

**Gaylen Gerber
Joe Scanlan**

NOVEMBER 19 - DECEMBER 24, 1994

Reception: Saturday November 19, 1994, 6-8 PM. The artists will be in attendance.

Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery is pleased to feature work by Chicago artists Gaylen Gerber and Joe Scanlan. This joint exhibition is a result of Gerber having an idea for a painting that would work well in tandem with some sort of activity in front of it, an activity that would accentuate its intended role. He asked Scanlan to exhibit with him and Scanlan agreed, thinking that a focusing device like Gerber's painting might assist in organizing, or fleshing out, some of the issues inherent in his work. To the painting's "yes" the objects respond "no" and a conversation thus ensues to which we, as viewers, can add our own thoughts and voices.

Gaylen Gerber's site-specific monochromatic painting covers one entire wall of the gallery, mimicing the space's institutional scale. Spare, conceptual, certainly minimalist in appearance, only the smallest of painterly details is evident: the weave of the canvas and the imperfections in the gray pigment applied to it. The painting presents itself and represents the wall: it is barely distinguishable and yet inseparable from the room in which it is located. The viewer, actively solicited to make sense of such an ambiguous work, is soon frustrated by the simultaneous act of revealing and concealing, postmodernist deconstruction and modernist abstraction, at play in it. But this frustration arises from one's need to fix the work, an activity the piece refutes, suggesting instead the rewards of suspending such a desire in favor of experiencing the painting. The apparent "uselessness" of the image thus disappears, replaced by a rich perceptual interchange which, among other things, exposes the intimate/intricate workings of the interpretive act.

Joe Scanlan's work for this show is also site-specific, albeit not in the traditional sense of that phrase. Scanlan's nesting bookcases, starter pot, mirror, and growth medium are selected and situated in such a fashion as to "add a sense of scale and space and narrative to [Gerber's] painting."(artists' statement). Exuding resourcefulness, environmental awareness, and practicality with a clumsy grace, Scanlan's works challenge the limited parameters of art, calling up a context which extends beyond the ordinary presence of the art object. The pieces' assembly-line practicality would appear more at home in apartments or home-improvement stores than in an art gallery, their functionality evidence of daily activities and a personal economy. Barriers between art and life are thus dissolved and the question posed as to what kind of relationship exists between objects, viewers, and the social and architectural spatial setting. Thus the juxtaposition of Gerber and Scanlan's art is much more than a mere exercise in comparison/contrast, speaking to and about currently accepted use, exchange, and aesthetic values.

The gallery is located at 51 Greene Street and is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM. For further information, please call 212-925-5157.