



Time Out Chicago / July 9-16, 2005

Things fall from the Sky Evanston Arts Center, through July 10.



Joe Sola, 'Studio Visit,' 2005

At first, it's tempting to take the title of this group show literally. There is a lot of "sky": the moon, a black hole, buildings that look like Dorothy's house after the tornado and lots of things that fly. Cocurators Ciara Ennis and Ken Fandell direct us to a more complicated read in their helpful catalog. They mean "things" like truly fantastic occurrences: amphibian rain or parallel universes, "creating a powerful present-tense experience" existing in "this uncertain but fluid space...between reality and the ideal."

Amy Jean Porter's gouaches illustrate migratory birds of North Africa "speaking"—words roll off their beaks—in French and English, while Janice Kerbel creates a whole new species of hummingbird for a fictitious island with a "real" wildlife illustrator providing an Audubon-print legitimacy. Cristian Silva presents 17 tiny photographs of copulating flies, a lewd vanitas.

Chad Gerth's photograms of smashed windshields exemplifies much of the work here: formally succinct, yet with a beauty tarnished with the tragic, two poles that "give the present more presence," according to the curators.

The amazing climax of "Things" is Joe Sola's video *Studio Visit*. The artist is seen in semidarkness, chatting with some curators in that earnest but dry, predictable style people tend to use when introducing their work. Walking casually to the right, the artist abruptly turns, starts to run and jumps, head first, crashing through the glass, out of the window! This hilarious stunt satisfies many an escape fantasy while giving us that magical moment of fear and wonder.

—Kathryn Hixson