

**NO END
IN SIGHT**

December 13, 2008 – January 10, 2009



NO END IN SIGHT

Some art is never meant to be completed. No End in Sight explores works that are perpetual in nature, including pieces with an undefined or unreachable endpoint; series composed of multiples the artist is compelled to continue; and projects that incorporate viewer participation as a way to continually regenerate the piece. Blurring the borders between life and artistic practice, selected artworks provoke the audience to consider art as an ongoing process, as opposed to a static event.

Featured artists approach these ideas with diverging forms and techniques. Each piece goes beyond the here and now, suggesting an art form that endures not through historical canonization, but through active methods of

repetition, regeneration, and recognition of the infinite. Collectively, these works encourage the audience to redefine their role from traditional viewer to witness of, or active participant in, the creative process.

Twelve curators from the fall 2008 Curatorial Practice course at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago collaborated on this exhibition, aiming to question the finality of artistic practices: what changes in our perception of art when a piece is decidedly unfinished, unending, or forever mutable?

UNDEFINED ENDPOINTS

These artworks are characterized by their undefined endpoints. Seemingly organic in nature, the works grow, age, shift, and regenerate over time. Continuous dynamism seems to be the goal of these artists, as opposed to a fixed, static endpoint.

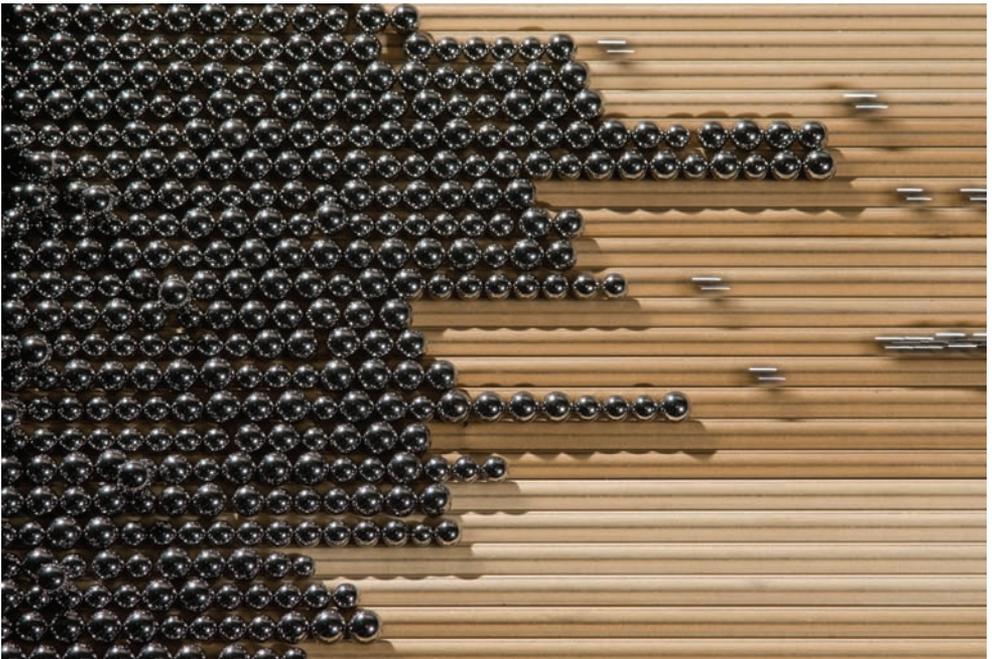


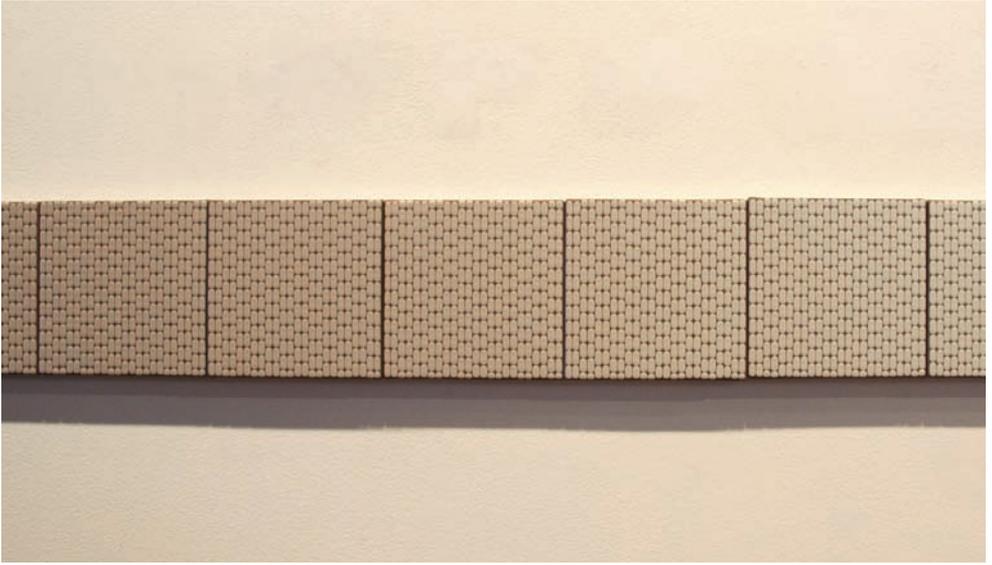
Aviva Alter, *Hyperbolic Coral Reef Project: Untitled Corn* • Aviva Alter is a collaborator in the *Hyperbolic Coral Reef Project*. With an artist base of thousands, this remarkably organic, tactile endeavor seems to have a limitless lifespan, continuing to grow and develop day to day. In her contributions to the project, Alter uses donated yarn and recycled plastic to explore environmental issues such as sustainability and, of course, the death of the coral reef. This work allows viewers and participants to question the ways in which we treat a damaged world and to consider ways we might fix it.

Jesse Seay, *Mechanical Tide* • Jesse Seay's *Mechanical Tide* addresses the idea of perpetual motion. This motorized board continuously tilts back and forth, creating waves of noise as hundreds of metal balls rush back and forth over the board's surface. The steady, tilting motion is evocative of the constant ebb and flow of nature's processes. The rhythmic movement and sounds lull the audience into a rarified state of hypnosis as they absorb the work's progression.

Aviva Alter, *Hyperbolic Coral Reef Project: Untitled Corn*
2007–2008, textile, reused plastic, dimensions variable
www.theiff.org/reef/cambria.html

Jesse Seay, *Mechanical Tide*
2007, poplar wood, metal frame, motor,
1,000 steel ball bearings of varied sizes, tin can, 8' x 5'
www.jesseseday.com





Marie Krane Bergman/Cream Co., *Forty Eight Parts of One Timeline* • Ten years in the making, the paintings made by Marie Krane Bergman/Cream Co. illustrate pigment changes from the life and death of flowers in the most painstaking, minute detail. From a distance, these works document a wide range of color, from the intense pigment of a recently cut plant, to brown tones of death, which ultimately fade to shades of grey. On close inspection, however, these colors become abstractions of their source, adopting three-dimensional texture that transform the color record into new physical permanence. These visually stunning images invite reflection on the infinite cycle of life and death.

Young Cho, *You and I* • Young Cho's series of drawings *You and I* deals with power, violence, torture, and submission in a wide spectrum of human relationships. Set in an uncertain, dreamlike space and time, the two figures age and grow throughout the series. The ambiguous chronology suggests that *You and I* will continue to engage in this unending power struggle *ad infinitum*. While the works discussed above explicitly deal with natural processes and lifecycles, the infinite development of the human subject is at the heart of Young Cho's work.

Marie Krane Bergman/Cream Co., *Forty-Eight Parts of One Timeline*
2005–2008, pencil and acrylic on linen over medium density fiberboard
48 panels: 4.5" x 4.5"
www.mariekranebergman.com

Young Cho, *You and I*
2007, colored pencil on recycled card, 4" x 6"



CONTINUOUS MULTIPLES

Artists working in continuous multiples create ongoing series that seem intended to continue indefinitely. The works reveal a compulsive, ritualistic, even obsessive need for replication, and in some cases highlight the perpetual repetition of societal ills or healing rituals.



Burtonwood and Holmes, *A Celebration of Markets* • In the minds Tom Burtonwood and Holly Holmes, there is no end in sight as far as war is concerned. This project by the collaborative team known as Burtonwood and Holmes began in 2002 to protest the impending invasion of Iraq. Believing that consumer culture veils the grim reality of the Iraq war, the duo utilizes the most ubiquitous of commercial imagery (junk mail and flyers) to address the monetary values that underline such tragic violence. To illustrate their idea that the social imperatives for peace are less profitable than those of war, they create immersive environments with dioramas and smart bomb balloon sculptures that highlight the irony of wartime media.

Masaco Kuroda, *An Apple A Day* • Born from the household proverb, “an apple a day keeps the doctor away,” this project eloquently reveals Kuroda’s precise, systematic artistic process. Kuroda sets herself the task of drawing a unique apple each day. The resulting drawings are simultaneously repetitive and aesthetically diverse, and illustrate society’s mania for ritualistic sameness. The book’s blank pages, however, also hint at the difficulty of banal repetition. Should the artist fail in her almost Sisyphean task, she has recourse to an “emergency kit” of existing apple images.

Burtonwood and Holmes, *A Celebration of Markets*

2008, paper, vinyl, plastic, wood

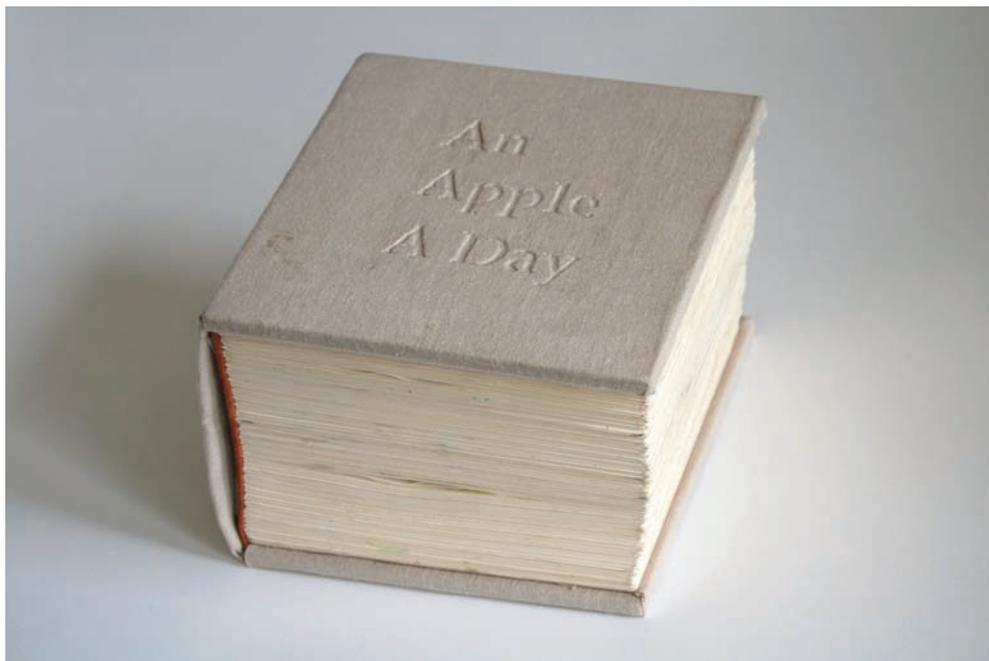
www.burtonwoodandholmes.com

Masaco Kuroda, *An Apple A Day*

2006–2007, daily apple drawings in a hand-made book
made with paper, linen, wood, and leather

5.75" x 5.75" x 4.75"

www.masacokuroda.com





Fred Nocella, *32 Seconds of Hand-Washing* •

Nocella investigates similar ideas of compulsive repetition through a most peculiar medium: the sweat-stained rag. He seeks industrial t-shirt rags that have been bleached, processed, and packaged in 25 lb. boxes, yet still contain the indelible stain of human presence—sweat. The figure of the laborer is paralleled in the figure of the artist, who endlessly works to create, promote, and show artwork, and is constantly in need of a cleaning rag. After sewing the unique found rags together, Nocella imprints images of hands wiping and washing each other on them, creating a compelling image of obsessive-compulsive behavior, and drawing attention to the fine line between our daily habits and all-consuming ritual.

Fred Nocella, *32 Seconds of Hand Washing*
2003–2008, gel transfers on cotton rags
8' x 13'

www.21grand.org/GALLERY/pictures/im001730.html

Tim Pannell, *Untitled (Gun Project)*
2006–present, linoleum block print,
life-size, dimensions variable
www.rtpannel.com

Tim Pannell, *Untitled (Gun Project)* • This project was born after the artist moved to Philadelphia, a city he describes as the Wild West. Shootings occur almost daily in the city; in 2006, a total of 317 people were killed by firearms. In response to this horrific volume, Pannell made five life-size wood-block plates of inexpensive handguns, planning to make a print for everyone who was shot and killed. The project extended into 2007 and 2008, and he sees it as work that could spread to any city and continue indefinitely. He would like to make multiple copies of the plates and send them all over the country, for people to print and distribute as they see fit. Like the *Burtonwood* and *Holmes* installation, this compelling piece points to the omnipresence of violence, underscored by the repetitive process of printmaking.

Signn, It's Ok • *Signn* uses repetitive text throughout his body of work. *It's OK* is a project that will continue until the artist has carved one million *It's OK* phrases out of business card-size blocks of wood. The process of making so many of these objects is a ritual in itself: the goal seems unreachable, and is currently in its early stages of accumulation. *Saying the Same Thing Over and Over Again Helps Keep Me Sane*, also exhibited here, gives additional insight to *Signn's* purpose. While constant repetition can create comfort for the obsessive-compulsive, however, it can also create eerie discomfort for the audience.

Signn, It's Ok
(1–1,000 out of edition of 1 million)
2008, basswood, 8' x 15'
www.signn.net



PARTICIPATORY REGENERATION

Active viewer participation is necessary for the very existence of the following artworks. Here, it is up to the viewer/participant to help generate the artwork, and continue its lifespan within the confines of the gallery and beyond.



ks rives and Nicole Kenney, *Before I Die I Want To...* • This Polaroid photo project, spearheaded by ks rives and Nicole Kenney, is part photographic essay, part sociological survey. These artists photograph participants while they declare what they wish to accomplish in life before they die. Ironically, the photos are taken in a medium that itself is near death; Polaroid film is predicted to be permanently out of stock by 2009. Although the literal subject of this project is finite, by perpetuating the use of this technology and immortalizing the photographic subjects' wishes for life, *Before I Die I Want To...* creates a tension between the concepts of death and infinity.

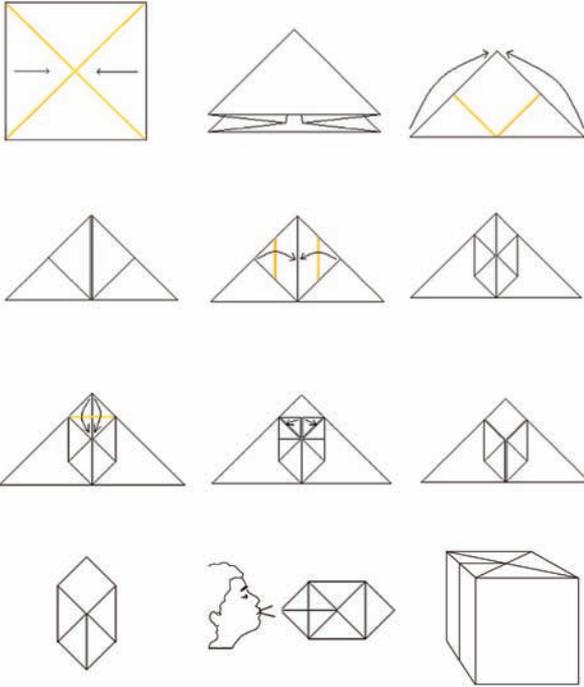


Tim Louis, *Untitled (Fence)* • Louis's piece is about breaking boundaries: those between public and personal space; and those between the pristine realm of the gallery and the life of the viewer. *Fence* performances consist of the artist obtaining a section of the plastic orange fencing used to separate construction projects from public space without expense, and by any means necessary. He takes the fence into the exhibition space and cuts it into minuscule pieces. When the audience enters the gallery, the tiny pieces of plastic inevitably stick to their shoes and coats, following them outside and infiltrating their domestic space. The eternal, unpredictable migration of the fragmented fence to various corners of the city and beyond makes this an undeniably perpetual artwork.

ks rives and Nicole Kenney, *Before I Die I Want To...*
2007–present, polaroids, dimensions variable
www.beforeidieiwantto.org

Tim Louis, *Untitled (Fence)*
2008, orange plastic fence, dimensions variable
www.timlouisart.com





Grayson Cox, *Building* • Inspired by Japanese philosophies that promote self-improvement and positive energy, Grayson Cox's *Building* project is generated by origami folding parties organized across the country. Through these forums, Cox envisages gathering thousands, even millions of flat folded shapes. After a minimum of 10,000 have been collected, Cox will organize the crowning event: participants will be asked to blow the folded shapes into 3-D cubes, which will then be animated with that participant's positive thoughts. These cubes will be assembled to form structures, which the intrepid viewer can enter and become immersed in good energy. A project that will seemingly never end, *Building* is generated entirely by viewer participation.

Josué Pellot, *Family Portrait: Boricua Toy Project* • Josué Pellot was taken aback by a vending machine he found in the heart of the Puerto Rican community of Humboldt Park, entitled "Boricuas," the indigenous term for Puerto Ricans. Each toy figurine sold in the machine displayed stereotypes of Puerto Ricans, satirizing the entire Puerto Rican community. Pellot decided to purchase the machine to create a critical statement about the dangers of cultural assumptions and stereotypes by adding realistic figures of himself and his family. This work functions perpetually as his minute figures are carried out of the gallery, and are invited into the lives of Pellot's audience, serving as a constant reminder of the conflicts of social perception.



Grayson Cox, *Building*
2006–present, paper, wood box, table, chairs,
poster (silkscreen), dimensions variable
www.paperbuilding.com

Josué Pellot, *Family Portrait (as Boricua toys)*
2008, mixed media, dimensions variable
www.josuepellot.com



You Are Beautiful, You Are Beautiful • The anonymously-run *You Are Beautiful* project is produced in collaboration with a multitude of artists and other individuals. Projects include site-specific installations, viewer interactive, and the dissemination of *You Are Beautiful* stickers. These projects have made their way around the world and have been translated into multiple languages. *You Are Beautiful* uses the medium of advertising and

commercialization to spread a positive message. Projects like these make a difference in the world by catching us in the midst of daily life and creating moments of positive self-realization.



You Are Beautiful, You Are Beautiful
2008, mixed media, dimensions variable
www.you-are-beautiful.com





TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE TEMPORALITY IN ART

No End in Sight *spurs an alternative perception of temporality in art. These works cannot be fully experienced all at once, but require versatile engagement and the passage of time to tell their stories. The perpetual nature of the sculpture, photos, paintings and projects featured in this exhibition can elicit a remarkably diverse range of responses. Perpetuity can be overwhelming, even frightening, as we contemplate unending war and infinite environmental damage, as evidenced by the works of Tim Pannell and Burtonwood and Holmes. By contrast, this unceasing sameness can be soothing and reassuring, as in Sign's It's OK or Jesse Seay's Mechanical Tide. Other projects may elicit a similar emotional conflict from the obsessive nature of ritualized compulsion, or the mind-numbing boredom of redundant monotony. However, perhaps the most engaging aspect to perpetual art is the inherent sense of possibility that comes as we are invited to question just what will happen next.*

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*This exhibition and catalog
was curated by
the fall 2008
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School of the Art Institute
of Chicago

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December 13, 2008–January 10, 2009

Sullivan Galleries

36 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago IL 60603

www.saic.edu/noendinsight

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Front photo by Lawrence Sawyer, Andover, MN