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HUFF POST CHICAGO

## A Bountiful Weekend of Art

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Good art is no longer restricted to the established, expected areas in Chicago. Art venues are in the communities, office buildings, condominiums and just plain off the beaten paths. There are pluses and minuses to this. It is good for the communities that are not accustomed to art sites and it is good to expose new eyes to art. The downside is that trying to see a lot of art in a day or two gets trickier. But I've previewed a lot of shows in the last 24 hours and it was worth it.

I want to cover the exhibits I saw in order. First, those that opened on November 16, then those that opened on Saturday, November 19 and third, those that opened previously.



Connie Noyes has a large vision; not only a strong exhibit (which opened November 16), but a symposium (November 17), all on the subject of pink and its myriad meanings. Both at [Blanc Gallery](#). Not only that, I'm speaking at the symposium on how artists can get "in the pink" and find success.

James M Smith's sculptural works at [Perimeter](#) are a special, honest statement about our relationship to the land and our ancestors. The work is different, fresh and communicates a palpable integrity. And for those of us who remember Charles Kurre's work before he left Chicago for Phoenix a decade ago, the effect of environment on an artist's work can be seen in the different pallet and shapes; from rectangular and muted to spherical and more vibrant. Or maybe he just matured.



On November 19, [Monique Meloche](#) presented another (overdue) meaningful exhibit of Karen Reimer's highly handworked, embroidered pillow cases. A thoroughly intelligent artist, making slow.methodical work, succeeds

on many levels. And in accord with our experiences the pillowcases and/or rubbings are sold in pairs just like pillowcases in "white sales" everywhere, but here the pairings are up to the collectors, sort of like in marriage. A really good show.

Also at Monique Meloche is a painting or two lingering from her previous exhibit with Scott Stack -- a show I inexplicably missed. Sitting in front of one of his brilliant paintings is better than standing because you realize it's revealing itself like an



onion peeling, as relationships and discoveries just don't stop.

There's a wonderful new piece at [Kavi Gupta](#) that Tony Tasset was putting the finishing touches on. Mr. Hot Dog Man is a vibrant, large, humorous, profane commentary on Chicago cuisine. We can tell it's a Chicago hot dog because there's no ketchup.



There's an abundance of truly powerful exhibits that I couldn't or didn't preview. At the [MCA, Chicago](#), *The Language of Less (Then and Now)* sings with exemplary, important, seminal works from the museum's collection, contrasted, across the hall with contemporary works that may grow on me over time.

At the School of the Art Institute's [Sullivan Gallery](#) we see a major

installation - meditation -- of Wolfgang Laib's made from an endless process of placing small piles of sand, and occasionally bee-pollen directly on the floor. Not only a beautiful, site-specific presentation, there is a pervasive calm that resonates throughout the room and the viewer.



The last show of Albert Oehlin's I saw at [Corbett vs Dempsey](#) was one of the most powerful aesthetic experiences I can remember, never having seen a presentation of an entire body of work of his before. Since then I've seen paintings of his at the Art Institute and listened to an amazingly embarrassingly lecture of this highly regarded painter at the same museum. And now this exhibit looks haphazard, casual and slapdash, making me feel like I've sadly stumbled on the Alphonso Soriano of the art world. Still a major leaguer, but on his way down.

Angela Bryant is one of a few exciting, female, Chicago curators, though she calls herself an art gallery ([Abryant](#)). With a wonderful eye and an adventuresome spirit, her gallery migrates whenever she's ready to present an exhibition. Geometrically Speaking II is in the large lobby of a condo building and opened last night. Good art, good energy and a fun sense of discovery make this a rewarding show.

On November 14, two other exhibits had their openings. At [Richard Gray](#), a contemplative, somber, beautiful exhibit by Jaume Plensa opened. Plensa is the same artist whose Crown Fountain at Millennium Park resonates with so many youngsters and their families. Just for clarity sake, the brilliant lightness of the fountain is more the anomaly than the pensive work in the gallery.

Next door at [Valerie Carberry](#), Jim Lutes new paintings baffle me. Not that they aren't proficient, they're just a significant jump shift in his oeuvre, which had been known for consistent, abstracted work. And I was surprised by his just-under-six-digit prices. I'm going to pay attention to see how this all plays out.

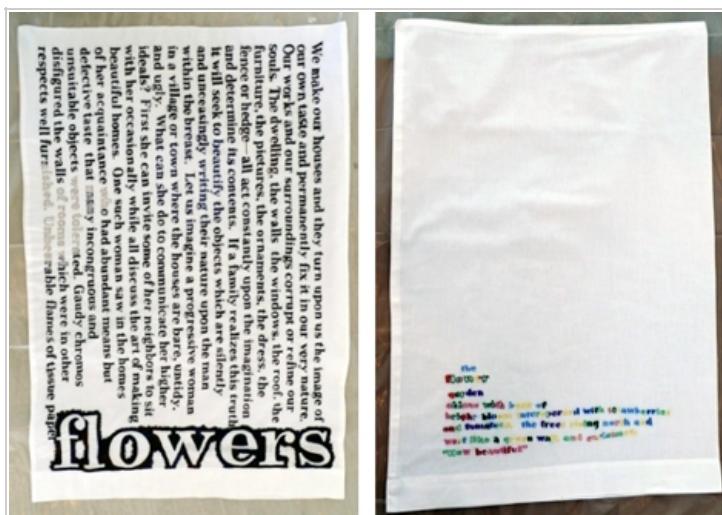


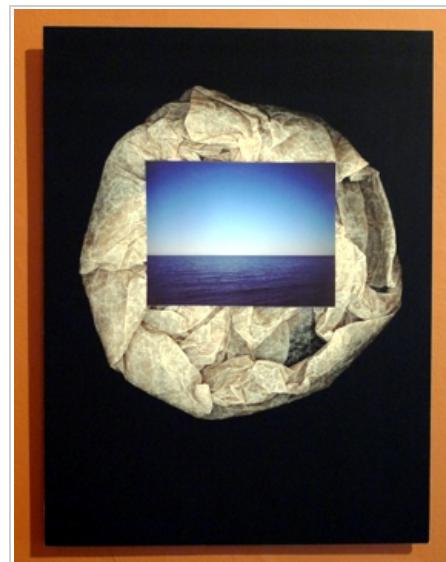
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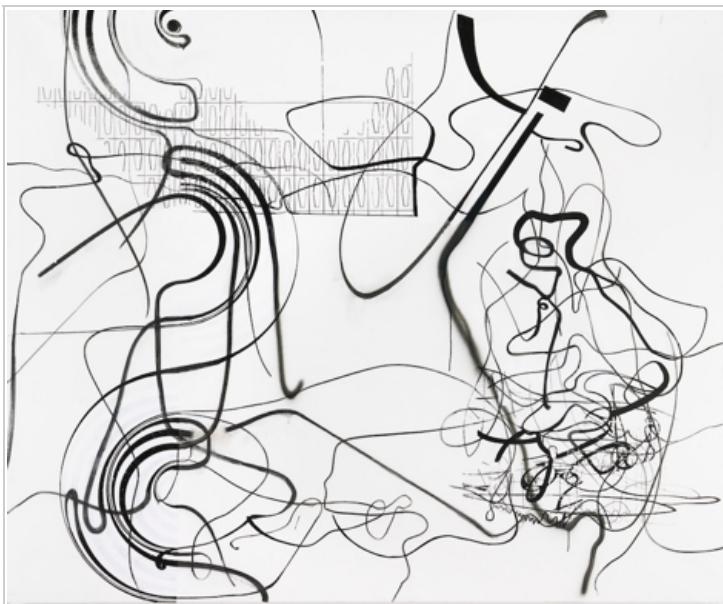
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Thanks for the updates with pictures Paul... it's a lifeline to those of us not living in the city. Inspiring even to see a small jpeg sometimes.

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