kind of patriarch) and those of Ohad Meromi and Guy Ben-Ner. The three show architectural installations are made of wood. In the present exhibition, works by Tevet and Ben-Ner are presented much more successfully than in the past. Inasmuch as these are installations – that is, works in which space plays an integral role – the present exhibition corrects the injustice inflicted on these pieces in past exhibitions.

Tevet shows "Question Five" from 2000-03, a work that was shown in 2007 at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem as part of an installation series by the artist. It is presently exhibited in a closed space, which was custom-built to serve the dimensions of the work as a distinct, autonomous unit, and is consequently more impressive. As opposed to the surplus and suffocation that characterized Tevet's solo show at the Israel Museum, "Works, 1994-2006," the piece is presently imbued with a sense of clarity. What stands out in this piece are the photo albums that are placed in varying locations, like personal memories – silent and present at once. The work also features images of small boats, wooden shelves and elongated legs that support miniature tables, which emerge from the thicket of furniture-like units.

In this work, Tevet formulates an homage to Israeli modernism – from International Style architecture to the sculptures of Michael Gross – while offering a meditation on its essence and the price it exacted. The adoption of a reductive ethos for each and every



LINEAR: Jan Tichy's "Installation No. 3."

unit alongside an almost Baroque cluttering of the space, which constitutes the installation as a whole, creates a tension between an admiration of such an ethos and a particular unwillingness to realize it.

Props for a show that doesn't exist

"Treehouse Kit," a work by Guy Ben-Ner from 2005, was shown in the Israeli Pavilion at the Venice Biennale that same year. It is presently exhibited in a much smaller space, and the piece is more effective as a result, especially in terms of the connection between the video and the wood sculpture.

This work further develops Ben-Ner's interest in classic novels from the 18th and 19th centuries, like "Robinson Crusoe" and "Moby Dick," highlighting themes of imperialism and colonialism, which have occupied the artist since the late 1990s. In "Treehouse Kit" he also makes reference to the modernist enterprise, which recurs in a later video work, "Stealing Beauty," from 2007 (currently showing at the Israel Museum).

"Treehouse Kit" features a wood sculpture of a tree composed of modular units that can be dismantled and put back together into pieces of furniture, including a chair, parasol, ladder and bed. The video shows Ben-Ner, who sports a Herzl-like beard, dismantling a tree identical to the one in the space and assembling it into pieces of furniture. The assembly is straightforward, recalling Ikea furniture (the artist's newest video work was filmed in Ikea stores). Ben-Ner intelligently addresses the modernist ethos of Ikea, which realizes the Bauhaus vision of mass-produced designer

furniture, albeit devoid of its ideology.

The Herzl/Robinson Crusoe character folds a photograph of his wife and children to stabilize the leg of a ladder in a symbolic act, thus creating a brave new world that is at the same time designed for comfort. This political reading, tied to the question of Zionist colonialism, surfaces in a somewhat refined fashion.

Refinement is not a word one would use to describe the two videos by Meromi, "Cyclops II" from 2005 (a follow-up to "Cyclops I," which was shown at the Tal Esther Gallery in 2004 and at the "Real Time: Art in Israel, 1998-2008" exhibition at the Israel Museum) and "The Exception and the Rule," which was enthusiastically received in Israel and abroad. "Cyclops II," like the video that preceded it, alludes to "The Cyclops" by Greek playwright Euripides, old sci-fi flicks and theater improvisation games.

"The Exception and the Rule" is a parody on folk dancing. With "Arab" and "Eastern European" costumes, which recall Israeli folk dance festivals, Meromi presents a dance that takes place in unidentified archaeological ruins. The result wavers between a show aimed at tourists and a utopia inspired by musicals.

The work "Installation No. 3" by Jan Tichy, from 2007, addresses questions about modernism from a formal and theoretical perspective. The piece consists of a lighting design and animated video projection that illuminate an object whose shadow is cast on the wall, creating a total, charming experience. The basic image is of a clean, linear structure, the embodiment of Modernism's disavowal of decoration, within

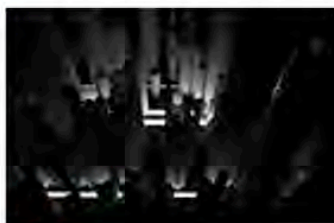
which unidentified tiny figures – residents or builders – come and go. This is a pretty, clean and sterile environment, a non-place that can be any place.

The victory of gibberish

The video "Normal" by Tami Ben-Tor from 2006 is a kind of comic piece that focuses on the neurotic behavior of an office worker. Throughout the four-minute video, the character leaves message after message, which begin with an artificial, enthusiastic tone, employing words like "project," "meeting," and "e-mail," but which gradually become less and less comprehensible as her language increasingly borders on gibberish. This piece is more challenging to watch than Ben-Tor's other works, like "Women Talk about Adolph Hitler" from 2004 (shown at the Rosenfeld Gallery), in which the artist satirized the type of documentaries that deal with less familiar sides of the history of World War II.

In the catalogue Ginton returns to the common comparison between Ben-Tor's work and that of Cindy Sherman. While Sherman works more with still photography as opposed to video, this is an apt comparison, especially for a reading of the work "Normal," due to the physical appearance of the persona Ben-Tor plays, characterized by unkempt, short blond hair. At the same time, "Normal" has more in common with the work of video artist Martha Rosler, especially her parody video "Semiotics of the Kitchen" from 1975, an iconic work in the history of feminist and video art. In the six-minute-long video, Rosler created a downward spiral of chaos and madness from what initially seemed like a cooking show.

artnet Magazine

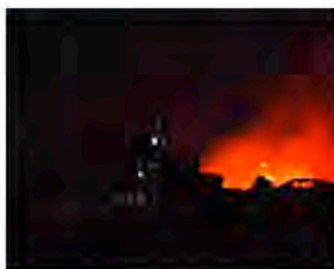
[Home](#)[News](#)[Reviews](#)[Features](#)[Books](#)[People](#)[Art Education](#)[Horoscope](#)[Newsletter](#)**Jan Tichy***Installation No. 6 (Tubes)*

2009

digital video with 200 paper

objects, ca. 10 minutes long

Richard Gray Gallery

**Jan Tichy***Pictures*

2006

digital video in seven parts, ca. 7

minutes long

Richard Gray Gallery

**John Stezaker***Excision I*

2007

Richard Gray Gallery

**John Stezaker***Muse (Film Portrait Collage) V*

2008

Richard Gray Gallery

CHICAGO A GO-GO by Brook S. Mason

What art dealer has brought the increasingly popular art-world "pop-up shop" idea to a city skyscraper? Surprise, surprise, it's Richard Gray Gallery, better known for expertise in blue-chip moderns and contemporary veterans like [Jim Dine](#).

Dealer Paul Gray has cleverly scored a temporary project perch 24 stories high in the John Hancock tower. Located directly beneath his 25th-floor gallery, a cavernous 10,000 square feet is devoted to nine astonishing and enticing video installations by the Prague-born Israeli native [Jan Tichy](#). One is already under consideration by a major New York museum.

Jan Tichy, John Stezaker

A Chicago resident, Tichy merges astronomy, architecture, ceramics (he's mastered the creation of porcelain objects), lighting art and early television and video, which he merges in single installations crammed with subtleties and ambiguity. Frequently focus is shifted from a projection of a tiny sliver of light to shadows cast on small geometric forms with some evoking planets and others futuristic cities. No wonder Tichy has been included in nine museum shows in the past two years.

If you only have 15 minutes in Chicago, grab Tichy's show. He's bound to be crowned the next [Tony Oursler](#).

On view upstairs in the Gray Gallery is "[John Stezaker](#)," a show dedicated to the London collage artist who is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Saatchi Collection, the Rubell Family Collection and others. Long known as well for teaching YBAs, Stezaker is getting increasing attention for his new collages.

Stezaker mines Hollywood stills, vintage photography, postcards and other printed material for sometimes jarring work. Deco arts fans may spring for his *Prague I* in which he juxtaposes portions of book illustration of the cathedral and landscape that sparks a touch of vertigo. It's \$16,500. Already plucked up is a Stezaker collage destined for the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art.

When Paul Gray closes his 2009 books, he expects to look back on a year of solid sales in comparison to the prior one. "The first half of the year saw a lot of pressured sellers," said Gray, who did business with works by [Motherwell](#), [Picasso](#) and other 20th-century masters.

His views on Miami? He expects an "Obama bounce" to produce a flurry of sales.

BROOK S. MASON is U.S. correspondent for the *Art Newspaper*, and also writes for the *Financial Times* and other publications.



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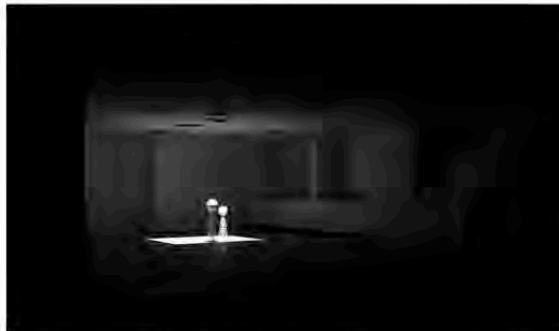
Illuminating a Recession

by Dan Gunn

JAN TICHY : INSTALLATIONS**Richard Gray Gallery****875 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611****October 9, 2009 - January 9, 2010**

It's rare that an economic downturn has an 'upside' but without the downturn Jan Tichy's show "Installations" for Richard Gray Gallery would not have been possible. Mr. Tichy's video installations are literally embedded in the vacant offices and abandoned conference rooms of an entire floor in the Hancock Building.

Stepping off of an elevator into an empty and dimly lit level of corporate offices is already an evocative enough experience on its own and is heightened by what Mr. Tichy's videos do with the dark. Frequently the only light source available, Mr. Tichy's projected works are predominantly black and white videos that illuminate accompanying topographical paper forms on the walls or the floors. The sculpted paper and the videos interact: casting shadows, spotlighting, filling up or revealing separate parts.



Jan Tichy. *Installation No. 4 (Towers)*. Image courtesy of the artist and Richard Gray Gallery.

Installation No. 8 (Hancock) washes light onto and off of a crooked architectural nook created by the building itself. Shown above, the most evocative piece, *Installation No. 4 (Towers)* sits alone in a large room. Two paper radar towers were lit from above by a projection that slowly ebbed and flowed between a cold crisp brightness and a deep, twilight darkness. The brightness cast stark shadows from the towers and the curvature of the radar dome splits the projected pixels apart. The transition between the two states begins as a sliver of light grows progressively longer and wider to bathe the floor in a bright white rectangle.

Some other works sit awkwardly in the mix, like *Recess*, a long shot of a park playground during the day, seemingly unrelated to the light referenced in the rest of the work. Even *Bats*, a dueling pair of slide projectors that show photos of urban bats in mid-flight, relate back to Mr. Tichy's more formal installations. Their eyes glow in the night sky and the camera's flash shows their bone structure through their translucent wings. Caught like naked specters of the night mistakenly revealed, the bats symbolize the "otherness" of the dark that Mr. Tichy plays with elsewhere.

The natural impetus driving his work with light is clearly seen in a series called *Pictures*. Displayed on tiny LCD screens about the size of a family photo the vignettes feature banal nighttime arrangements of light. A streetlamp reflecting in a puddle of water, lit windows in a building across the street or a searchlight roaming the sky are like observational drawings done in video. Despite being more like studies for larger works they still they hold a quiet understated beauty in themselves.

Mr. Tichy has found in the play of material and light, representation and digital information, the intoxicating charm of a darkened cinema and the epiphany-like glow of the projector-- a remarkable feat for a medium that is as technological as video.

--Dan Gunn



Best gallery show in the last year

+ Culture & Nightlife

Jan Tichy, Richard Gray Gallery

It's a sign of the times when prime real estate is more accommodating to large-scale art installations than posh law offices. So, when the Richard Gray Gallery overtook the John Hancock Center's vacant twenty-fourth floor to host a sprawling installation by video artist Jan Tichy, the corporate post-apocalypse never seemed so tangible. Tichy, who teaches at the School of the Art Institute, was born and raised in Prague, and lived in Jerusalem during the recent Israeli-Palestinian conflict. His work is necessarily political yet surprisingly subtle, at turns ominous and hopeful.

875 North Michigan, 25th floor
(312)642-8877

richardgraygallery.com

Best of Chicago 2009

<http://best.newcity.com/2009/11/11/best-gallery-show-in-the-last-year/>

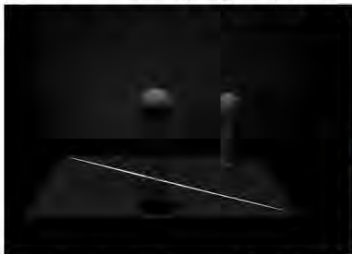
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Gallery review

Art in empty spaces



By Lori Waxman
Special to the Tribune
October 30, 2009

Strange new tenants have moved into the 24th floor of the John Hancock Center. Shards of cold, colorless light, mute paper forms and the buzz of white noise have replaced receptionists, clerks and executives in darkened conference rooms and empty cubicles.

Remember that episode of "The Twilight Zone" in which the heroine gets trapped on the mysterious ninth floor of a department store that doesn't have a ninth floor? Walking around the 24th floor of the Hancock building these days can seem like just such a step into another dimension. But it isn't one where mannequins come alive, rather it's a mesmerizing world of slowly cast light and meticulously calibrated spaces, created by artist Jan Tichy and presented by the Richard Gray Gallery.

The gallery, whose regular showroom sits one flight up, has temporarily taken over the vacant floor to present a museum-quality exhibition of nine projects created by Tichy since 2006.

Individual installations map water towers, oil fields, urban architecture and jungle gyms through paper sculptures, abstracted digital projections, site specificity, an old television set and even a slide show of fruit bats. Together they constitute a body of work that pays close attention to the creation and dispersal of energy, from the nonrenewable natural resources that sustain the contemporary world and drive much of its geopolitics to the kind of human energy expended by schoolchildren as they swarm over a playground. Meanwhile, Tichy's quotation of man-made structures and spaces speaks to his own experience growing up in communist Prague, tense but cosmopolitan Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and most recently Chicago.

The expansive, abandoned offices provide a locale much more suited to the artist's unsettling video projects than the gallery's more traditional setting. It's a strategy Christopher Canizares, the gallery's director of contemporary art, has used once before, securing an empty rental unit on the 25th floor this past spring to show the work of Marc Swanson.

Pop-up galleries, as such temporary spaces are often called, have been popular in London for years and recently started showing up in New York. Slowly but surely they're making their way into Chicago too, helped along by the storefronts and offices vacated during the current financial crisis. Most aren't nearly as prestigious as a floor-through in the Hancock tower, but an empty window on a shopping street in [Edgewater](#) does just as fine, if not better, for artists working in more conventional media.

Giving such spaces over to galleries, curators and artists for free or reduced rent typically creates a win-win for everyone. Landlords reduce vandalism by keeping properties occupied and stand a better chance of renting them anew because of the attractive temporary inhabitants and increased foot traffic. In return, artists get an affordable showcase for their work, one that provides a break from the typical white cube, and often reaches a broad new audience through street-side locations. And artists are nothing if not adaptable creatures, ready to transform whatever space is made available to them.

Edgewater and [Lakeview East](#) have both begun pop-up gallery programs in recent months. In Edgewater, a dozen or so empty shop windows along North Broadway, West Granville and a few other streets have since this summer been filled with paintings, sculptures and jewelry by local artists and artisans through the "Artists in Motion" program. Jay Delaney, executive director of the area's chamber of commerce, which runs the program, explains that the displays make streets more walkable. They've become so popular, he adds, that landlords have begun to seek artists out rather than the other way around.

Unlike the Edgewater scheme, which aims to find display space for any local artist who applies, Lakeview East is taking a more selective and ambitious tack. Maureen Martino, executive director of the neighborhood's chamber of commerce, is working with curator Anna Cerniglia to find and fill spaces along North Clark Street, from Diversey Street to Wellington Avenue, with a roster of up-and-coming Chicago artists. They hope to have a string of temporary galleries -- not just windows but functioning storefronts -- up and running by the end of November. Some of the challenges they face include licensing, liability and funding, all of which still need to be sorted out with various city and commercial agencies.

A single floor in the Hancock building and a dozen or so shops on the North Side might not be enough to constitute a phenomenon, but with any luck they'll be enough to get one going. Imagine temporary galleries sprouting up everywhere across Chicago, wherever shops and businesses have closed. For the sake of strollers, art lovers, artists, property owners and the residents of neighborhoods with vacant properties -- and what Chicagoan doesn't fit into at least one of those categories, especially the last -- let's hope the pop-up gallery phenomenon goes viral.

Jan Tichy, "Installations," at Richard Gray Gallery, 875 N. Michigan Ave., 24th floor, 312-642-8877, richardgraygallery.com, through Nov. 24. For more information on the Edgewater Chamber of Commerce's "Artists in Motion" program, go to edgewater.org/Edgewater_Artists_in_Motion.aspx. No information is available yet on the Lakeview East Chamber of Commerce's pop-up gallery program. Check their Web site in the near future for announcements: lakeviewchamber.com.

onthetown@tribune.com

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Reviews, profiles and news about art in Chicago

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Eye Exam: Twenty-First Century Ruins

► Humboldt Park, Installation, Michigan Avenue, Video

By Jason Fournberg

In the typical scheme of urban gentrification, artists stake out cheap studio space in a so-called bad area, then comes the wave of galleries, condos and boutiques, and voilà, a neighborhood is transformed (to oversimplify the matter). Sometimes, though, this process is reversed. As the economy slips and strong commercial centers lose their tenants, vacancies are produced faster than trinkets from China can fill them, and we end up with ruins in the city center. That's when the artists move back in.

The artist take-back was staged in Michael Ruglio-Misurell's installation of a ruined shopping mall reclaimed by squatters, recently closed at Gallery 400. The theatrical ruins fed a certain taste for apocalypse porn, but the real thing is happening in buildings around Chicago right now. More than just a schadenfreude of capitalistic decay, the creative re-imagining of vacant spaces produces a range of effects, from emboldening the DIY spirit to provoking political commentary.

The John Hancock Tower is an unexpected home for one such creative re-use of a ruin. Here, on the twenty-fourth floor in this monument to corporate progress, artist Jan Tichy transforms about a third of a vacated 33,000 square-foot office suite into a sprawling exhibition of video installations. At the elevator's ding, its doors open to lights out and the low hum of a machine. The carpet has been torn out to reveal concrete, but the walls of private offices and conference rooms, previously home to headset-yapping VPs, remain like ghosts. These rooms are lit only by the glow emanating from Tichy's projectors and television sets, maximizing the haunted house effect as viewers wander the empty offices.



Jan Tichy, "Installation No.6 (Tubes)," 2009

not shocking or loud; even a three-minute video requires patience to fully reveal itself. At heart, Tichy is a formalist who captures the way lighting effects change or reveal architecture. Looking out one of the tower's irregular geometric windows onto a creeping sunset over the city, it becomes clear that this opportunity enabled Tichy, who's had smaller shows around town, to fully realize his potential. Funny, though, that it took someone else's despair to complete another's dream.



Inside "Stolen" at Garage Spaces

It also feels devilishly enthralling, as if the light from Tichy's works were a helicopter searchlight shining into your illicit party. It's entertaining, but hardly illegal. The production is sponsored by Richard Gray Gallery, located one floor above, which seems to be surviving, and mining, the economic downturn with aplomb. Despite the immersive environment, though, Tichy's strength is his use of subtlety.

The videos and projections are

OCTOBER 14, 2009



Paul Klein

Art advocate and proponent for art in Chicago

Posted: October 8, 2009 04:44 PM

Fresh Art Breadth

Chicago artists are making a difference. There are more artists taking initiative than I've seen in some time. More artist-run, alternative spaces are emerging. Some appear with the intent of only

lasting for a few months and some only for a single show.

Obviously there are not enough galleries here to address the quantity of quality art that's made here. And though that appears to be an indictment of our galleries, there is also an insufficient number of collectors (even just buyers) to adequately support the gallery scene.

The smart galleries stay ahead of the curve. Old models don't work the way they used to. For decades Richard Gray Gallery has been exemplary, and under the guidance of Paul Gray and his coterie of co-workers steps up its game yet again this weekend. They've commandeered a lot of space on the floor beneath them and given it over to a one-person installation of sensitive work by Jan Tichy, who just received his master's from the School of the Art Institute. Last seen in a MCA 12 x 12 show, Tichy's work incorporates projected video, often onto objects he's sculpted. His calm, meditative, memorable work is worth seeing all by itself, but observing how a first-class gallery expands its program as it morphs forward, even in embracing what appears to be a thoroughly noncommercial presentation, is a joy unto itself.



Welcome to Tel Aviv's first art biennial

After a shaky start and threats of artists boycotting the event, ArtTLV has downsized its international ambitions to host an inaugural showcase primarily exhibiting local art instead

Marisa Mazria Katz
guardian.co.uk, Thursday 17 September 2009 13.44 BST

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Political art ... Part of Israeli artist Shelly Federman's separation wall installation at the Tel Aviv Art Biennial. Photograph: Shelly Federman

A petite blonde with tight blue jeans and honey-coloured skin sits atop a Styrofoam slab in a bright courtyard. The slab is made to look like a portion of the West Bank's separation wall. "On the one hand its grotesque," said 34-year-old Israeli artist Shelly Federman as she lit a cigarette on a balmy September night, "but I wanted to make the wall visible, and in doing so make people feel uncomfortable." About half a dozen of these sponge wedges — roughly a quarter of the size of their actual counterpart — encircle a small screen that has a short video on loop. During the clip you hear Mungo Jerry's melodic song *Summertime* blast from speakers, accompanying images of sun-drenched Israelis using the grey blocks as surfboards and lounge chairs on a pristine Tel Aviv beach.

Federman's installation is the centerpiece for Tel Aviv's inaugural biennial, ArtTLV, a city-wide art event featuring roughly 300 local and international artists. The three-week-long happening, taking place inside galleries, public courtyards and workshops, is the brainchild of a group of art collectors, gallerists and philanthropists — coincidentally, all of them Israeli women. Their aim was to create a "Mediterranean cultural triangle" between Tel Aviv, Athens and Istanbul in an effort to promulgate Israeli art and culture, and also to facilitate a vibrant exchange between the three cities.

After a small test run last year, the organisers of ArtTLV hired two well-established, foreign curators,

when Gaza was attacked in December 2008. After the onslaught began, Misiano and Badovinac announced they would only participate in the biennial if no government funding was accepted.

But then "the situation became a paradox", says Galia Yahav, Israel's most prominent art critic and former ArtTLV board member. The process of sourcing alternative funding began just months before the planned launch – and at the start of the global financial crisis. "Basically, no one knew how to raise the cash the curators expected in that short amount of time," said Yahav. Failure to secure the funding resulted in Badovinac and Misiano's departure, and a severance of cooperation between the biennial and the nearby Istanbul Biennial.

Thus ArtTLV shrunk and became, at least for its inauguration, a predominantly Israeli affair. The biennial's main exhibition space is centred on a seam of land that now divides the ancient city of Jaffa and Tel Aviv. It was here that the German Templars, a sect of the Lutheran Church that populated Palestine with agricultural communities, once lived. Their modest two-storey structures, built circa 1870, lay abandoned for decades, hidden behind sheaths of overgrown trees and rusted gates. Plans to build a 147-metre high, multi-million dollar tower next to the former Templar colony were sanctioned on the condition that developers renovated three of the dilapidated German structures. And so it was on 9 September 2009, inside these newly restored edifices in the shadow of a 44-storey concrete and glass skyscraper, that ArtTLV was born.

A little more subtle than Federman's squishy separation wall, is work from the artist Jan Tichy. His white paper tubes of uneven height, vertically affixed on top of a TV screen, stand out as one of the exhibition's most poignant critiques of Tel Aviv and its evolution. Streams of white lines radiating from the black monitor burn light on the paper cylinders, which effectively operate, in the artists words, "as a kind of organism that lurks below the city's surface". Tichy says the piece challenges the 2003 listing of Tel Aviv's collection of Bauhaus buildings – known as White City – as a World Heritage site: "Tel Aviv may be called the White City, but it sits on big, black issues. And in many ways it is the unseen here that has an immense influence."

On the biennial's opening day, the darkness Tichy described was nowhere to be seen; instead it was all cava and gourmet espresso. The city's art elite popped in and out of the templar buildings to see the hundreds of videos, paintings, photographs and multimedia pieces. On the streets, however, few had heard of the event, giving it an insular, navel-gazing quality. Still, much of the work on show had a delicious sense of humour and subtly acknowledged the awkwardness that comes with exhibiting in a country mired in political turmoil. Of particular interest was Su-Mei Tse's video of uniformed men and women sweeping desert sand, and Aharon Ozery's 6ft steel and aluminum contraption that moved large white eggs around several platforms.

Further afield, a small exhibit that marked the literary debut of Made Public: Palestinian Photographs in Military Archives in Israel, was one of the few pieces to focus on the Palestinian minority living in Israel. The book, written by Israeli curator Rona Sela, features images of Palestinian soldiers studying maps and preparing for battle before the establishment of the state in 1948. Sela recovered the images from the Israeli Ministry of Defence archives when they were opened to the public in 2002.

The absence of local Arab artists at ArtTLV is not entirely surprising. Staging a showcase funded by the Israeli government against the backdrop of the city's centennial celebrations meant Palestinian artists living in Israel sidestepped participation. Despite the potential for controversy, Said Abu Shakra, director of the country's only Arab arts museum in Umm el-Fahm, curated an exhibit entitled A Place of Memory, which featured photographs of prominent Palestinians who reside in the

northern Wadi Ara region. But international Arab representation was limited to artists Mounir Fatmi, who displayed a collection of 1,500 VHS cassettes arranged like a cluster of high-rises for his piece Skyline, and Kader Attia, whose work Fragility showed a series of sculpted plastic bags perched atop pillars.

When the opening gala was in full swing, Federman's separation wall slabs were subject to a barrage of accidental kicks and falls by passersby. These unintentional assaults were precisely what Federman sought when she conceived of the project. "I am trying to show the audience that there is no way to be passive, because when you are passive you are actually taking part in something that is terrible. By bringing the wall here, I want to bring the responsibility back."

A young woman in stiletto heels came over to greet Federman. As she stepped on to a wedge to take a seat, she punctured the surface with four golf ball-size holes. Federman smiled as she surveyed the damage. "Looks like rocks were thrown on it," she said, exhaling a plume of smoke. "Makes it look real."

Gaza Via Tel Aviv

ArtTLV, a success in 2008, was on its way to being an international event when the harsh reality, both political and financial, brought it back to being local

— VARDIT GROSS



The opening night of ArtTLV 2008 took place on an early fall evening. Hundreds of people stormed down Rothschild Boulevard, walking between exhibition spaces, sipping alcohol and enjoying the perfect weather. The installations in venues along Nachalat Binyamin gave a different perspective to these rarely entered buildings; the videos playing outdoors at Yaacov Garden blended flawlessly with the architecture; the performance by the band Bney Hama mesmerized the crowd.

It was the kind of night that carries light optimism in it. The guests of Bank Leumi, the event's main sponsor, were excited and promised their support for the next ArtTLV. Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai witnessed the powerful moment – and he, too, was happy to embrace ArtTLV 09 as part of Tel Aviv's centennial celebration. The light optimism carried into the winter: Three months later, in mid-December 2008, representative curators from the Istanbul biennial came to Israel to meet the appointed curators of ArtTLV, Zdenka Badovinac from Ljubljana, Viktor Misiano from Moscow and Edna Moshenson from

Tel Aviv. The curators started thinking about the possibility of cooperation, and discussed the meaning of having an international biennial in the Middle East. The idea of creating a triangle of connected events in the Mediterranean region, including the biennials in Istanbul and Athens, seemed closer than ever.

But dreams often fade in the non-forgiving Israeli sun. Just a few days after the international curators left, Israel launched its attack in the Gaza Strip. The domino effect was quick and painful: Following the images from Gaza, the Istanbul curators decided that they couldn't cooperate with ArtTLV, which is partially funded by the Tel Aviv Municipality. The international curators decided to rethink their concept and, in order to respond to the war, they offered an alternative plan: to publish statements made by important international artists and intellectuals about the war in Gaza in leading Israeli and Palestinian media outlets. The process of trying to execute this proposal was long and drawn-out. As time was running out on the curatorial side, bad news arrived on the financial side: With the world economic crisis

Image:

Jan Tichy / **Installation no. 6 (tubes)**

2009, video installation, 10 min.

25" monitor, 200 paper objects, adhesive, sand bags

70x60x120 cm

Opposite page:

Meir Tati / **Tikkun**

2008, video installation



reaching new heights, the supporting bank announced less than six months before opening day that it would renege on its financial commitments. With no main sponsor and no other public institution to take it under its wing, and with an international media project that was slowly disappearing, ArtTLV had to think smaller and more local.

With the help of streets signs in Tel Aviv, people find their way to important tourist destinations in Gaza City

The smaller-than-planned ArtTLV, taking place this September, is connecting to other art events around Tel Aviv's centennial celebrations to create a weekend of art. All galleries in town will be open all night during the opening event, and many artists' studios will be open to the public over the following weekend.

ArtTLV 09's main exhibition, curated by Edna Moshenson and Maayan Sheleff, is located in a Templer settlement at the intersection of Neve Tzedek (Tel Aviv's first Jewish

neighborhood and currently a luxury residential area), Jaffa (which has a large Arab community) and Florentin (an industrial neighborhood home to many local artists). The exhibition is using this intersection as a starting point to discuss different aspects of urbanism. More than 30 local and international artists are taking part in this exhibition, among them Sigalit Landau, Yael Bartana, Francis Alÿs, Laurence Wiener, Allora and Calzadilla, Sue-Mei Tse, Michal Neeman, Jan Tichy, Yochai Avrahami, Nira Pereg, Michal Ullman and Miri Segal. Next to the main exhibition, the "Artist Curates Artist" section of ArtTLV 09, in which artists curate themselves, will be led by Said Abu Shakra — who, apart from being an artist, is the Umm el-Fahem art gallery director.

An outdoor exhibition curated by Michael Kessus Gedalyovich and Maayan Sheleff plans to map the city both physically and mentally. The mapping project intends to build a route through the city using installations and performances, which ends in a big mud event on the beach. Among the mapping projects

is Mushon Zer-Aviv and Laila El-Haddad's "You're Not Here," which allows you to tour the streets of Gaza via the streets of Tel Aviv. In a sort of an urban tourism mash-up, people hold up a double-sided map to the light and, with the help of street signs in Tel Aviv, find their way to important tourist destinations in Gaza City. Audio tours are available through a hotline whose access numbers will be published in the streets. Other mapping projects include those by, among others, Adina Bar-On whose "Orientation" is a guided tour that examines private and public sentiments in regard to the city, and Ori Dromer and Lilach-Shira Gavish who will try to reveal lost cultural figures. Four leading Israeli video artists — Guy Ben-Ner, Doron Rabina, Boaz Arad and Ruti Sela — will work with curator Maayan Amir on their own mapping projects through an exploration of their unedited materials. The route built in the city by the different projects is supposed to continue from the beach and into the water with a boat that will host "Ex-Territory" — a conference taking place outside of any state's territorial water. →

Barcelona free art

A free look at art in Barcelona: galleries, public spaces, installations... (an exquisitely slow blog)

[Kevin Booth](#)

After Architecture – Typologies of the Afterwards

13/07/2009

[Arts Santa Mònica](#), from 20 June to 6 September. 18 artists.



Terence Gower Wilderness Utopia, 2008
Video projection: 3'22". Digital printing 89×230 cm.

Approaching an exhibition on architecture as a kind of "essay" might seem dry yet it refreshingly smashes some traditional boundaries of expectation to examine the topic from new angles. Curator Martí Peran's aim to "ascertain the effects and transformations that architecture suffers through experimentation in real contexts and real time", provides a discursive thread that links these eighteen artists' widely divergent, even eccentric, perspectives.

On one hand, the exhibition stresses architecture's regimenting, orderly function, to control or predetermine behaviour, as David Harvey states, "erect[ing] a built space in order for time to progress smoothly into the future"; yet on the other, inherently highlighting its simultaneous role as a container for real lives, lived experience. This human presence naturally tends to "correct" or modify the premise, creating cracks for entropy to creep through: "a structure of notable cultural complexity will inevitably undergo a multiplication of its inherent processes of degradation and disintegration" with the result that "the modern project has declined into endless sequels produced by its own (dis)solution."

After Architecture is divided into four sections: Back, Around, Interior and Demolition.

Back examines the duality of façades, hiding those "ideological foundations" which, in turn, reveal architecture's "habitual failures".

In *Wilderness Utopia* (2008), using digital technology, Terence Gower recreates Hirschhorn City, a failed utopia conceived by self-made tycoon and art collector Joseph H. Hirschhorn who amassed a fortune in uranium mining and arms dealing. This state-of-the art city was to house his important art collection (now Washington's Hirschhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden). Gower reveals the grim underbelly of this utopian dream, accompanying his project with graphic press information on the ecological disasters uranium mining has caused: the devastation behind the façade.

Within *Around*, Tim Etchells exhibits *City Changes* (2008), a series of texts that reference the city as a changing narrative rather than a static structure. The description of each possible urbs begins from the same premise: "There was once a city that..." before diverging into twenty different texts that each propose a different reality, repeating certain elements, drastically changing others, reading the city as a multiplicity of possible realities.



Jordi Colomer Avenida Ixtapaluca (Houses for México), 2009 Video and screening room 6' Master HD-CAM, Stereo. A production by CO-producciones (Barcelona) and Maravillas (Paris), with the collaboration of 7 Bienal do Mercosul (Porto Alegre, Brazil), SEACEX, CCE (Mexico).

Jordi Colomer's Avenida Ixtapaluca (houses for Mexico) (2009) offers an aerial panorama of a vast, apparently pristine, well-ordered suburb – thousands of independent bungalows laid down with the precision of computer chips. However, as the camera

inexorably hones in, encroaching into the human reality, it reveals previously invisible architectural imperfections until, at street level, it confronts us with its inhabitants' degradation and slum-like misery. The film fiercely critiques an ideological stance opting for hegemonic regimentation of architecture's inhabitants.

The section Interior focuses on enclosed space, traditionally identified as a private sanctuary protected from public life. Yet modern architecture reinterprets the inner space as a meeting point, one which use of transparent materials brings into contact with the exterior. Inside, is where humanity can most successfully alter and mutate the original architectural premise.

In Skyline (2007), Mounir Fatmi emphasises this polarity of exterior/interior, into hard/soft, brittle/flexible dualities. Recreating a city skyline out of video cassette cases, magnetic tape streams from its protective casing in a glistening waterfall representing humanity's anarchic messiness. The obsolescence of this recycled medium stresses architecture's temporality – modernity inevitably evolving into the historical – while the tape itself is a medium on which stories are recorded, thousands of narratives flowing out from the metropolis's fragile cells.



*Mounir Fatmi Skyline, 2007
1200 VHS magnetic tapes. Installation
dimensions: 3.8x8.2 m.*

Xavier Monteys offers an installation, La habitación secreta (2009), a secret room that references many similar themes in literature and cinema, "spaces which lead to the core of the drama", of which Monteys specifically references two, a Joseph Brodsky text and a William Wilder film. Yet its secret containment also celebrates the room as the city's smallest constitutive cell, a building block for the dwelling, its walls faintly resonating with the life sensed outside.

Demolition is possibly the most passionate section, recording entropy's inevitable triumph over order. Perin declares that "the modernist decision of commitment to the utopian spirit cancelled out Romantic fascination with ruins." Yet these pieces examine the ruins of modernist dreams.

Chris Mottalini photographs the effects of the American crisis in After you left they took it apart: demolished Paul Rudolph homes (2007). He documents the demoralised beauty of bankrupt American dreams, once so optimistically executed in Rudolph's clean, Bauhaus- and Cubist-influenced lines. Yet sagging plate glass dividers, peeling cladding and weeds sprouting in the once-manicured turf are his

heritage as the sun sets, throwing receding shadows onto stained walls. His photos capture the scars of past living in these now-abandoned spaces.

Lara Almarcegui's *Wastelands Map Amsterdam*, a guide to the empty sites in the city (1999), ironically focuses on those unplanned gaps in the urban tissue. It is an anti-guide of unlikely stops on a tourist itinerary, yet catalogued and photographed like rare sites in danger of extinction.

The most chilling work in *Demolition* is Jan Tichy's *Dahania. Yasser Arafat International Airport* (2006). Architecture here undergoes continual disappearance as a result of Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian infrastructure. Built in 1996, the airport's control tower was bombed by Israel and its runways mined in 2000. Despite repeated occupation by Israeli forces, the airport continues to be rebuilt and repaired as an optimistic icon to a future, free Palestine. Ironically, the sand in this installation originates from the Gaza Strip's geographical and ideological Mediterranean extreme, the bourgeois town of Sitges.



Jan Tichy Dahania. Yasser Arafat International Airport, 2006
Paper models on sand and framed poster. Dimensions: 120×45×15 cm; inkjet printing 200×35 cm.
Courtesy of Magazín 3 Stockholm Kunsthall

After Architecture includes the following artists: Terence Gower, Pia Rönicke, Xavier Arenós, Vangelis Vlahos, Laurent Malone & Dennis Adams, Gregor Graf, Mounir Fatmi, Heidrun Holzfeind, Xavier Monteys, Didier Bay, Jordi Colomer, Tim Etchells, Alexander Apóstol, Jan Tichy, Clay Ketter, Chris Mottalini & Lara Almarcegui. It is curated by Martí Peran in conjunction with Andrea Aguado.

Posted by [barcelonafreeart](#)

Modern Art Notes

Tyler Green's modern & contemporary art blog

'Uncle Rudi' and the response to torture



Continued from [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#) on Gerhard Richter, Uncle Rudi and a *quiet confrontation*. These posts are informed by *Gerhard Richter Portraits* from the Yale University Press and *Art of Two Germanys: Cold War Culture* from Abrams.

Gerhard Richter painted *Uncle Rudi* in 1965, 20 years after the Russians took Berlin. For a variety of reasons, including the sheer magnitude of Germany's shame, it took German artists about that long to begin to examine their nation and its responsibility for the Nazi years.

The crimes of the Bush-Cheney torture regime are not as horrific, and while the United States is still coming to grips with them -- some on the right such as Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC) even [argue that](#) 'it's in the past, so who cares?' -- artists have already begun to address questions of national responsibility for torture committed in America's name.

Yesterday I detailed how Richter's dry, confrontational-whisper approach to Germany's past in *Uncle Rudi* (and, in a different way, in *Aunt Marianne*) created a new, influential, just-the-facts-ma'am way for artists to address controversial topics, particularly when an artist spotlights a nation's shared responsibility for terrible acts. Today I want to talk about how several artists have adopted Richter's deadpan in addressing Bush-Cheney-era torture.



Take Israeli artist Jan Tichy, whose *1391* (2007, at right) was exhibited [last year](#) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. (At the top of this post is a 2007 Tichy video installation also titled *1391*.) *1391* is a paper architectural model of [Camp 1391](#), a once-secret Israeli military base, a Bagram-like [secret installation](#) used by the

Israelis [in a manner](#) similar to how the United States used its black sites. According to journalist Jane Meyer, the United States' torture regime was informed by Israeli practices, including those likely used at Camp 1391. In her book *The Dark Side*, Mayer reports that a former CIA officer told her: "The Israelis taught us that you can put a towel around a guy's neck and use it like a collar, to propel him headfirst into a wall."

Camp 1391's existence was revealed in 2003, five months before America's abuses at Abu Ghraib became public. Three years later Tichy created an artwork that imagines the physical structure of the Camp 1391 as simply as possible -- what's simpler than white paper on the floor? -- puts it in a dark gallery and blasts it with intense white light. Tichy's approach both emphasizes that a secret site used for state-sanctioned illegal detention and, probably, torture has been revealed, but the darkness in the rest of the gallery emphasizes how the place was once hidden from the world. It is confrontational revelation as artwork, an installation every bit as dry and matter-of-fact as Richter's *Uncle Rudi*.

The best-known American art about the torture era are Richard Serra's three 2004 works featuring Serra's take on the most [iconic](#) of the Abu Ghraib photographs. The work at right, as well as [this piece](#), are prints produced by Gemini G.E.L. Serra [exhibited](#) a lithocrayon-on-mylar version (below) at the 2006 Whitney Biennial. All three feature a straightforward sketch of the central figure in the horrible [photograph](#) from Abu Ghraib, an approach right out of the Richter playbook. (Like *Uncle Rudi*, the Tichy and all three Serras are black-and-white, as if the lack of color serves to reveal truth.)



However, for the Whitney Biennial version, Richter included an extra element: The hooded torturee was surrounded by the phrase "STOP BUSH." Serra exhibited his *Uncle Rudi*-influenced *Stop Bush* just after he had borrowed from another artist, Goya, for [an artwork](#) that was reproduced on the back cover of *The Nation*. That Serra was a cheap, one-off Photoshop trick, so reactionary as to be cringe-worthy.

No surprise then that when I saw *Stop Bush* at the Whitney I thought of it in the context of Serra's [Goya-plus-Bush](#). *Stop Bush* seemed like a similar grimace-causing one-note. I thought it was too pointed, too specific, too immediate and time-sensitive to be the kind of art work that lasts. I was pretty sure that once the biennial was over that I'd never think about the piece again. (I wasn't alone in shrugging at *Stop Bush*: In Michael Kimmelman's [review](#) of the show, he mentions the Serra only enough to note that conservatives would dismiss it.)



In the three years since the Serra was installed at the Whitney, we've learned more about the Bush-Cheney torture regime. *Stop Bush* has come to seem less an exhortation and more of a plea. Given the art work that has come since -- work referenced here and plenty more -- *Stop Bush* seems like something else: Permission from a venerable, successful figure to younger, less institutionally-sanctioned artists. More and more it seems like Serra's way of saying to other artists: *Go confidently where your heart tells you that you must go. Uncle Rudi may have provided us with one way for an artist to address a calamity of his own nation's doing... but you know what? It's good to learn from the*

past, but you don't need to be too careful. Look at how I signed Stop Bush in the lower-right -- it's mine and I'm proud to take responsibility for it. Go ahead and bring passion and urgency into your work. Be explicit again.

Related: Kathryn Hixson [Interviews](#) Jan Tichy.

Related examination of art and torture on MAN: [George Grosz at the Hirshhorn](#); the Abu Ghraib photos [part one](#), [part two](#); the Hirshhorn acquires Martha Rosler's *The Gray Drape*; Bruce Nauman at the Venice Biennale: [Double Steel Cage Piece](#) (1974) and America's torture of Abu Zubaydeh, Nauman's hanging chair sculptures, [part one](#), [part two](#).

August 12, 2009 9:44 AM | [Permalink](#)

An Interview with Jan Tichy, by Kathryn Hixson

By Kathryn Hixson



Jan Tichy, (1991, 12007), video installation

Jan Tichy is an Israeli artist of Czech origin living in Chicago. All of his work is photographic - taking such multiple forms as prints, videos, sculpture, digital animation and installations. His work embodies Douglas Ecklund's assertion in The Pictures Generation exhibition catalogue at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009) that "the technical and material basis of all photography is the

control of light in relation to darkness." In some works, Tichy takes the intrinsic ability of the mechanical apparatus of the camera to capture a fleeting instant of time that the human eye can barely see. These images become objects frozen for further contemplation. In other works, he deconstructs our ability to "picture" a thing, place, or time in our mind's eye, actually constructing objects out of found images. He then uses the medium of light itself to activate these objects in a way that turns them back into images, etching themselves into our imagination.

Born in 1974 in Prague, Tichy moved to Israel in 1993. After four years of studying political science at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he attended Musrara School of Photography and New Media, Jerusalem. He continued his studies at the Advanced Studies in Art Program at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design. During a workshop at the Kiasma Museum of Modern Art in Helsinki, Finland, Tichy met Mary Jane Jacob, a curator and then chair of the Sculpture Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), who encouraged him to pursue an MFA there.

Over the past two years Tichy has exhibited internationally, his work shown in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Haifa, Prague, Berlin, Frankfurt, Barcelona, Washington DC, New York and Los Angeles. In 2008, his work was exhibited in the Israeli Pavilion at the Architecture Biennale in Venice. He recently completed a major Chicago project situated at Crown Hall, a building designed by Mies van der Rohe on the campus of Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), as well as a collaborative project with SAIC professor Helen Maria Nugent for the upcoming exhibition "Learning Modern" at the Sullivan Galleries.

I recently talked to Tichy in his studio about the range of his works.

Kathryn Hixson (KH): At the Herzliya Biennale in 2007 you showed *Bats* (2007), an installation for two slide projectors with 80 images of bats. Why did you focus on bats?

Jan Tichy (JT): The work is not just about these mammals living around Tel Aviv, but also about the architecture of the city, and the sleeping people behind the shattered windows. It took me five years to gather and edit the final selection of photographs of the bats. I used a digital camera with a flash to capture images of the flying creatures. Even though these are friendly, fruit-eating bats, people have a strong reaction to them: either disgust or fascination. I find them cute and sometimes talk to them.



Jan Tichy, *Bats* (2007), slide installation

KH: So you froze the bats' movement into still images. In other works you proceed in the opposite direction. You make objects, from paper or porcelain, often based on images found on the Internet and animate them with digitally projected light. Some of your installation objects are abstract, like domes, tubes or cylinders; some are generic like antennas towers or spatial grids. But you also worked with specific sites as well, making paper model kits according to images from the Web, such as

the Yasser Arafat International Airport in Gaza and the Dimona Nuclear Power Plant. In a solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, you displayed a paper model kit of the secret Israeli prison, Facility 1391, a controversial site made public in 2003. Though hotly political, you presented the structures as if from a distance: small, cool, and opaque. Why did you choose these highly charged sites?

JT: It is about access and distribution of information. Those charged sites are inaccessible to the public for various political reasons. But there is enough visual information on the Internet for me to create a paper model of the structure and redistribute it as a cutout kit. The fragile paper model of the power structure placed on the floor redefines the building's relationship with the viewer.



Jan Tschy, *Installation on 6 (tubes)*, (2009), video installation

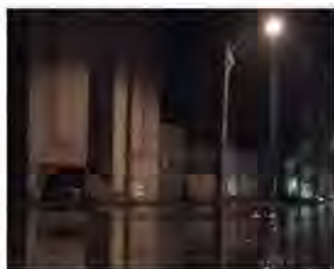
KH: You have begun to add sound to some of your installations. In *Installation no.6 (tubes)* (2009), you affixed paper tubes of various diameters onto a TV monitor positioned on its back, horizontally, so that the white tubes are lit from beneath by the screen, on which your abstracted light animation is playing. How did you make the sound for this piece?

JT: When I started to work with an analog CRT monitor, the good old tube, I noticed that even when the sound is turned off it makes this static noise. I used a pick-up microphone, like the one in an electric guitar, to amplify the noise and realized that there is a correlation between the

projected image and the amplified sound. I composed the score by changing the image. In effect, you hear what you see.

KH: In that work and other installations you animate still objects with time-based light projection. But you also made video works like the pictures (2007) or recess (2009), long video shots of the urban environment.

JT: These shots were coincidentally collected. The pictures are from south Tel Aviv, found on my way home from the studio. Others are from different trips in Europe and America. Although I am using different media approaches, in the end the stillness, the light and the movement are all present, creating similar effects as in my sculptural installations.



Jan Tschy, *the pictures* (2007), multi channel video installation

KH: You have already taught in some very different settings, mostly in Israel. Now you are starting to teach in Chicago. To which pedagogical models do you look?

JT: After teaching for number of years in Israel, it was important for me to experience American art education models, first of all as a student, and SAIC offered me an essential experience. I am now leading a group of international MFA students as a part of "The Bauhaus Labs" program organized by SAIC and IIT, to light up the Crown Hall building with video projections. It is a collaborative effort in

the spirit of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, I'm bringing in the know-how, but the creative process will be one of cooperative teamwork.

About the author:

Kathryn Hudson is an art critic, professor at the Department of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is former editor of *New Art Examiner*, and her writing has been published in *Art US*, *Art on Paper*, *Flash Art*, *Arts*, and many other arts publications internationally, and she has written catalogue essays for the Renaissance Society, MCA Chicago, Milwaukee Art Museum, and numerous galleries. She is currently working on her PhD in Art History at the University of Texas at Austin, and recently received an Art Writers Grant from Creative Capital / Andy Warhol Foundation.



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Exhibition

Paper perfection

The artists whose work is on display in Ticho House's new exhibit have created meticulous three-dimensional installations from a simple, even humble, material

• By LAUREN GELFOND FELDINGER

It's been a long time since paper was just a surface for writing, decorating, drawing or prints. Making objects from paper is long known, especially in Japan, China, Korea and the Philippines, with techniques such as paper-cutting, origami paper folding, lantern-making and papier-mâché.

Paper has become especially "bling" recently, from small objects like sparkly paper ornaments advertised by Martha Stewart, to paper dresses sewn on Project Runway and an entire set at the Chanel Paris couture show in January, adorned with thousands of flowers, leaves, nets and light fixtures, composed of simple, white paper.

Chanel's creative director Karl Lagerfeld had previously hinted that a new age of modesty would follow in the design world on the heels of the world financial crisis. So it may not have come as a shock to see even a Chanel couture dress trimmed with what looked like white paper origami flowers and models with origami hats. Lagerfeld wrote at the time that he loves paper: "Everything starts with paper," he said of how his designs evolve.

At the Ticho House exhibition in Jerusalem, paper is also elevated and fashioned into images and objects from nature and other sources with unexpected results.

But the show asks questions that blur the distinction between design, decoration and fine art, much like the recent "Bizarre Perfection" exhibition at the Israel Museum, to which Ticho House is affiliated. In both shows, the artists use time- and labor-intensive methods to create their graphic, textural works, often with atypical materials. "Paperworks" is a more somber show, with the materials and colors pared down to the minimum.

ON THE first floor of "Paperworks," pristine, dark, earth-colored pinecones lie in a pile. Only from close up is it obvious that the



'Desolation,' 2009, by Yifat Bezael, born 1975. Installation; paper, wood, toothpicks.

Pristine, dark, earth-colored pinecones lie in a pile. Only from close up is it obvious that the cones are handmade

cones are handmade. Ruth Orr spent months using traditional Filipino paper-folding techniques to create individual pine nodules, which interlock to form each pine. An immigrant from England who moved to a kibbutz in the Jezreel Valley during childhood, her works often duplicate objects that are displaced from their natural environments.

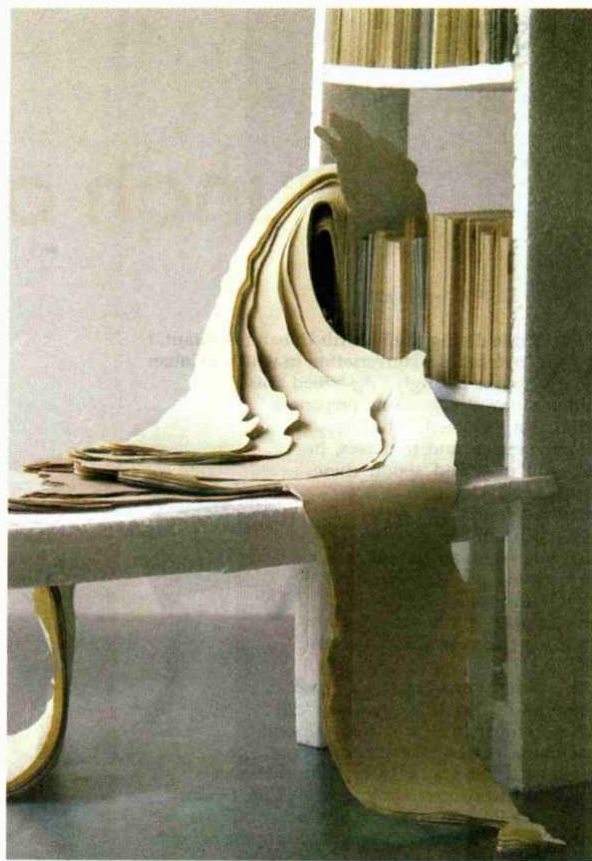
Yael Goren-Strauss crumpled up Japanese silk paper and used the surface to draw a photo-realistic image of an elephant. The crinkles of the page, ironed by the act of drawing, take the image only subtly out of the two-dimensional sphere, while adding a sensation of luscious, aged elephant skin. Again, the technique can only be seen from close up, inviting the viewer to zoom in on details not seen in the zoo setting, where Goren-Strauss works part time.

Though most of the works have an obsessive craftiness about them, many are not fashioned with the goal of pictorial realism. There is a large-scale and abstract sculptural installation, *Secrets*, by Efrat Klipshtein and a sound composition made from a recording of crumpling and throwing away paper in *Writer's Block*, by Nelly Agassi and Assaf Evron.

The scores of white flowers, leaves and marsh grasses in Yifat Bezael's installation *Desolation* are graphically pleasing because of their layering and arrangement, but are not created out of precision patterns, like the flowers at the Chanel show or as the works of most of the other artists in the exhibition. Bezael intentionally laid her installation in a backroom, without painting over the mildew on the walls, to create the feeling of stumbling on an untamed, undiscovered corner of nature, neglected yet beautiful.

Some of the works are visually surprising, like a hand-cut paper window screen in one window and a heap of 3,000 paper wasps in another. Yellow jackets apparently like to nest in window corners, and they grind bark and leaves to a pulp in their mouths to fashion their paper nests.

The making of insects from paper-folding is a relatively recent innovation. Physicist and avid origami-maker Robert Lang, who represents the interest in the last couple of decades of scientists and mathematicians in origami, has said that historically there were no origami insects because it was too complicated to make all the delicate legs with just folding and no cutting. In the 1990s, however, he created a computer program, with input from other scientists, to create intricate and highly sophisticated origami patterns based on geometric theory.



'Paperwork,' 2009, by Maya Zack (born 1976). Installation; paper, wood.

ONE OF the more ambient works in the show, a video installation by Jan Tichy, uses an analog television as the prop, lighting and sound to highlight a minimalist metropolis built on its screen with rows of unadorned paper tubes. If seen properly in the quiet, dark space, with the curtains closed, the light and sound animate the cityscape, much as the lights, shadows, traffic and noise of a city continuously transform any skyline. The work recalls some of the meditative power of the classic black-and-white film *Metropolis* by Fritz Lang.

Two other installations also include movement. At the entrance to Ticho House, in an alcove across from the restaurant, for example, Paul Jackson's electric device imperceptibly works 24 hours a day, timed precisely to take three months to tear one sheet of small paper.

After 12 years of working with two-dimensional prints and drawings on paper, "Paperworks" curator Ronit Sorek set out to explore all the other ways that paper could be used to make fine art. "I'm interested in paper as a medium, not as a surface," she says.

Sorek called the exhibition a contemporary follow-up to a 1974 exhibition at the Israel Museum, curated by Meira Perry-Lehmann. "Above and Beyond" showed works by Israeli conceptual artists who examined paper in the tradition of the Dada and other Conceptual artists who were their predecessors.

"[But] today we don't need to ask questions about paper," she says. "It is just another medium."

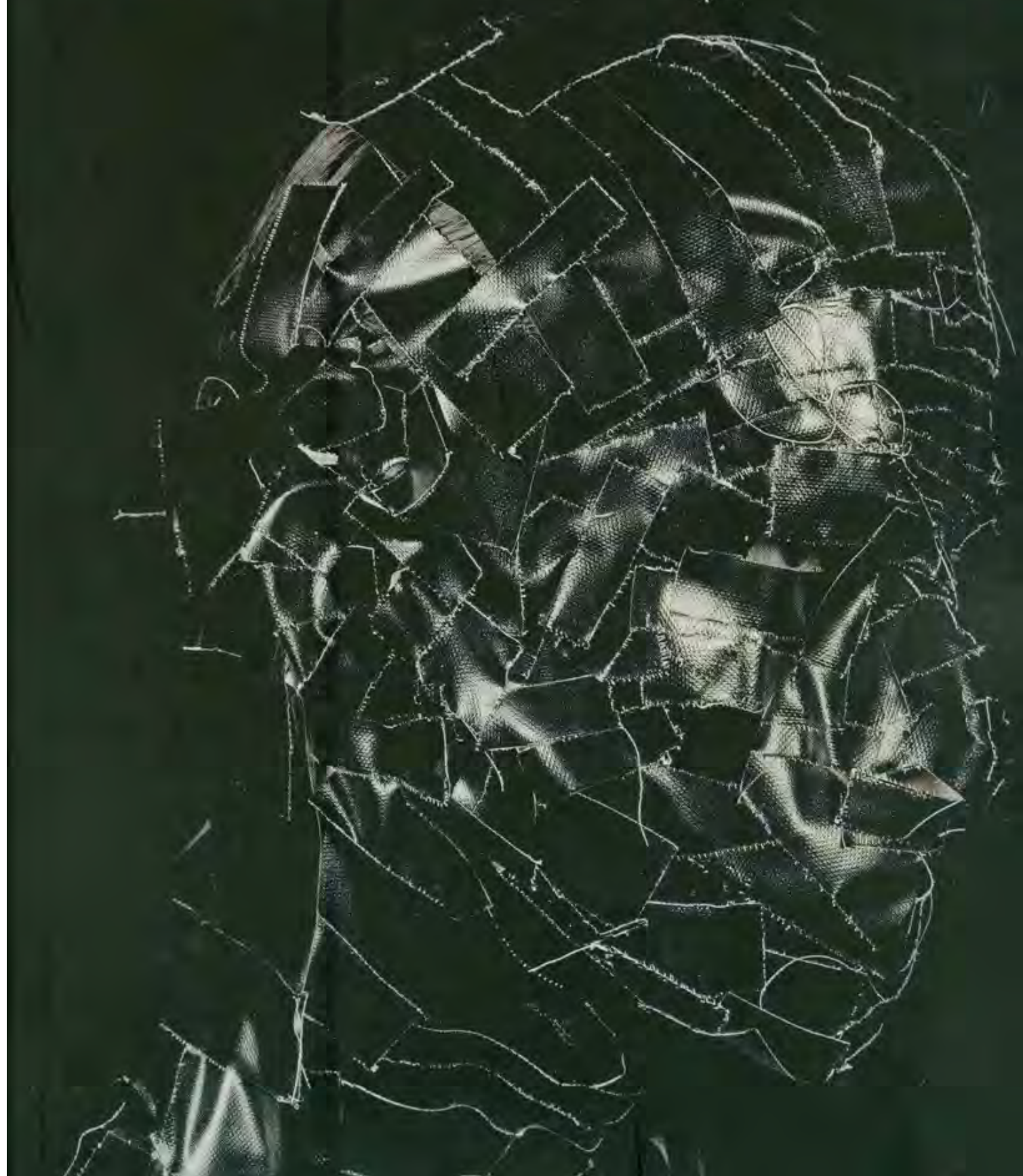
"Paperworks," with works by 12 contemporary artists, is showing through June 5 at the Ticho House galleries in Jerusalem, Rehov Harav Kook 9, (02) 624-5068.

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FACILITY 1391



DESIGN
JAN TICHY

1391 (2007), MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO 2008
INSTALLAZIONE VIDEO, 10 MINUTI
MODELLO DI CARTA (20 X 28 X 33 CM), PER GENTILE CONCESSIONE DELL'ARTISTA
PROIEZIONE VIDEO VERTICALE (152 X 203 CM)
STAMPA A GETTO D'INCHIOSTRO (305 X 28 CM) E TESTO (43 X 28 CM)

1391 (2007), MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO 2008
VIDEO INSTALLATION, 10 MINUTES
PAPER MODEL (20 X 28 X 33 CM), COURTESY OF THE ARTIST
VERTICAL VIDEO PROJECTION (152 X 203 CM),
INKJET PRINT (305 X 28 CM) AND TEXT (43 X 28 CM)



Questa struttura si trova al centro di Israele, vicino al confine con la Palestina. Ricorda molte delle stazioni di polizia fortificate, in stile Tegar, costruite durante il mandato britannico. Molti di quegli edifici oggi fungono da basi militari, la loro ubicazione è rivelata da segnali stradali che riportano solo un numero. Facility 1391 non è segnalata sulle carte geografiche ed è stata cancellata dalle foto aeree. L'edificio, "la Guantanamo di Israele", è una sorta di buco nero nel quale i detenuti, molti dei quali libanesi catturati durante i 18 anni della lunga occupazione israeliana del Libano meridionale, sono svaniti, spogliati dei diritti fondamentali stabiliti dalla Convenzione di Ginevra.

The facility is located in central Israel, close to the border between Israel and Palestine. It resembles many of the heavily fortified, Tegar-style police stations built during the British Mandate. Many of these serve as military bases today, their location revealed through roadside signs showing only a number. Facility 1391 is not marked on maps and has been erased from aerial photographs. The facility, "Israel's Guantanamo", is a sort of black hole into which inmates, many of them Lebanese captured during Israel's 18-year occupation of South Lebanon, disappear, to be stripped of their basic rights under the Geneva Conventions.



NEWCITY Art

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May 15

Review: Jan Tichy/Museum of Contemporary Art

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RECOMMENDED

Jan Tichy has constructed a model of the secret Israeli military base Facility 1391, often referred to as "Israel's Guantanamo." On the floor of the gallery is a model of the building. A projector hums overhead, casting a long, eerie shadow of the model's tower onto an illuminated section of the floor. The paper model is simple and modest, a seemingly harmless artist's reconstruction. However, the bright white light from the projector, combined with a black curtain sectioning off this one room from the rest of the museum, shows us that Tichy is illuminating a thing normally hidden from view. On the wall, a long black banner showing Tichy's construction plans for the model and a description of Facility 1391 reveal the various possibilities of representation given the metaphorical black curtain surrounding what happens in the base. (Amy Dittmeier)

Through June 1 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, 220 E. Chicago, (312)397-4010.

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Beauty is a self-aware exterior

Smadar Sheffi

Graduate show, Master of Fine Arts program of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Bezalel Gallery, Tel Aviv

Expectations surrounding the graduate show of the Bezalel Master of Fine Arts program were certainly met. The show includes a number of noteworthy works, and even the weaker pieces are of average quality. It would be wise to keep an eye on a number of these graduates in the years to come.

A few of the graduates, like Reuven Israel, Galia Pasternak and Meital Katz-Minervo, are already active artists who regularly show at galleries and in group shows. Jan Tichi is also among these artists, and his video installation is the most enchanting of the works in the exhibition. Tichi showed pieces in the past year that laid the ground for his current installation: he showed a model of the Yasser Arafat International Airport in Dahaniya at The Heder gallery, and the installation "Facility 1391" at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. Both works addressed the point at which the concrete and substantial become hazy, and their political dimension was dominant.

In the current installation Tichi creates a more complex story built of three parts: a structure that looks like a minimalist sculpture by Sol LeWitt, an image of a broadcast antenna and a map that is screened on a wall showing two nuclear reactors, which at times seem like the breasts of a woman protruding from the wall.

Three projectors illuminate the objects, whose changing silhouettes constitute the drama that Tichi's play enacts. In the shadow of the structure, screened on the wall in a 9-minute loop, small figures whose actions are unclear appear and disappear. The silhouette of the antenna also makes itself known from time to time on the wall, and the image recalls those of antennas



THE WEBS WE WEAVE: A painting by Shai Azoulay.

and sirens that Moshe Ninio made use of in his works from the 1980s.

The map on the wall, the third element, is actually a map of both a "non-place" and an "everywhere" – a hybrid of different maps. A five-minute loop shows the changing image of a threatening landscape that, with its nuclear reactors, raises associations from Chernobyl to Iran to the Vanunu affair.

Tichi's installation works like a terrifying

play from which one cannot disconnect. It leaves no room for an interpretation that is not dramatic or difficult, and its beauty lies in its self-aware exterior.

Ariel Ken also shows an impressive body of work. The main piece is a "life-cycle" documentation (as in nature films) of the transformation undergone by the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem – from an elegant house designed by Richard Kaufman, exuding a liberal modernism that is confident and even

somewhat complacent, to an ugly fortress adorned with antennas, security stations, high walls and barbed wire. This is one of the most clever political works shown in recent years.

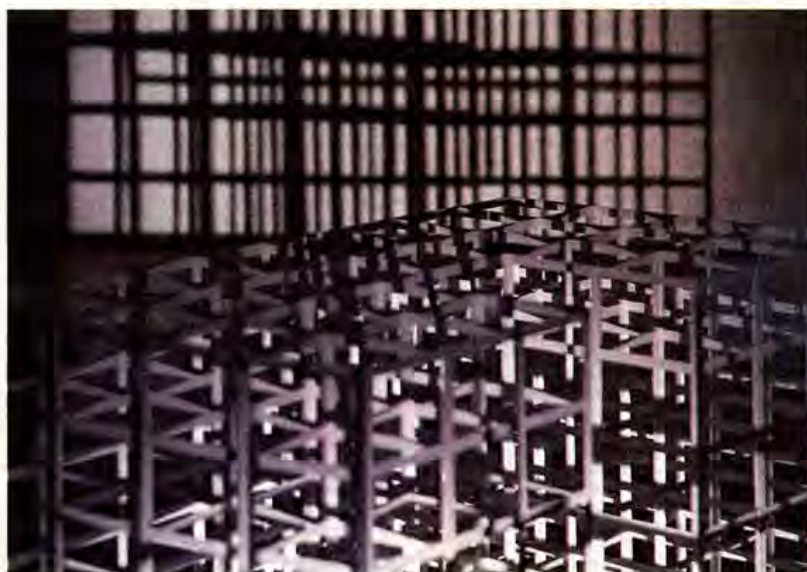
Ken's additional works are also very interesting – including photographs of dream houses built by settlers, ones that don't conform to the stereotype of bad taste, as if this were necessary to strengthen an objection to their existence. In a certain respect Ken is

the most original of the graduates in that he is an artist who addresses the complexity of life in Israel while avoiding oversimplification or demonization. Ken's challenge in the future will be to find a place where his art, which borders on documentation, continues to create an expansive experience, in which the concrete is put in service of something more than a manifesto. In the current exhibition Ken has already succeeded.

Shai Azoulay's paintings are also excellent. Azoulay, who has already participated in a number of group exhibitions, shows works that strengthen each other, making it clear that he is by now more than just a promising artist. He paints stories, moments, statements and absurdities. Images of a wig shop and paintings like "Presentation" and "Fundraiser" address questions relating to the nature of illusion and representation and, in fact, to the way we try to convey themes or messages. Azoulay refrains from virtuosity, dealing with a reality that is not whole, one that is flawed in how it operates.

Additional standouts include the paintings, drawings and refined objects of Liat Livni, the excellent photographs by Gustavo Sagorski and the installation by Guy Goldstein, who continues to toy with the line between the awful and the ridiculous. He shows a series of photographs of disposable plastic kitchen supplies, eroded by rodents he raised in his studio.

The works by Atar Geva, who created objects according to holes in the ground left by rockets that landed in the recent Lebanon War, and the disturbing works by Ores Dirker, in which the body serves as the basis for a nightmare – both offer sculpture of the kind that is rare among young artists, and it would be interesting to see how these artists develop in the future.



TOWER OF TERROR: From an installation by Jan Tichi.