

GRAY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Counterproductive Conceptualisms in Chicago

GRAY Chicago

Jul 10 - Aug 22, 2026

Despite Chicago being a major arts hub existing at the intersection of some of the most influential developments in postwar American art, the city has not always been closely associated with the conceptual art tradition. GRAY Chicago is pleased to present *IT'S ABOUT TIME: Counterproductive Conceptualisms in Chicago*, an exhibition that traces the contours of a newly emerging conceptual art ethos among younger generations of Chicago-based or -trained artists.

Organized by DRAW, the curatorial duo composed of Dieter Roelstraete and Abigail Winograd, *IT'S ABOUT TIME* includes artists with disparate practices but who maintain a shared spirit of studied nonchalance: what might be described as a “Midwestern” alternative to the demands of artistic production as a rat race. The artists include **Alex Chitty** (b. 1979), **Shir Ende** (b. 1993), **Max Guy** (b. 1989), **Jinn Bronwen Lee** (b. 1984), **Dave Lloyd** (b. 1991), **Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle** (b. 1961), **Devin T. Mays** (b. 1985), **Pope.L** (b. 1955 – d. 2023), **Nick Raffel** (b. 1982), and **Miao Wang** (b. 1988). Working in a broad range of disciplines and media—from drawing, painting, and photography to installation, moving image, performance, and sculpture—these artists often combine different artistic personas and profiles.

Bucking the tendency of art history to focus on a handful of seminal conceptual practices in Chicago from the mid-1970s to early 1990s (“ancient history in these accelerationist times,” the curators maintain), this exhibition focuses primarily on a new generation of artists who prefer taking their time, and who often use “time” itself as one of their subjects. Shaped to a discernible degree by the local legacies of artists like Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle and Pope.L, this distinctly contrarian strand of conceptualism in Chicago seeks to restore the social magic of both art and the artist’s life.

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Pushing against the current cultural obsession with “vibes,” this exhibition posits conceptualism as art’s most compelling means of a far more crucial mode: attitude. Self-effacing as they are ambitious, the works in *ABOUT TIME* may appear laidback and slapdash, but by emphasizing the importance of time and space to create such “counterproductive conceptualism,” the result is works of art that are radically different from life as we know it.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Dieter Roelstraete is the curator of the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society at the University of Chicago, where he has organized exhibitions by Gelitin, Rick Lowe, The Otolith Group, Pope.L, Raqs Media Collective, Martha Rosler, Betye Saar, Cecilia Vicuña, and Christopher Williams among many others. He was part of the curatorial team of documenta 14, worked as a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago from 2012 until 2016, and the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen from 2003 until 2012. Trained as a philosopher at the University of Ghent, Roelstraete has written extensively on contemporary art and related philosophical issues.

Abigail Winograd is an independent curator who acted, most recently, as the co-commissioner and co-curator of the U.S. pavilion at the 2024 Venice Biennale (*Jeffrey Gibson: The Space In Which to Place Me*), and who is currently preparing a survey show by Rick Lowe at the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Winograd is also the founding director of Pueblo Unido Gallery at the Centro Romero on Chicago’s northside. She has organized exhibitions at the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem. She has held positions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Blanton Museum of Art. Winograd received a PhD in art history from the University of Texas in Austin and has additional degrees from Northwestern University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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