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Writing Sample; Article

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Painting the Town

The 16th Annual Chicago Artists Month or

Color your Chicago experience by participating in Artists Month

There's more to Chicago's art scene than the Manets, Pollacks and Picassos at the Art Institute. The city is home to over 5,000 artists, and the 16th annual Chicago Artists Month in October showcases a diverse group of 12, representing a wide range of mediums, age, gender and styles selected from over 200 nominees. Don't bypass the museums, but here are a few individual Chicago artists well worth a visitor's time to check out...and they're still alive.

Anders Brekhus Nilsen's (www.andersbrekhusnilsen.com) art looks and feels like way cool children's book illustrations, the soft color palate inspired by Sweet Tarts and Necco wafers. But it registers that no, you will not be seeing these in any bedtime story. Nilsen's work is surreal and sometimes gruesome, but his meticulous line work and delicate use of color compel the viewer to look.

Canary-yellow and fuchsia smoke rolls downhill through a pine forest. A housewife hangs precariously from the gutter of a two story brick foursquare. Sarah and Joseph Belknap's (www.sarahandjoseph.com) alarming photography and sculpture are based in reality but disarm. Playing with perspective and expectations, their work invites the imagination to create the stories behind it.

Delicate shards of driftwood and coral the size of drawer pulls look like the real thing but are actually made of porcelain and enameled copper. They, and jewelry made of glass, metal and gemstones are created by Christine Simpson-Forni (www.christinesimpsonjewelry.com). Her nature inspired art is not confined to paper or canvas, and you can wear it home.

Whether editorial shots, celebrity portraits or artfully composed black-and-white images of the urban experience, Carlos Javier Ortiz's (www.carlosjortiz.com) work captures surface moments in such a way that the subject's inner life is revealed as well. It's almost like photographed

thought.

Lorraine Peltz's (www.lorrainepeltz.com) vaguely abstract paintings of chandeliers and dense floral arrangements simply put the viewer in a good mood. They have a groovy, retro 60's feel, but she updates the look with bright, vivid color. Cheerful and upbeat, they are pictures of celebration, music and pleasure.