www.chicagotribune.com/features/ct-ott-1217-best-of-galleries-20101217,0,7118084.story

## chicagotribune.com

### Best art of 2010 found in unlikely places

See page 2

River North wasn't a quality nexus this year

By Lauren Viera, Tribune reporter

December 17, 2010

Looking back at the year in Chicago's gallery scene, three things come to mind.

First, the art community is capitalizing on our downtrodden economy. The ample supply of vacant and/or cheap real estate, has meant an increase in both thoughtful new spaces with potential for longevity, and shoddily thrown-together art parties barely worth the free PBR. Here's hoping the new year brings more of the former and less of the latter.

Second, artists are as prolific as ever. Perhaps it's another result of the economy (high unemployment yielding free time), but we'll take it — especially if it leads to a surplus of new work.

Finally, we're champing at the bit for a professional cash-prize art contest. Our trial-run was October's uneven **Art Loop Open**, co-sponsored by **Chicago Artists' Coalition** and **Chicago Loop Alliance**, whose tribulations sealed its fate as one of the our most talked-about events of the year. When it returns in 2011 (ideally with the kinks worked out), artists will be ready.

Meanwhile, exhibitions at galleries of all shapes and sizes proved to be worth seeing -- and not one of my favorites came from the city's staid River North gallery district. This year, the best shows popped up in the least likely of places.

Wicker Park has a new gem in **Johalla Projects** (1561 N. Milwaukee Ave., **johallaprojects.com**), the prolific, year-old, artist-run space located a stone's throw from the increasingly vacant **Flatiron Building**. Johalla hosted standout shows by up-and-comer **Montgomery Perry Smith**, as well as the ridiculously well-attended "Chicago Aldermen Project: 50 Aldermen/50 Artists," which has since yielded hopeful collaborations with the CTA (including a Damen Blue Line installation set for early 2011) and a growing list of neighborhoods.

Down the street, the newly launched LVL3 live-work space (1542 N. Milwaukee Ave., 323-216-0631; lvl3gallery.com) is refreshingly less apartment, more gallery, and ended the year on a positive note with a group show aptly named "Goodbye Turquoise." At the edge of the arty-again 'hood, apartment-gallery Lloyd Dobler (1545 W. Division St., 312-961-8706; lloyddoblergallery.com) rang in the autumn openings with a pitch-perfect installation by Dan Gunn. We're likely to see more of both Smith and

Gunn in 2011, if curators play their cards right.

The West Loop continues to thrive with a gang of solid galleries at the crossroads of Washington Boulevard and Peoria Street. **Kavi Gupta Gallery** remained a steadfast destination (835 W. Washington Blvd., 312-432-0708; **kavigupta.com**) with drool-worthy shows by **Angel Otero**, **Chris Johanson** and **Curtis Mann** (which is up through Dec. 30, and recommended). **Western Exhibitions** (119 N. Peoria St., 312-480-8390; **westernexhibitions.com**) smartly spotlighted both **Miller & Shellabarger** and **Deb Sokolow** in solo shows (Sokolow is up through Dec. 31), but teased with just a glimpse of outstanding work by **Rachel Niffenegger**, who deserves more. (Niffenegger's work will be featured in a Jim Nutt companion show opening at the Museum of Contemporary Art on Jan. 29.) Another favorite underdog of 2010: **EC Gallery** (which shares its 215 N. Aberdeen St. storefront with **Kasia Kay Art Projects**), which consistently presents tiny, beautiful shows that underscore the important existence of working artists. On view through Jan. 15 is a lovely little show by Richard Blackwell.

The local academic galleries made out well too.

Northeastern Illinois University's modest **Fine Arts Center Gallery** (5500 N. St. Louis Ave., 773-442-4944; **neiu.edu/~gallery**) played host to more than a few good shows (among the best was **Amy Sacksteder**'s "We Are Running ...," inspired by Amelia Earhart's final words), while the **University of Illinois at Chicago's** consistently well-curated **Gallery 400** (400 S. Peoria St., 312-996-6114; **uic.edu/aa/college/gallery400**) continued to impress, from **Andy Moore**'s enormous book of "John's Luv" to **Steve Reinke**'s "Tiny Ventriloquist" (on view through Dec. 18). Columbia's **A+D Gallery** (619 S. Wabash St., 312-369-8687; **colum.edu/adgallery**) sparkled with "**Let There Be Geo**," but left us scratching our heads after a glimpse at "**X-Treme Studio**." Here's hoping the next show, curated by Anchor Graphics, kicks off A+D's new year well.

There were oldies but goodies. Early in the year, legendary local photojournalist **Art Shay** displayed his "True Colors" at **Thomas Masters Gallery** (245 W. North Ave., 312-440-2322; **thomasmastersgallery.com**) with rare snapshots of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and then some. (A second Shay show is on view through Thursday) **Ox-Bow** celebrated its centennial (via nicely dovetailed shows at **Corbett vs. Dempsey** and **Roots & Culture**) with rarely seen prints by giants like **Claes Oldenburg**. And **The Suburban** celebrated its 10th anniversary with a hefty 1,200-page catalog of projects past, among them **Luc Tuymans** and **Tyson Reeder**. The dual-gallery venue (125 N. Harvey Ave., Oak Park, 708-763-8554; **thesuburban.org**) is booked through 2011 with shows from the likes of **Sara Greenberger Rafferty**, **Ruth Root** and a dozen more.

Collage proved itself at the Chicago Tourism Center, and vintage silkscreens resurfaced in Bridgeport thanks to Jason Pickleman and Co-Prosperity Sphere (3219-21 S. Morgan St., 773-837-0145; coprosperitysphere.org). Running took on new life as an art form via Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba's fascinating "Breathing is Free: 12,756.3," which landed at the School of the Art Institute's Betty Rymer Gallery (280 S. Columbus Dr., 312-629-6635) last winter. And when things warmed up, curious onlookers were invited to witness "30 Days of Dinner Time" via Kimmy Noonen's quixotic voyeuristic performance art series at Art on Armitage (4125 W. Armitage Ave., artonarmitage.com).

What's more, everything mentioned was free to see, as will be whatever lands at our galleries in 2011.

#### lviera@tribune.com

Copyright © 2010, Chicago Tribune

#### The News-Gazette **December 17, 2010**

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS** 

## Little resolved at first talk on turbine

Campus official says she hopes to provide answers at next meeting

By PATRICK WADE pwade@news-gazette.com

Residents URBANA shared their concerns Thursday night at the first of two public informational meetings University of Illinois officials are holding to discuss a wind turbine project slated for unincorporated Urbana.

Few concerns - if any were resolved during the question-and-answer initial session, but Morgan Johnston, the sustainability coordinator at the UI, said she hopes to have more answers when they meet again in January.

Project officials are currently negotiating with a contractor who bid on the project, and Johnston said it looks as though only one of three proposed turbines can be built within the \$4.5 million budget. The UI Board of Trustees could take final action at their next meeting on Jan. 20 in Chicago, and officials hope to have a turbine built by the end of May, when a \$2 million grant would expire.

The seemingly condensed project timeline was not lost on nearby residents, who fear a 400-foot wind turbine would be intrusive on their properties.

'It appears that a lot of decisions have already been made, and you've just asked us here to tell us what's going to happen," said Marcela Raffaelli.

Johnston said the ideal location for the wind turbine is the southernmost of the three sites that had been proposed, located near the intersection of Old Church and Philo roads.

The site is south of Urbana's city limits, but within an area where city officials argue they are allowed to control certain specifications on wind turbines. Legal officials at the UI say the university, as a state agency, is not required to comply with the municipal zoning ordinance.

Please see TURBINE, A-6

## TURBINE

Continued from A-1

The proposed location is 1,028 feet from the nearest residence, short of the would-be setback requirement of 1,200 feet.

Duane Schwartz, who occupies that nearest home, said it is too close.

Schwartz, who used to work for the university department out of which this project is being managed, said it is encouraging to see UI officials taking steps to address public concerns, but it is a long time coming.

"It's a start for communication," Schwartz said. "I don't know why they didn't do it five years ago."

Roy Douglas owns farmland and a ranch house close to the proposed turbine, and his son owns the house right next door.

"I'm fearful the thing will never shut off," Douglas said. "I'm fearful that we'll have to live with the noise and the shadow flicker every day of our lives."

The project, which was originally conceived by students seven years ago, is intended to be one of the first steps in working toward goals set in a university renewable energy plan, which calls for a 5 percent reduction in the campus' fossil-fuel use in the next five years.

Johnston said she will take Thursday night's questions

into consideration and prepare responses for the second meeting in January.

While some worry about the effect on property values, noise and shadow effects a turbine will have on their homes, many wonder why the turbine cannot be moved farther from established neighborhoods.

UI officials have said the location was carefully chosen based on ground level heights and distance from Willard Airport, and Johnston said it is unclear whether residents' concerns about the location can have any impact on the design of the project.

"I do not know if the university will consider modifying the

location," she said.



**Breaking News** 

Weather-related school closings for Friday

#### New legislation might cut size of WIU board

The Associated Press

Posted Dec 17, 2010 @ 06:00 AM

MACOMB -- Authorities at Western Illinois University say a bill now moving through the Illinois General Assembly could have a significant impact on the schools board of trustees.

WIU officials tell Macomb radio station WIUM-FM that the legislation could leave the board with only two members.

The bill would force Gov. Pat Quinn to fill vacancies and expired terms on all state boards and commission within 30 days of his signature. If he fails to do so, those serving under expired terms would be forced to leave office.

Western's Board of Trustees has two vacancies, two terms that expire next month, and two terms that expired four years ago.

WIU lobbyist Dave Steelman says the governor's office has failed so far to respond to questions about the board.

Copyright 2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed

# More pension reforms ahead

#### Getting Illinois' systems in good financial shape

By Tom Cross

To paraphrase an old holiday saying, "Yes, Virginia, there is a pension crisis in

Illinois' five public pension systems have massive liabilities of approximately \$80 billion. The bipartisan Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability recently estimated that Illinois' pension systems have a 43 percent asset-to-liability funding ratio. They're the worst funded public pensions in the nation. The Illinois Constitution protects pen-

retirees and public employees. Those benefits may not be diminished.

We must now enact reforms to current

employees' future benefits to stabilize the

employees future benefits to stabilize the systems.

If a state or municipal pension plan runs out of money — which is projected to start happening in a decade or so — the state or municipality may be liable. More fundamentally, the state and most Illinois municipalities do not have the money to make good on these commitments.

This went the General Assembly took a

This year the General Assembly took a good first step by making significant changes to the pensions earned by employees hired after Jan. 1, 2011. These changes for future employees will increase the retirement age to 67, cap the maximum retirement benefit and tie cost-of-living increases to the consumer price index, among other reforms. These changes will save Illinois more than \$70 billion in pension contributions over the next 35 years. But that's not enough.

The Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, a nonpartisan group of business and civic leaders, has studied this issue in depth and proposed a fair and balanced approach to help get our state on

better financial footing.

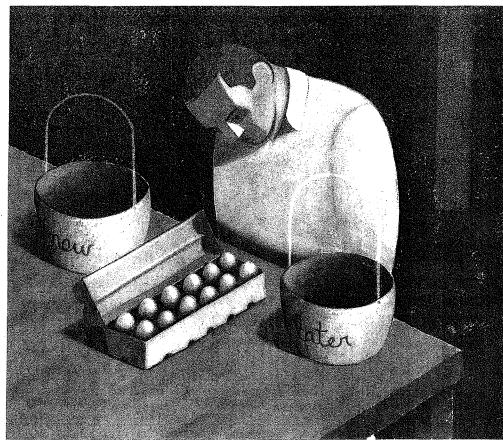
The proposal would allow employees to receive the retirement benefits that they have earned to date. It would provide three options for benefits that they earn after the new law is enacted:

Employees could stay in their current defined benefit pension plan, but the state would cover only 5 percent of the cost of the plan. The employees would cover the rest of

Employees could opt for a new benefit plan and split the cost of the plan with the

Employees could opt for a defined contribution plan with a matching employe

In addition to these changes, it is impor-tant that state government make a firm



JON KRAUSE ILLUSTRATION

commitment to provide the required annual contributions to the pension systems.

In January, I plan to put the Civic Committee's proposed plan into legislation and work with members of the Illinois House and Senate and Gov. Pat Quinn to enact

meaningful reforms.

We want to have discussions about this very important proposal to come up with the best plan for the taxpayers, employees and the state.

This day of reckoning is a long time in

coming. Several factors have contributed to this crisis. A stock market that has been stagnant for a decade has reduced returns. People are living longer and collecting

benefits for a longer period of time. Illinois has failed over many years to make ade-quate payments into the pension systems but has increased benefits. This is a recipe for financial disaster, and both political parties share the blame.

This crisis has long-term consequences and a short-term impact. Illinois is supposed to contribute \$3.5 billion into the pension systems this year. In five years this payment will rise to \$5.5 billion and in 10 years the annual payment will almost double. Without significant reform, these annual pension payments will take an ever-increasing portion of Illinois' budget, crowding out important services such as

education and health care.

If we take no action, we run the risk of not meeting our obligations to those who in good faith have worked and paid into the retirement system all these years with the understanding they will have certain ben-

efits when they retire. We must do this. We also have to control other areas of state spending, reduce Medi-caid costs and create jobs through changes to our workers' compensation laws. We have to do all of this to get our state back on

Tom Cross of Oswego is the Republican leader of the Illinois House.

## THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education

#### **Finance**

Home News Administration Finance

December 16, 2010

#### More Public Colleges Are Pessimistic About Tuition Revenue, Survey Finds

By Paul Fain

Net tuition revenue increased last year for 96 percent of public colleges and 85 percent of private institutions, according to survey results released Thursday by Moody's Investors Service, and a majority of both groups expected to see gains in the current fiscal year as well.

But when looking forward, a growing share of public-college officials were pessimistic about net tuition.

About one in five public institutions projected a decline in tuition and fee revenue for the current fiscal year, which Moody's attributes to political pressure on some to slow tuition increases while also increasing financial aid. Among private-college leaders, 15 percent projected a dip in net revenue.

Moody's, which provides bond ratings for 506 colleges, has been conducting the survey to gauge the recession's "considerable" impact on the complex alchemy of pricing in higher education. The findings have shown that colleges are earning more revenue per student, as tuition increases have outpaced how much colleges are discounting their sticker price with institutional financial aid.

That means colleges are relying more on tuition to cover operating budgets as state contributions, private giving, and endowment returns have tapered.

The survey found, however, that net tuition declined at 15 percent of private colleges, matching last year's percentage, but far outpacing rates before the recession, when only 3 to 5 percent saw declines.

Still, more private colleges are positive this year about the future, the survey found. The proportion that projected a dip in revenue this year, 15 percent, is about half the 29 percent that predicted one last year—a shift that is among the most significant changes identified by the survey, said John C. Nelson, a managing director at Moody's who heads its higher-education practice.

Negative projections last year were stoked by a "higher level of uncertainty" around financial planning, said Mr. Nelson.

But private colleges are hardly out of the woods, he said. Small institutions are more likely to struggle with heavy tuition-discount rates, enrollment pressures, and prolonged periods of declining tuition revenue. The most vulnerable, Mr. Nelson said, are the 45

percent of colleges that have fewer than 1,000 students, and Moody's does not analyze many of those institutions.

In coming years, more financially weak small private colleges will cope by merging, forming partnerships with for-profit companies, or closing, said Mr. Nelson.

Looming Trouble for Public Colleges?

Tuition revenue has increased rapidly at public institutions, which isn't a surprise, given the budget pain caused by hard-hit state economies.

The survey found an 11-percent median increase in net tuition and fee revenue among 96 percent of public colleges. But that trend will change, said the survey's respondents.

The median increase among the 81 percent that expect revenue gains is just 4.4 percent, while the median decline among the 19 percent predicting a drop in revenue is 5.2 percent.

Erin V. Ortiz, an analyst at Moody's and primary author of the report, said some public institutions are unsure how much more revenue they can raise through tuition. Politicians and students are resisting tuition increases, while 90 percent of the survey's respondents expect growing financial-aid expenditures.

Furthermore, she said, some public universities, particularly in the Northeast, have already increased their tuition levels to the point that they may feel competitive pressure from private colleges on cost.

Declines in net tuition become problematic when they occur for two to three years, said Mr. Nelson. And over all, the colleges that are the most threatened are those with unmanageable debt. For example, Mr. Nelson said, some public colleges in New Jersey have more debt than revenue. Relying on tuition increases to cover debt service is problematic, he said.

Other key findings from the report include the following:

- Tuition-revenue pressure for private colleges varies by region, with those in the South and
  West continuing to enjoy an advantage, thanks to growing populations and student demand.
  Colleges in those regions also generally follow a lower-tuition, lower-aid model.
- Tuition-discount rates are expected to remain relatively flat, with private colleges projecting a
  rate of 41 percent and public ones 23 percent.
- Private colleges continue to experience a decline in student yields, the proportion of admitted students who actually enroll.
- · Application volume and enrollment growth remain strong for both private and public colleges.

Copies of the report are available at Moody's Web site.

Copyright 2010. All rights reserved.

The Chronicle of Higher Education 1255 Twenty-Third St, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037