



Harris Theater for Music and Dance
Jack and Sandra Guthman Gallery Guide



The Jack and Sandra Guthman Gallery is designed to showcase the work of current and former Chicago-based artists. While the Joan W. and Irving B. Harris Theater for Music and Dance serves as a home to several of the city's performing arts companies, this gallery reveals a similar community among visual artists. Virtually all of the artists were students or are now faculty members at one of Chicago's prominent art schools. In addition, the artists also share an interest in conceptual art, which places more emphasis on the concept, or idea, behind an artwork than on the object itself.

Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle (American, b. Spain 1961)

Twin, 1995

Cibachrome of DNA analysis



Many of Manglano-Ovalle's artworks examine the concept of identity and the ways that society defines and classifies people. *Twin* is part of a series of works in which Manglano-Ovalle collected DNA samples that were then "mapped" as rows of computer-colored dots and ultimately translated into enlarged photographic prints.

Belying its title, the DNA samples shown in *Twin* are actually those of the artist

and his brother, who are not the same age – yet there is only one line of difference. In this and similar works, Manglano-Ovalle represents people not by visible characteristics, such as skin tone, but by arbitrary colors and patterns that lack social and political meaning.

Lina Bertucci (American)
Academy of War, Italy, 2001
C-print



Academy of War, Italy was titled after the school the photograph depicts. Located in Florence, the academy was built in 1937 by Mussolini's Fascist government and served as a military training school. The academy still exists today and has the same function. The military plane and uniformed men in the foreground indicate the use of the otherwise non-descript buildings. In addition, the colors in the photograph – green, white and red – are those of the Italian flag.

Stephanie Brooks (American, b. 1970)
Constellations of Northern Hemisphere, 2000
Lightbox and inkjet print



In her artworks, Brooks often takes familiar visual motifs – including legal forms, directional signage, and proofreaders' marks – and combines them with witty, yet unrelated, text, subverting our expectations of recognizable objects. *Constellations of the Northern Hemisphere*

depicts a celestial map with groupings of stars labeled with the names of candies one would find in a box of assorted chocolates. Combining two types of charts, those used to map the skies and to select a piece of chocolate, Brooks hints at the limitations of traditional categories.

Laura Letinsky (Canadian, b. 1962)

Untitled #80, 2003

Chromogenic print



Letinsky's series of photographs of the remnants of dinner parties and food preparation present a contemporary perspective on the traditional genre of the still life. Despite the appearance of random disarray, the objects in

Letinsky's photographs are carefully arranged. Initially inspired by the debris she found the morning after cooking elaborate dinners, Letinsky began to focus on the idea of leftovers in her photographs. As metaphors for promise and its loss, her photographs of leftovers reflect life's potentials and disappointments.

Dan Peterman (American, b. 1960)

Mushroom, 1997

Mushroom on paper



Peterman's artworks often consider ideas and materials related to recycling. *Mushroom* is created from *Coprinus comatus* mushrooms, more commonly known as shaggymane or Lawyers wig. Upon maturity, this type of mushroom autodigests and turns into a pool of black liquid. Peterman collects the fresh mushrooms and lays them on print paper

where they dissolve to create abstract shapes. "I am intrigued by the metaphor of autodigestion, like the snake that eats its own tail," says Peterman.

Brian Ulrich (American, b. 1971)

Madison, WI (hangers), 2005

Chromogenic print

Edition 1 of 4



Madison, WI (hangers) is from Ulrich's *Thrift* series which focuses on the shops that collect and resell unwanted consumer goods. "I started thinking about

the thrift store as a kind of rest home, and as totally indicative of our fickleness in relation to these objects, which lose their glamour quite quickly," he explains.

Inspired by the aftermath of September 11th, 2001, and President George W. Bush's implication that people continue to shop to build the economy, Ulrich began to photograph the nation's consumerism. Comprising retail stores, thrift shops, and rundown malls, his photographs document the people, objects, and buildings that drive consumer culture.

Kerry James Marshall (American, b. 1955)

Untitled, 1998

Color photograph



Untitled is part of a series of works Marshall created to commemorate the ideals and advocates of the civil rights era. All of the works in the series are united by the common theme of mementos – inexpensive objects used to remember people, places, and events. *Untitled* shows what appears to be the tip of a letter opener displaying the images of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy, leaders who according to Marshall

“were commemorated as a kind of holy trinity of the civil rights movement in America.”

Jeanne Dunning (American, b. 1960)
Untitled (Study after Untitled Landscape), 1987
Gelatin silver print



Dunning's photographs such as *Untitled (Study after Untitled Landscape)* zoom in on various body parts, transforming them into what appear to be undulating hills or sand dunes. The small scale of this work invokes traditional black-and-white photography, but Dunning undermines its documentary function by abstracting the image with tight framing.

Carla Arocha (Venezuelan, b. 1961)

Portrait (Crocodile), 2001

Acrylic on MDF



Arocha mixes art and fashion by taking recognizable patterns from clothing and accessories and presenting them in new contexts.

Portrait (Crocodile) is part of a series in which each painting represents not a specific individual, but instead a personality type or an image with universal appeal.

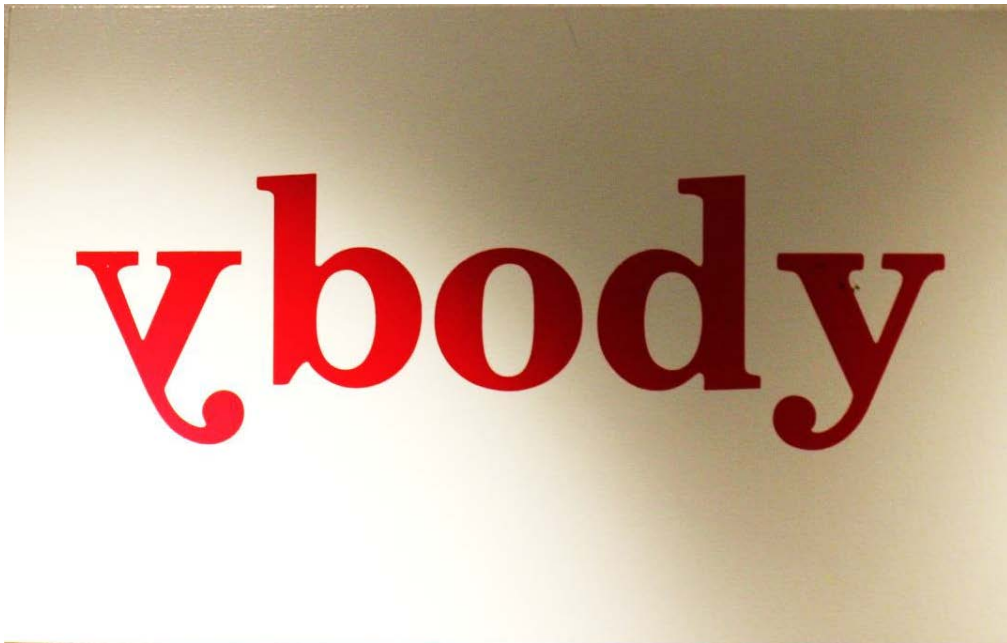
While the pattern is associated with shoes, belts, or handbags, the oval shape references a human face as well as portraits created for rounded frames or locket.

Kay Rosen (American)
Remember, 1993
Flat sign paint on paper



Rosen makes paintings that consist entirely of words. By using word play, homonyms, mirror images, and doubled letters, she challenges the way we read and think about text. Notice the subtle difference between the works title, *Remember*, and the letters she paints. By not remembering the b in the painting, Rosen creates the palindrome “rememer”

Kay Rosen (American)
Y'd body, 1993
Enamel sign paint on canvas



Rosen says she likes the combination of canvas and sign paint in her works because it relates to both art and commerce. At first glance, her paintings appear to be commercial signage; she even uses sign paint, straight out of the can, to create them. However, Rosen's messages are not as straight-forward as their presentation implies. Her titles help interpret the text, while adding another layer of meaning. *Y'd body*, pronounced like its homonym, "wide body," describes what happened to the word "body" – it was "y'd" creating a mirror image.

Dan Peterman (American, b/ 1960)
First Tool Board (Bike Shop), 1999
Polaroids



In 1995, Peterman acquired a building at the corner of 61st Street and Blackstone Avenue in Chicago. Formerly a recycling center, he transformed it into a neighborhood venture, housing artists' studios (including his own), a community garden, and several businesses, including Blackstone Bicycle Works. *First Tool Board (Bike Shop)* references a Blackstone program where children learned to fix bicycles to earn credits toward the purchase of a bike. Peterman outlined where the tools belonged on the board so the children would put them back properly.

Jeanne Dunning (American, b. 1960)
The White, 1996
Cibachrome mounted to Plexiglas frame



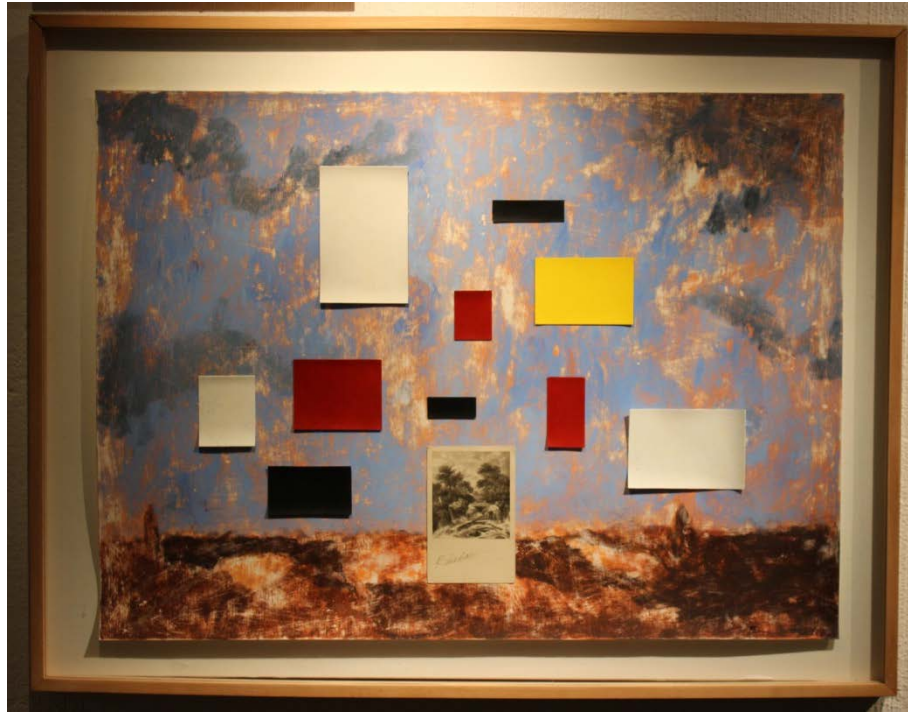
Rather than using photography to clarify and reveal, Dunning uses the medium to make reality ambiguous. *The White* is one of a series of photographs in which Dunning took extreme close-ups of familiar foods, including beets, grapefruit, and baby asparagus, and enlarged them to an unrealistic scale. Each photograph is titled solely by the color of the food (*The Red*, *The Pink*, *The Yellow*), leaving the task of identification to

the viewer. While *The White* appears to depict something living – perhaps animal or insect – it is in fact a photograph of cocktail onions.

Buzz Spector (American, b. 1948)

DeStijlscape #2, 1987

Acrylic, collage, and postcard on paper



A poet, author, and visual artist, Spector often creates paintings that allude to important artists and styles.

DeStijlscape #2 is part of a series paying tribute to de

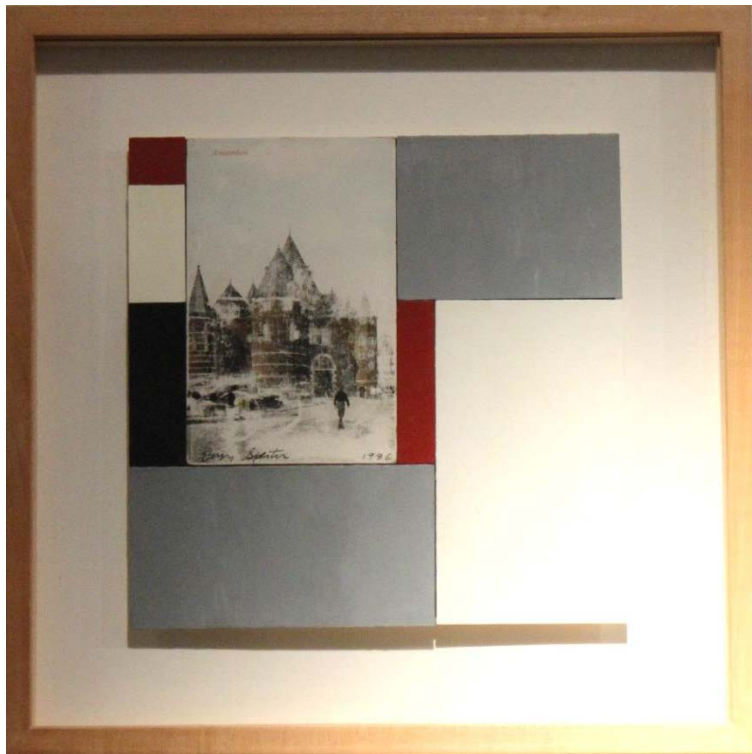
Stijl (the Style), a Dutch art movement that originated in 1917 and was characterized by a non-representational style consisting of primary colors and rectilinear shapes. (Georges Vantongerloo, referenced in another Spector painting in the gallery, was a member of de Stijl.)

In this work, Spector places squares and rectangles reminiscent of de Stijl on top of a painted landscape – a subject with a longstanding tradition in Dutch art. As a final “rectangle,” Spector collages a postcard depicting the Dutch countryside precisely along the painting’s horizon line.

Buzz Spector (American, b. 1948)

Vantongerloo #9, 1986

Mixed media collage



Vantongerloo #9 is part of a series of works that references de Stijl (the Style), a Dutch art movement characterized by a non-representational style based on primary colors and rectilinear shapes. The work's title refers to Georges Vantongerloo, a Belgian sculptor, painter, and architect

who transformed de Stijl's tenets into three dimensional designs. In this work, Spector creates a background of rectangles that evokes a de Stijl painting. On top of this he places a traditional Amsterdam cityscape, perhaps to underscore de Stijl's departure from historical styles.

Dawoud Bey (American, b. 1953)

LaToya II, 1999

Polaroid ER print



Bey creates portraits of teenagers that challenge their stereotypes as troublemakers and pop culture consumers. He says he photographs teens because “they are the arbiters of style in the community; their appearance speaks most strongly of how a community of people defines themselves at a particular historical moment.” Bey’s photographs are both community-focused and collaborative. He also pays particular attention to the relationship between the subject and the viewer – in *LaToya II* the subject’s head is turned, cropped, or bowed, averting our gaze.

Buzz Spector (American, b. 1948)

Conceptual Art, 1996

Torn paper



Spector was a poet before becoming a visual artist and was also the publisher and editor of *Whitewalls*, a Chicago-based magazine featuring writings by artists. His frequent use of text and books as both the subject and object of his work is apparent in *Conceptual Art*, a torn book. While tearing pages out of books is usually an act of vandalism or censorship, Spector creates a work of art. The words “conceptual art” refer to an idea-based practice in which the concept that drives creation is more important than the art object itself.

Jeanne Dunning (American, b. 1960)

Untitled Landscape, 1987

C-print and frame

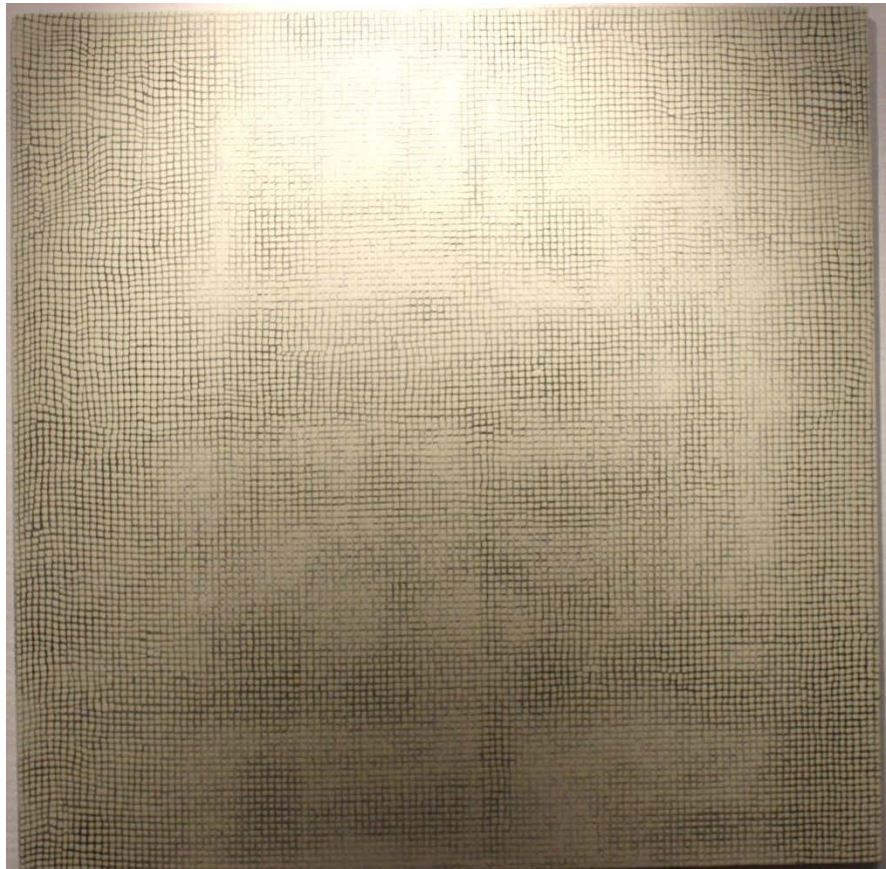


Dunning's works often comment on photography's ability to present reality and truth. However, by using the camera in unconventional ways she makes ordinary objects appear strange and ambiguous. What appear to be rolling hills and fields spotted with grass in her *Untitled Landscape* series are actually extreme close-ups of various body parts. Combining the traditions of nude and landscape photography, Dunning prompts the viewer to look at the familiar in new ways.

Michelle Grabner (American, b. 1962)

Rug Backing, 1995

Enamel on birch panel



In her paintings, Grabner re-presents overlooked and mundane domestic objects. Removed from their natural settings, her subjects are depicted as abstract patterns and grids rather than as functional items. Her titles are the only means of identifying the source material – in this case, the stitched underside of a rug. Showing evidence of its use, the rugs pattern wobbles and fades due to frequent footsteps.

Arturo Herrera (Venezuelan, b. 1959)

The Circular Ruins, 1995

Gelatin silver prints



Although *The Circular Ruins* is a representational image – two close-ups of a man's jaw and throat – Herrera's use of cropping and framing renders his subject in an anonymous, nearly abstract manner. Defying portraiture's traditional aims of depicting an individual's physical and psychological nature, Herrera's photographs are generally ambiguous, provocative, and open-ended.