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Tetsuya Noda's powerful work

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By Alan G. Artner
March 20, 2009

Tetsuya Noda: For nearly 40 years this printmaker has created pages of a diary in which all aspects of everyday life have been recorded. The Andrew Bae Gallery shows selections that present still lifes and portraits of arresting delicacy.

The artist employs a woodcut-and-silk-screen process that often results in very large prints. Everything depicted is highly personal, and some of the autobiographical texts that accompany the prints will be of interest mainly to followers. However, the various still lifes of food constitute a virtual celebration of natural bounty that seduces as much through color as form.

Many of the gratifications here come from the craft that late 20th Century art tended to downplay. The artist looks to have been unmoved by any fad or fashion and unashamedly demonstrates again and again how much work really goes into a work of art. If his exploration of friends and family does not hold your interest, the personal way in which he sets everything down may very well, as it shows a powerful melding of tradition and individual talent. Everything he sees is firm and solid and viewed with winning appreciation.

*** At 300 W. Superior St. (showing with Kwang Jean Park), through April 11. 312-335-8601.

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Marvin Newman and Yasuhiro Ishimoto:

The photographers who receive mini-retrospectives at the Stephen Daiter Gallery are both in their 80s and met at Chicago's Institute of Design where they became friends more than 60 years ago. They once collaborated on a short film about [Maxwell Street](#), but otherwise they went separate ways, Newman being interested in social documentary, Ishimoto in form and design.

Their ID-infused works are, not surprising, their best. Newman's street photographs captured entirely through shadows and Ishimoto's images of automobiles after a Chicago snowstorm are mid-century classics. But there's much else here, including Newman's portraits of manhole covers plus Ishimoto's crushed-can and leaf studies that will repay close study.

Because Ishimoto had a full-scale retrospective at the [Art Institute of Chicago](#) in 1999 and Newman has been seen mainly in group shows, the latter's documentary series now have more of a claim on our attention. Of particular interest are pictures from Nome, [Alaska](#), and Wall Street in New York, the one seeming a century away, the other remarkably of our moment.

*** At 311 W. Superior St., through April 25. 312-787-3350.

The End of Analog: The year's switch to digital television has prompted a group show at the Roots and Culture Contemporary Art Center that "marks this historic transition with

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an exploration of technology's shifting significance on our culture." It is a big order filled more by essays (at endofanalog.blogspot.com) than the show's objects. But the works are diverse enough in medium and tone that they still demand to be seen rather than just be spurs to ideational writing.

Nostalgia is not, in any case, an idea, and it underlies the majority of pieces even when they're absurd or distanced through process. The absurdity comes in a collection of 36 drawings (plus more created on video) that attempt to recreate the living spaces of several TV sitcoms. The distancing is evident in Todd Simeone's digital alterations and enlargements of vintage LP jackets. Each preserves artifacts from throwaway culture of the past by putting them at the center of contemporary creation. The labor expended suggests how much longing for the past there is. It's even memorialized in Rebecca Gordon's funereal "sculpture" of CDs and jewel cases.

Video pieces by George Monteleone and Alexander Stewart, Brandon Alvendia and Jon Satrom eschew such nostalgia, proving so contemporary that viewers attuned to the other works may have difficulty sorting out what they're seeing.

*** At 1034 N. Milwaukee Ave., through Saturday. 773-235-8874.

Departures: Jay A. Clarke, an associate curator of prints and drawings and curator of the stirring [Edvard Munch](#) exhibition at the Art Institute of Chicago, has become Manton Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass. Beginning May 4, she will oversee the planning of a study center for works on paper as well as tend more than 5,000 pieces.

Christa Mayer Thurman, for 42 years curator of the Art Institute's textiles department, will retire effective July 1. Some of the fruits of her labors were seen last year in the first exhibition of European tapestries that had been acquired for more than a century. Like no other curator at the institute, Thurman *is* her department, having been responsible for everything from the much-expanded collection to a conservation laboratory.

Susan Rossen, the Institute's executive director of publications for 28 years, will retire on Aug. 1. She has brought to press more than 200 publications, including exhibition and collection catalogs as well as Museum Studies, the periodical that presents scholarly writings on the museum's holdings and history. Her work has been an example to many who have gone on to other publishing operations.

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