

Art openings galore in Chicago this fall

From faceless busts to 3-D installations, there's something for everyone

By Lauren VieraTribune reporter

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Autumn — and the autumn art season — is upon us once again.

This is the one time of year when the majority of local visual arts venues align their openings to a single night (Friday!) in order to capitalize on the crowds, the weather and that deeply rooted back-to-school fervor that fuels our desire to get cultured.

Navigating it all can be a bit overwhelming, unless you've got a gallery-hopping game plan. Pick a specific neighborhood, or follow your curiosity. Those fond of classic figurative painting should prioritize visits to Ann Nathan Gallery or the Highland Park Art Center, while hipsters in search of offbeat art will flock to Johalla Projects and Threewalls. Up-and-comer Dan Gunn is the star Friday at Lloyd Dobler Gallery while Shane Campbell Gallery breaks in a new address with subtly beautiful paintings from Anthony Pearson.

Behold: Your guide to the most noteworthy openings, along with a save-the-date guide to the rest of the fall — the best art season of all is on...

Up-and-comers

These are the names likely to linger on the tips of the tongues,

especially for those who closely follow the rotating cast of emerging artists. **Dan Gunn** is a recently graduated product of the School of the Art Institute who has been playing with plywood, cutting it up into visual motifs. A collection of recent works called "Multistable Picture Fable" opens Saturday at Lloyd Dobler (*1545 W. Division St., 2nd floor, 312-961-8706; lloyddoblergallery.com*). **Stephanie Syjuco** has arrived nationally, exhibiting at major institutions such as New York's **Whitney Museum** of American Art. Her show at Gallery 400, "Particulate Matter (Things, Thingys, Thingies)," continues her explorations of counterfeit and mismatched mass production (*400 S. Peoria St., 312-996-6114; uic.edu/aa/college/gallery400*). Golden Age Gallery presents "Faux Weirdo," new work by **Lauren Anderson**, which continues to propel this young artist's portfolio into uncharted territory. In the past she's created a pinata shaped like a PBR can; for this exhibition, she's made a series of smoke-bomb inspired drawings and sculptures (*119 N. Peoria St., 312-288-8535; shopgoldenage.com*).

Classic and figurative artists

German photo-artist **Gert Wiedmaier** softens his images of Parisian life to an impressionist-grade fade for his solo show at **Thomas Masters** Gallery (*245 W. North Ave., 312-440-2322; thomasmastersgallery.com*), while **Tim Lowly**, a longtime contributor to the local painting and drawing scene, continues to produce startling, photorealist images of experiences spent nurturing his disabled daughter. His latest show of paintings and woodcuts, "Without Moving (25)," opens Saturday at **Lincoln Square's** Fill in the Blank Gallery (*5038 N. Lincoln Ave., 773-878-1750; fillintheblankgallery.com*).

The elongated title "Tethered to My World — Contemporary Figure Painting: Location, Chicago" is the self-explanatory subject of the fall show (reception Saturday) at the Art Center in Highland Park (*1957 Sheridan Road, Highland Park, 847-432-1888; theartcenterhp.org*), which includes work from brilliantly detailed painter/drawer **Kevin Wolff**, as well as familiar locals **Karl Wirsum**, **Andreas Fischer** and **Elizabeth Shrev**. For something completely different, don't miss "Introducing **Stephen Cefalo**" at Ann Nathan Gallery (*212 W. Superior St., 312-664-6622; annnathangallery.com*), in which eerie, Dutch-style oil paintings make bold statements.

Weird and the beautiful

A cartoonlike Neighborhood Watch icon and a weeping **Abraham Lincoln** are two of the half-dozen sculptures **Ben Stone** created for his second solo show at Western Exhibitions (*119 N. Peoria St., 312-480-8390; westernexhibitions.com*).

"Poignant Trash" is the subject of renowned painter **Connie Noyes'** show at EC Gallery (*215 N. Aberdeen St., 312-850-0924; ec-gallery.com*), whose works feature cast-off utilitarian items so gussied up, they're almost unrecognizable. **Montgomery Perry Smith** fashions soft, circular compositions from faux flowers and felt, producing polished, craft-chic sculptures. A collection of his latest, dubbed "Pit Worship," opens Saturday at Johalla Projects (*1561 N. Milwaukee Ave., 708-280-3940; johallaprojects.wordpress.com*). Dubhe Carreno Gallery is often home to exhibits that are equally creepy and beautiful, and ceramicist **Elise Siegel** is no exception. Her faceless busts and topless bottoms are the focus of "make/believe" (*118 N. Peoria St., 312-666-3150; dubhecarrenogallery.com*).

Modern intelligentsia

There's an abundance in this category of smart, new art, beginning with **Los Angeles**-based **Anthony Pearson's** laborious photographic processes built from the subject on up. He's the premiere artist at Shane Campbell Gallery's new location in River West (*673 N. Milwaukee Ave., 312-226-2223; shanecampbellgallery.com*). Tony Wight Gallery kicks off its fall season with a joint show of work by **Arturo Herrera** and **David Schutter**. We're keen on the former, whose mixed media collages are as tasteful as the polished paintings we're accustomed to seeing on these walls (*845 W. Washington Blvd., 312-492-7261; tonywightgallery.com*). Another pair of men, **Jeff Gibson** and **Geoff Kleem**, share the exhibition spaces starting Sept. 19 at The Suburban (*125 N. Harvey Ave., Oak Park, 708-763-8554; thesuburban.org*). Gibson will be projecting a new video work, and I'm especially excited to see Kleem's 3-D installation, to be viewed from just beyond the gallery's perimeter. Friday night, **Portland, Ore.**-based painter and sculptor **Chris Johanson** goes "Backwards

Toward Forwards" at Kavi Gupta Gallery (835 W. Washington Blvd., 312-432-0708; kavigupta.com), which, if it's anything like past shows, will spill over the entire gallery in a wash of childlike color. Downstairs at Carrie Secrist Gallery (835 W. Washington Blvd., 312-491-0917; secristgallery.com), **Megan Green** and **Carolyn Ottmers** contribute flora- and fauna-inspired collages and sculptures, respectively, both of which offer modern interpretations of natural beauty.

Familiar faces

You've seen these folks several times before, and they're worth looking at again. Photographer **Jason Lazarus** is everywhere these days, from the Modern Wing to modest suburban galleries like the Riverside Art Center's Freark Gallery (32 E. Quincy Road, Riverside, 708-442-6400; riversideartcenter.com), which Sunday celebrates the opening of "Too Hard to Keep," Lazarus's ongoing study of anonymously submitted photographs too painful to hold onto. **Laura Letinsky** shoots still-lives, mostly of morning-after table settings, and somehow they never get boring. Her latest collection, "To Peach," opens Sept. 17 at Donald Young Gallery (224 S. Michigan Ave., suite 266, 312-322-3600; donaldyoung.com). Carl Hammer Gallery invites us to revisit the work of well-known self-taught artists **Joseph Yoakum**, **Bill Taylor** and **Frank Jones** in "Out of Struggle Came Power," under the guise of their collective African-American experience (740 N. Wells St., 312-266-8512; hammergallery.com). If the names **Carla Arocha** and **Stephane Schraenen** sound familiar, chances are you ride the Red Line: The pair's "24/7" public sculpture hangs above an escalator at the Howard station. While details are vague, Arocha-Schraenen's "As If" at Moniquemeloche should be worth seeing when it opens Thursday (2154 W. Division St., 773-252-0299; moniquemeloche.com).