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HUFF POST CHICAGO AROUND TOWN

Three Strong Shows

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Opening last night, in an attractive new space, in an area of the city that is serving more and more artists is a strong group exhibit at the [Bridgeport Arts Center](#). *Anxious Object: Masterpiece or Junk* was curated by Leide Klamite and includes Bill Boyce, Mary Ellen Croteau, Sarah Barnhart Fields, Sharon Gilmore, Rita Grendze, Mike Helbing, Lisa Limas, Gary 'Hal' Link and Matt Runfola.



Art must transcend its materials. What that means is that when you encounter the art, it is the art you see first and not what it was made of. Many favorite artists are in the show and succeed beautifully. Rita Grendze is new to me and presents thoughtful and emotional work that confronts societal growth, how information is conveyed in changing world. Old, no longer appreciated,



books are chromatically arranged as pages depart and information is redacted. Culture moves on, but artifacts remain.

Bill Boyce gets still

stronger. Mary Ellen Croteau does magic with coral beds made from no longer recognized discarded plastic bags. Sarah Barnhart Fields brings remnants of a rural culture back to life, as does Sharon Gilmore, albeit more holistically. Two of the most beautiful pieces I've ever seen of Mike Helbing's are on view, one dry and wet, one small and also wet. Lisa Limas' elegant, diminutive homages to coral encourage us to pay more attention to the small. Gary 'Hal' Link is a magician and Matt Runfola makes gorgeous, distinctive pieces.



making extra-large paintings, broke her foot and while recuperating returned to a former life of digitally altering photographic images, which she then loaded with the gloop and detritus she is known for.



Sarah Krepp's show opened at the [Chicago Cultural Center](#) a few weeks ago, but her work is so strong that I want to recommend it. What I find striking are the multiple layers of content, the beginning point being of tracing wind currents and flight patterns to generate 'natural' flow lines. Imbued with a 'push me, pull you' balance of manipulating foreground and background through found shredded tires, I love how she expands painterly issues as her art takes on greater dimensionality and movement.



Thanks very much,
Paul Klein

PS: [Volume Gallery](#) is more about furniture and design, but sometimes they'll present a thoroughly kickass art exhibit like this installation by Charlie O'Geen and Frank Fantauzzi. (Checker Cab used to work out of this space.)



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