



Find tacos, cheap dinner, Max's

Near Chicago, IL



Sign Up

Home About Me Write a Review Find Friends Messages Talk Events

Log In

Kim's Corner Food

★★★★★ 6 reviews

Details

★ Write a Review

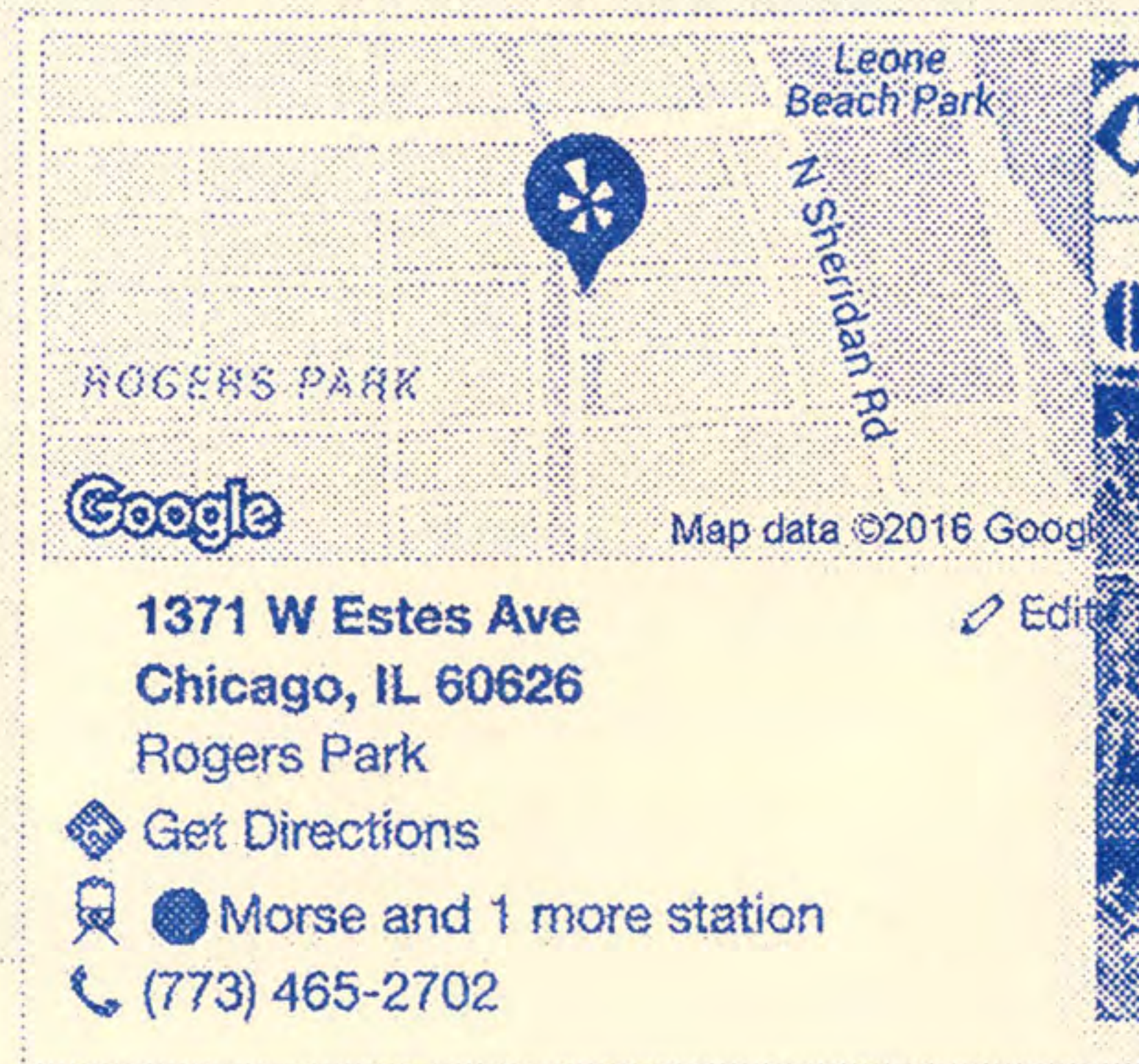
Add Photo

Share

Bookmark

\$\$ · Grocery

Edit

1371 W Estes Ave
Chicago, IL 60626
Rogers Park

Get Directions

Morse and 1 more station

(773) 465-2702



Mr Kim's collages have taken over the... by Ciel D.

Recommended Reviews

Search reviews



Sort by Newest First ▾

English (6)

Rebeca B.
Chicago, IL
0 friends
12 reviews

Share review

Embed review

Compliment

Send message

Follow Rebeca B.

★★★★★ 2/13/2014

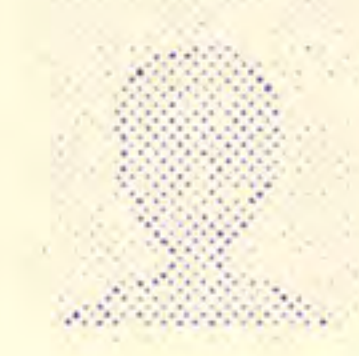
I used to love coming to Kim's corner before I hopped on the train to go to work. They really do have everything imaginable in that little store. Mr. Kim always greeted me with a smile and I always made room to have a little chat with him...ahh the good ol' rogers park days.

Was this review ...?

Useful

Funny

Cool

nancy l.
Chicago, IL
0 friends
33 reviews

★★★★★ 2/13/2014

I always think this place is just crazy expensive. Now, I understand it's a corner store but I see them bringing in items in their own van that they probably purchased at Costco and you can't imagine the rent on the location is very high.

Was this review ...?

Useful

Funny

Cool

Dale M.
Rockford, IL
0 friends
6 reviews

★★★★★ 10/16/2013

This shop is a Chicago Gem. The collages and art that the owner creates give the shop a warm, personal feel. The selection of goods for sale is very broad. This is the store that has what you're looking for.

Was this review ...?

Useful

Funny

Cool

Kristin R.
Boca Raton, FL
30 friends
8 reviews

★★★★★ 10/6/2013

Roger's Park local corner market. Pick up necessities, but be sure to check out the collages created by the owner. The art can be seen inside and outside at Kim's Corner Store.

Was this review ...?

Useful

Funny

Cool

Price range Moderate

Edit business info

Work here? Claim this business

Hours

Add business hours

More business info

Accepts Credit Cards Yes

Parking Street

Wheelchair Accessible No

Angelique I.
First to review

You might also consider

Rogers Park Fruit Market
55 reviews

The produce is always fresh and extremely cheap.

Browse nearby

Restaurants

Nightlife

Shopping

Show all

Work here? Claim this business

Respond to reviews and privately message customers

Claiming is free, and only takes a minute

Claim This Business

People viewed this after searching for...

Grocery Chicago



Ciel D.
Birmingham, United Kingdom
30 friends
108 reviews

- Share review
- Embed review
- Compliment
- Send message
- Follow Ciel D.

8/6/2012 · Updated review

27 check-ins

Mr Kim recently got a pack of stick on letter and numbers and has made about a million signs for everything in the store. It's super cute. SO now you can look into the cooler and see that the bacon is labelled "BACON" and so on.



Was this review ...?

Useful 1 Funny Cool

1/8/2012 · Previous review

I love Kim's, I'm in there probably 4 days a week, I have to pass it to get to the red line, so it's really convenient. Mr Kim is always really friendly and he has a great selection and variety of items for such a small space. Their prices are a little high, but the convenience is fabulous. And I'd rather pay a little more to help an actual small business owner instead of Dominick's or Jewel-Osco.

Was this review ...?

Useful Funny Cool



Katie P.
Chicago, IL
15 friends
130 reviews

12/19/2008

I love this little store. They have literally EVERYTHING under the sun from coffee creamer to men's boxer shorts in an array of pastel colors. You want Pop Rocks? They got 'em. Bologna? Got it. Hair nets? Check.

But the greatest thing about Kim's is they take credit cards which a lot of little stores don't. There's also a fine ATM in there for those neighborhood places that require cash only.

And the people who work in there are really delightful. I used to live near Sonny's and would have to force myself to go in there because that place just was not right. I'll take Kim's any day of the week.

Was this review ...?

Useful 1 Funny Cool



Angelique I.
Chicago, IL
57 friends
41 reviews

11/23/2007

First to Review

Listed in Rogers Park is my hood

I'm very happy to have this corner store by me. The owners are really nice and the prices aren't bad (for a convenience store).

Was this review ...?

Useful 1 Funny Cool

Search photosandart.com

READER

the BLEADER

NEWS & POLITICS | MUSIC | ARTS & CULTURE | FILM | FOOD & DRINK | CLASSIFIEDS

BEST OF CHICAGO | PROFILES THEATRE STORY | SAVAGE LOVE | AGENDA | EVENTS | LOCATIONS | ISSUES | ARTICLE ARCHIVES | FUN & FREE

ALL | NEWS | ARTS | FILM | FOOD | MUSIC



Like 0 Tweet G+ 0 Pin it Share

Former Reader writer Lee Sandlin ho...

Did you read about the National Lab...

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2015

VISUAL ART / SHOW US YOUR... / ARTS

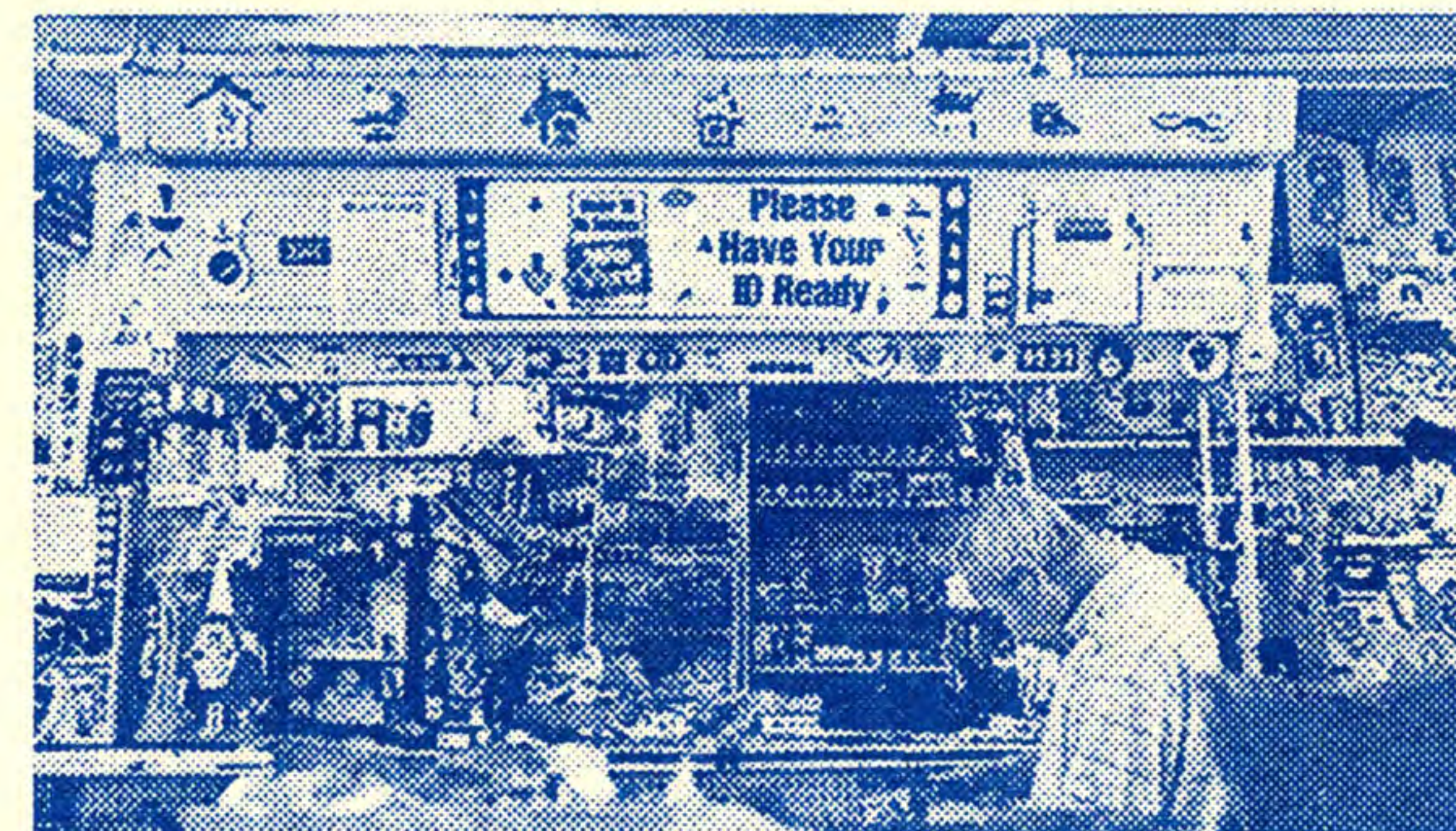
A north-side bodega has become a gallery of food-packaging collages

Posted By Kate Sierzputowski on 08.17.15 at 04:00 PM



ROSARIO ZAVALA

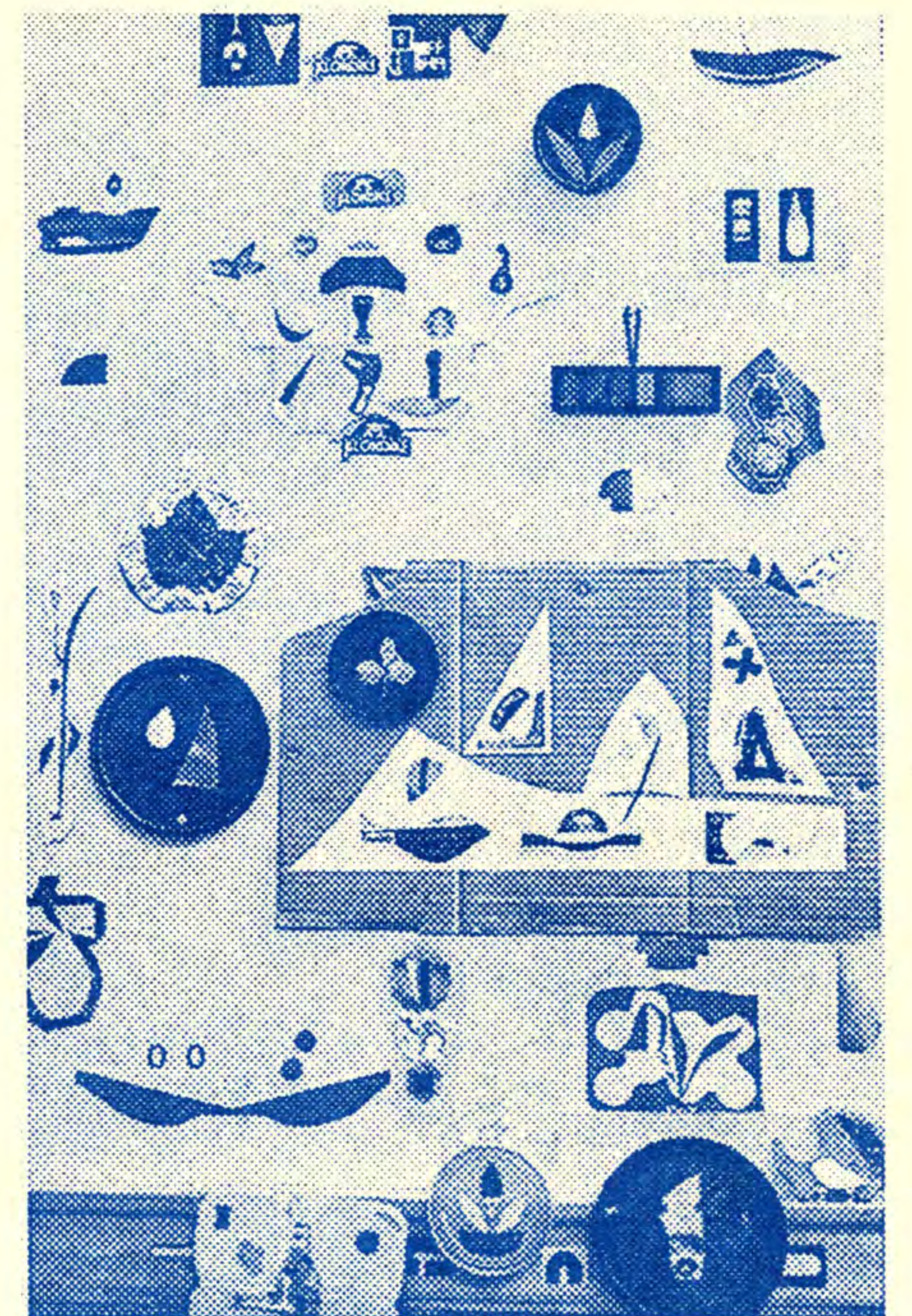
THINK BIG spelled out in adhesive letters, a *g* standing in for the *G*, hangs above the cash register of Kim's Corner Food at 1371 W. Estes in Rogers Park. On many surfaces throughout the aging bodega, proprietor Thomas Kong has hung the small collages he's been crafting for the last four years using Black & Mild containers, Coffee-mate packaging, and other scraps of stray paper and cardboard destined for the Dumpster. Kong's colorful, sometimes odd works adorn walls, endcaps, even the interiors of beverage coolers.



Thomas Kong

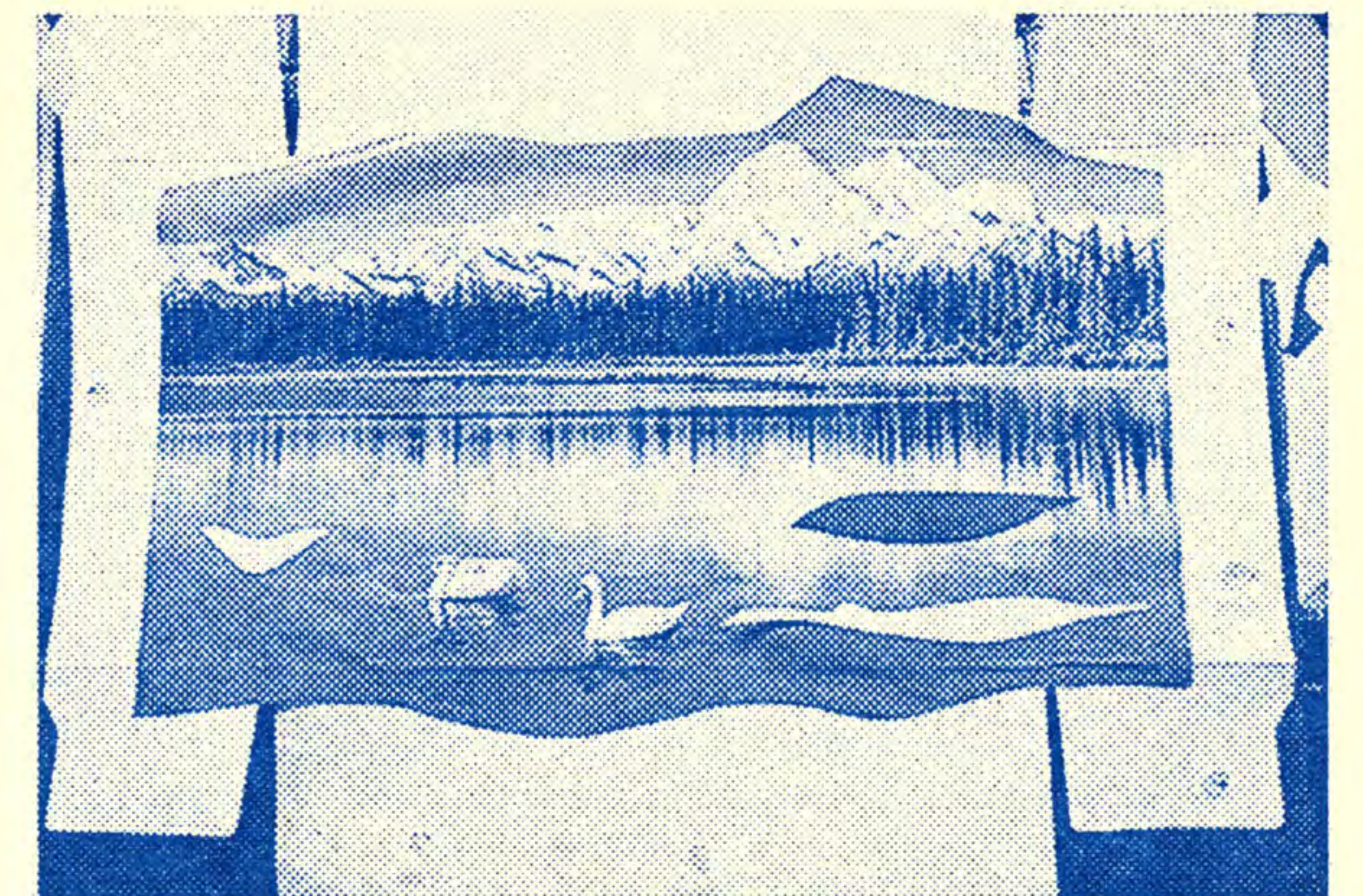
ROSARIO ZAVALA

"Every day I make," says Kong, who immigrated to the U.S. from South Korea nearly 40 years ago. "Big and small, large and narrow, wide ones, high ones, low ones, different colors. I can't remember how many I've made—maybe a couple of thousand." He began making the collages simply to pass the 12 hours a day he spends working in the store, but it quickly blossomed into a passion.



ROSARIO ZAVALA

Daniel Miller, an artist and grad student at Northwestern University, and Nathan Smith, who codirects Rogers Park gallery Roman Susan, became interested in Kong's work last fall after wandering into his store. The two helped Kong make a website on which he can promote his art, and have begun to organize years' worth of Kong's pieces stashed in a back room of the store. With Kong's blessing, Miller and Smith plan to turn the room into a mini exhibition space, allowing Kim's Corner Food shoppers to browse the artist's work just beyond the densely packed aisles.



ROSARIO ZAVALA

Avondale gallery Night Club will feature Kong's art, alongside artist John Neff's photographs of Kim's Corner Food, in an October exhibition.

Tags: Thomas Kong, Kim's Corner Food, visual art, bodega, Kate Sierzputowski, Daniel Miller, Nathan Smith, Image

Email Share Add to favorites Add to Custom List

COMMENTS

Showing 1-1 of 1

add a comment

Beautiful work. Thank You so much, Mr. Kong. Looking forward to seeing it in person.
report 1 like 0 dislikes like dislike
Posted by every day we make on 08/19/2015 at 2:20 AM
Subscribe to this thread: By Email With RSS Showing 1-1 of 1

THOMAS KONG

projects about interview the back room visit contact

Excerpts from an interview with Thomas Kong
by Dan Miller
Chicago, IL, January 2015

DM MILLER I don't want to ask you your life story; I want to talk about art in particular. So my first question is: why did you start making collages?

THOMAS KONG There's no why; it's just like this. The first time I was motivated by the store; the store decorations, you know. So, first of all the shelves of the store, all the shelves, the shelves were kinda empty-like or dirty-like, so I just thought about laying something on the shelves, you know, like the bottom of the shelves, so the merchandise looks nice.

DM So initially it was decoration?

TK Yeah, initially, yes. The reason is, that's the reason. If this is the answer to the question, 'why?', that's the answer.

DM And why did you progress from there?

TK And then I started like—I can do it, you know—I thought, I can do it, I can do something, something nice, so it draws some people, some peoples' eye. So I can talk to people about the art, you know, yeah. So I started making, and then, when I cut it, cut everything, anything from the packaging, anything from the pictures, it's kinda, you know, I feel like I'm proud of it, you know, proud of it, I can make this one, I can make this one, and when I look at it afterwards, it looks good, not bad, huh? It looks good, right?

DM Yeah!

TK I was kinda getting more interested in doing it, you know, so, it keeps me going too. And then, plus, the store is kinda small, so I have a little time, you know, time to kill, time to kill. So I kept doing it. If I have nothing to do, some bad things, bad ideas, come in, so I try to chase 'em out, you know?

DM To chase out the bad ideas?

TK Yeah.

DM What kind of bad ideas?

TK All kinds! Some worries, some fears about aging, you know, something like that. That's no good, I thought. That reminds me, in the Bible God says, "keep praying, keep praying". That means, when you have time to worry about something in the world, pray. That means you can't do that, you can't pray all the time, 24 hours, but when you have time to worry about things, keep praying. So that's why. Something like that. When I do this, this is praying, too. That keeps me going, that's the main thing.

...

DM Did you ever go to university?

TK Yeah, in Korea, Sogang University...

DM What did you study?

TK I studied English literature. Shakespeare, Fitzgerald.

DM Who was your favorite in English literature?

TK Shakespeare, I liked Shakespeare. But that's a long time ago now.

And then I went to Korean Airlines after school, for three years, so I travelled all over the European countries and Southeast Asian countries, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and France and England, Spain, Italy. I travelled a lot too, you know, when I was in the airline business. We actually inaugurated the Seoul and Paris line, you know. Seoul and Paris, the first inauguration, when I was in 1975 or something. I was with Korean Airlines starting in 1972, so after 2-3 years we inaugurated the Paris and Seoul direct line. We had only the Southeast Asia line and Los Angeles from Honolulu, just two routes, but now Korean Airlines is giant. We had one 747, now they have more than a hundred.

DM Are you still in touch with people from that time?

TK No. That was about, nearly forty years ago. They all left, you know. All the people I worked with at the same time, my friends, at the same time we had about 800 people tested, so we passed, and they put us all in different departments, you know. I was in the marketing department.

DM So when you think about your past, do you think it has an influence on the artworks that you're making now?

TK Not really, not from the past, but since I started this, every day I look at everything in the world, the ground, the air, whenever I see it, I just look very closely. I started looking closely; I pay more attention to everything, and then make shapes. Even footprints in the snow, or leaves on the ground, even puddles make different shapes, so I started looking at everything in the world for my images, you know. Images for making something like that. So I started picking up the leaves and started picking up some kinds of colors, too. I started looking at color, too, to match with this and with that. So in everything, I use my attention to make something.

DM I've noticed that you have a very natural talent for color and shape and composition...

TK So I kinda gained some knowledge about art. I didn't know anything about art, but I used to make some paper, like, paper, what do you call it, this one?

DM Like, origami, like Japanese folding...?

TK Folding, yeah, make some shapes and...

DM When did you do this?

TK From my childhood, you know. I liked that stuff, you know. Paper folding. [Begins folding paper]

DM Did you have any family or friends who made art?

TK I had a couple of friends from my childhood who are good at painting, a couple of them. I know one guy, he does good paintings too, but...

DM So you did paper folding, and did you make other things when you were a child?

TK Uh—

DM I'm wondering where this natural talent comes from, or whether you just discovered it when you started this?

TK Oh, you know what? That's a good question, too. I grew up in a rural area, like hills and fields and seas, you know, all that stuff. So I had more chance than other people to get close to nature, you know. So I kept wondering how they make that stuff? Like, stars, at night. And I started questioning about that too. Now, God made it, I know, God made all these things.

DM And what was your relationship to the city?

TK I went to middle school. In Korea there's primary school, six years, middle school, three years, high school, three years, so I went to middle school. I lived in the rural area until I was twelve years old, until I had just finished elementary, and then I went to the city, middle school, and high school, and then went to the university in Seoul. Then high school, middle school in Incheon, Korea, the smaller city than Seoul. So I just keep telling my son, to have a house in a rural area, near Cincinnati or whatever, to raise your children to learn about nature.

DM So you think that your understanding of nature informs the way that you make your collages?

TK Maybe, that might be. I don't know exactly. The thing is I started with nature, you know.

DM But the materials that you use are very unnatural, apart from the leaves, the materials that you use are very unnatural—

TK Unusual, right?

DM —yeah, like packaging materials, advertising...

TK Yeah, that's from the deliveries you know, the merchandise deliveries. I just started about four years ago; I think it's been about four years now.

DM Sometimes, the collages, the forms are very natural, but sometimes you use the advertising material very clearly, like you will cut out the name of the brand and include that.

TK Yeah, such as, from the cigarette company, they gave me this stuff, you know, Newport and all this stuff. I just kinda thought the color is nice, and the material is kind of stable, so I cut it out and started putting it in the collages.

DM Some of my favorite collages of yours are when you use the words like—the words of the brand, like "American Spirit". And I wonder, when you use the words like that, what's your intention?

TK The "American Spirit" words, the spirit, the spirit is kinda like [points at his chest], something like that, so I started with spirit. And there's another word, "American", in there, right? But that's really American Indian, right? So when you have American Spirit cigarettes, there's always this guy's picture on it, an Indian.

DM What do you think about that?

TK It's okay.

DM And how do you feel about America?

TK You know when I was here for the first time, I was about 27. Just after I quit Korean Airlines. My sister was here first, before me. My sister, who is about six years older than me, she was a nurse here. She invited me, gave me an invitation, an immigration permit. At that time in Korea I was making, money-wise, about \$200 a month. That was a high salary, too, at that time in Korea. Less than \$200, I would say. But still, I had a dream. We had a hard time, you know, because the war had just ended in 1956, I think, and then nobody had money, there were a lot of hungry people.

I just thought about America, okay, let's go. So I just asked the company, Korean Airlines, I'm going to America, give me some money, an air ticket. So I took an air ticket from the company, and they gave me about \$800, so I came here. But I thought I spoke English pretty good at that time, but I couldn't understand anything—as soon as I arrived at the airport, I was deaf! Oh my goodness, I thought, I could speak, but I can't hear first, you know, can't understand. You know, hearing is first, right? First step, you gotta hear, and then you can speak, right? And, I can't hear! I can't understand. So I couldn't get a good job, okay, so I had a gas station job, pump man. I started pumping gas. The first word I learned was "fillerup".

DM That's what my grandmother used to say when I was a kid, when we would drive to the petrol station.

TK [Showing the completed paper sculpture] That's the first paper folding that I started making in my childhood.

DM So, when was that? How old were you?

TK When I was about ten.

DM So you've been making these for more than fifty years?

TK That's right.

DM So what is it, a boat?

TK A boat. [Motions to hand over the sculpture]

DM Is this for me?

TK Go ahead, that's what I wanted.

DM So how do you feel about America now?

TK Actually, I feel still comfortable. Because I've lived here long enough to make this place my home, my hometown. This is my hometown now. I lived in Korea for 27 years, I've lived here about 38 years now, so this is more my hometown now. When I go to Korea, that's a foreign country now. Sure, comfortable, yeah. Because I met Jesus here when I was about mid-forties, close to fifty. Mid-forties, yeah. I met Jesus here. That's the main thing.

DM So what are your hopes for your making art in the future? Do you have hopes for who will see the work, or how people will feel about it?

TK For now, some people, not everyone, some people come in and just look at my work, do not buy anything, but they buy something after all, you know. That's good. But some people look around very close, check everything out, and then they've never seen this before, and they're interested, nice, give me some words, like, "beautiful job", or whatever. Okay, that's not bad.

DM Is it that you enjoy the opportunity to talk to people, that the artwork is like a way for you to connect with other people?

TK Yeah, that could be one thing. But first of all, like a belief, like faith, that's personal. Faith is personal. The relationship between me and God. It's personal. Something like that. So, personally, this is first of all for myself. My satisfaction, okay. Yeah, but you know, still, you can't live by yourself in the world, right? When people give me praise, applause, about my work, it keeps me going, too you know?

DM Yeah, I understand that very well.

...

DM I'll ask you one more question, and then I'll go — what's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

TK Beautiful things, what, the nature, or—

DM In the world— what's the most beautiful thing you've ever seen?

TK Substantially, that we can see, with our eyes?

DM Yeah.

TK You mean scenery, or artwork, or people who help other people, you know, all that stuff. The most beautiful thing, beautiful thing, beautiful thing. That's a big question too, you know. Because beautiful means very—you say, 'beautiful woman', also, right?

DM Sure.

TK That's beautiful, beautiful: woman, nature, seashore, mountains, pictures, beautiful things. When you say beautiful things, the object could be woman, could be nature, picture, minds, human minds, beautiful minds, beautiful hearts. Beautiful things. Things, right?

DM Yeah.

TK Oh! The astronaut took a picture of the earth, you know, when he was up there. That's beautiful. That was beautiful. I didn't know that the earth is beautiful like that, you know, in the universe like this. All the other stars are just small like, no color, you know, just dark, but when you see the earth from up there, look at that, beautiful! The earth is beautiful! The earth is beautiful. That's why God loves too, you know. After he made the earth, what did he say? Beautiful! Yeah, that's right. After he made it.

Dan Miller is an artist living in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago.

ARTICLES

How a Bodega Became a Sprawling Site for Collage

by Anna Foran on April 19, 2016

Like 256

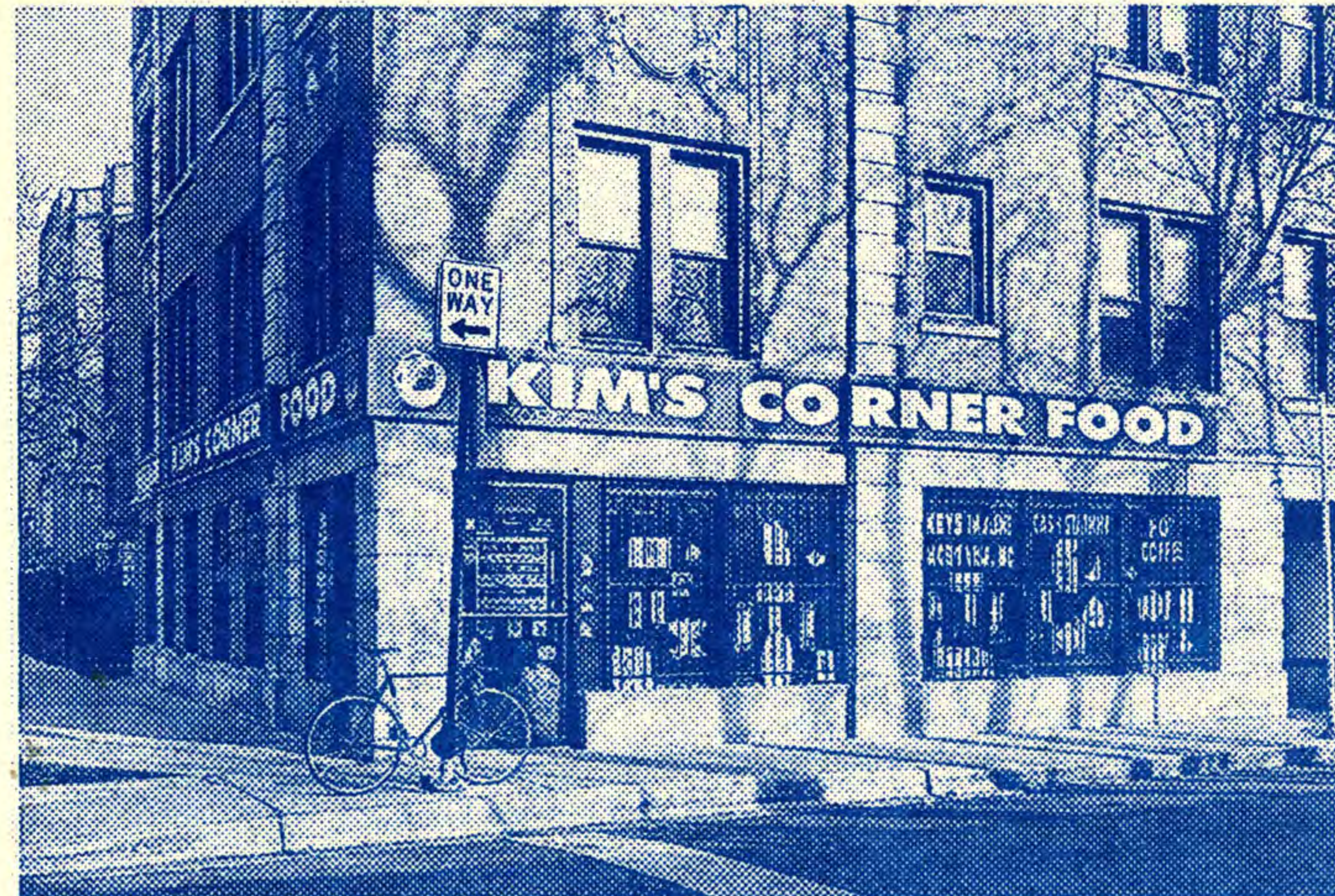


Interior of Kim's Corner Food, Chicago, with collages by Thomas Kong (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic unless otherwise noted)

CHICAGO — In the second act of Arthur Miller's 1949 *Death of a Salesman*, a distressed Willy Loman laments, "Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground." The traveling salesman goes out and buys a package of seeds, hoping to sow physical proof of his time on earth.

Thomas Kong, bodega owner and collage artist, remembers reading Miller and Fitzgerald back at university in Seoul. Almost 50 years later, and he's sowing his own backyard — as the co-proprietor of Kim's Corner Food in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, but also as the maker of thousands of paper collages that claim almost every surface of his corner establishment.

But Kim's Corner Food hasn't always been Kong's backyard. After emigrating from Korea to the US in 1977, he jumped around, working as a gas station attendant, owning a liquor store in Chicago's South Side, and co-owning a dry cleaning business with his wife, all before purchasing the bodega on a sleepy residential street in 2006.



Kim's Corner Food (image courtesy Dan Miller)

After filling the store with retail products, Kong started working from the ground up, using the various products' cardboard skins to enliven the edges of the shelves. With time, the cutouts began to inch beyond the shelves, and an entrepreneurial impulse to embellish morphed into a full-fledged collage practice that now happily consumes half the labor of Kong's work days (the store is open 7 days a week from 8am–8pm) and means he is almost *always* wielding a pair of scissors. When I ask Kong about his nonstop cut-and-pasting, his reply sums up how all artists might conceive of their labor: "It keeps me going."

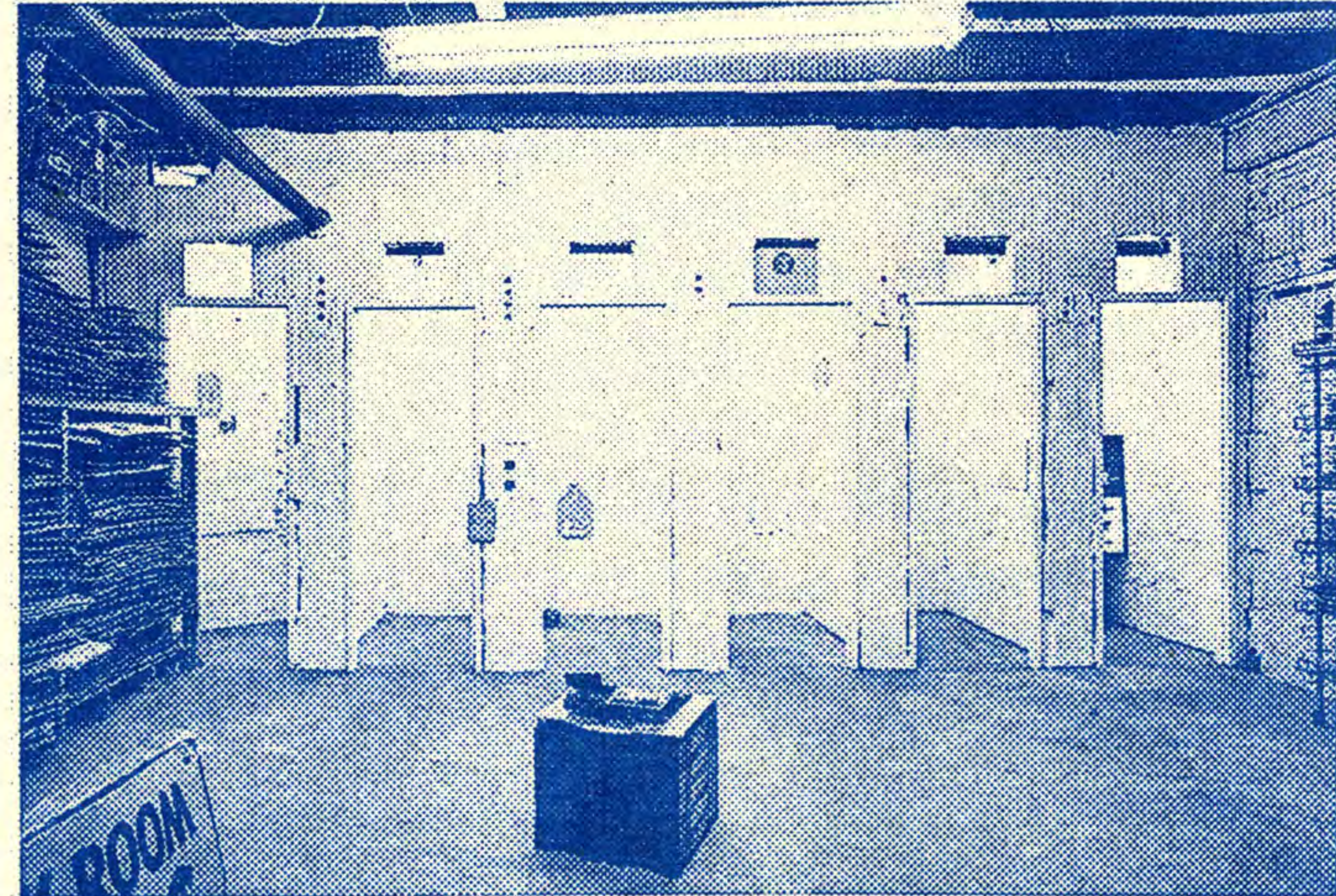


The vitrine of Kim's Corner Food (photo by Alice Ashiwa) (click to enlarge)

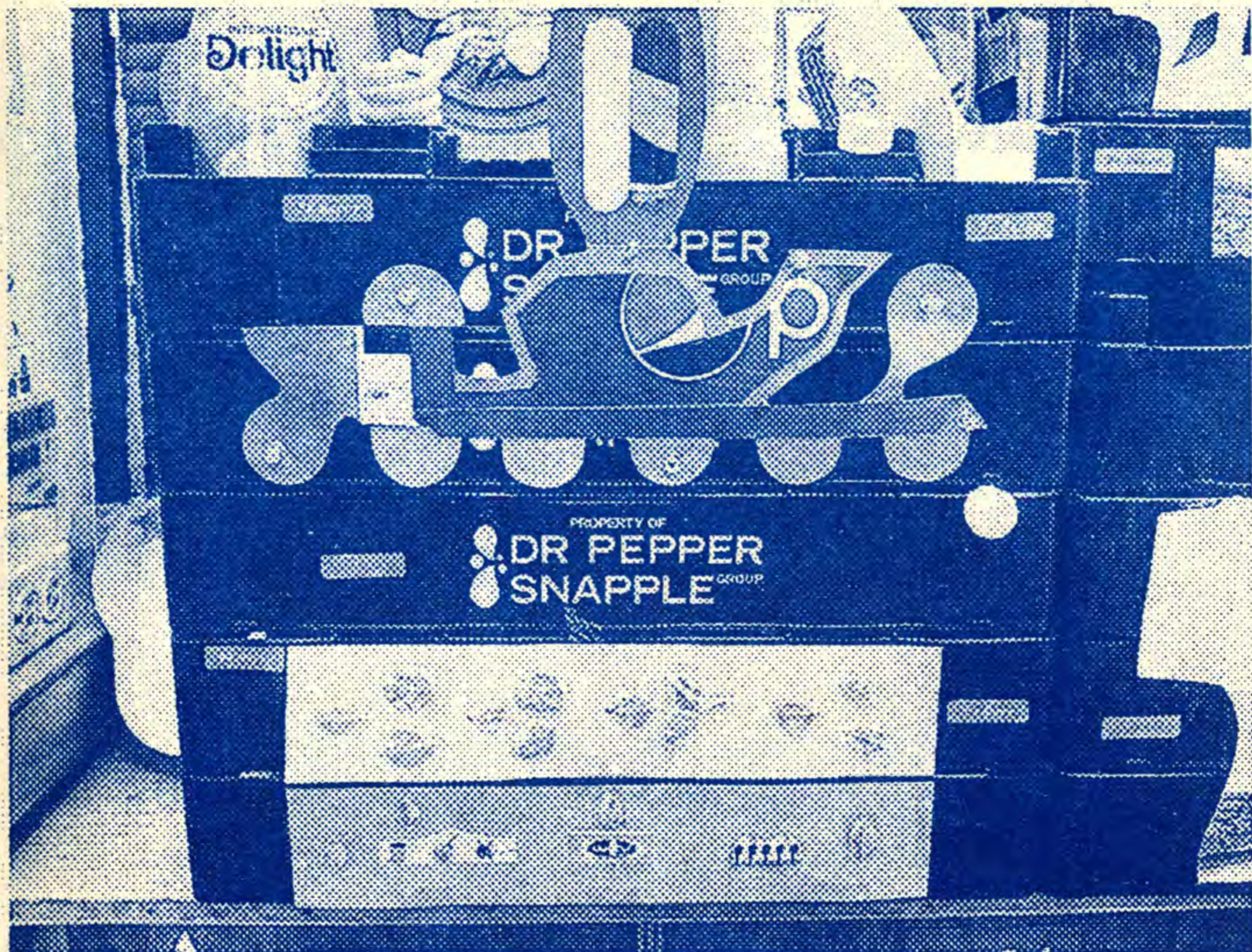
In 2014, Northwestern University student and artist Dan Miller noticed the unusual, collage-decked exterior and struck up a friendship with Kong and his ever-growing collection of collages. What has emerged from this working relationship between Miller, Kong, and also Nathan Smith, the co-director of the local art space Roman Susan, is, among other things, the opening up of The Back Room, a storage space at Kim's Corner Food that, with Kong's go-ahead, has been turned into an explosive archive and eclectic exhibition venue.

Owing to the shared labor of Kong, Miller, Smith, and a host of others, Thomas's collage practice continues to move around and beyond The Back Room and the

windows of the bodega. In early April, a crowd gathered at Roman Susan to witness the opening of *Thomas Kong: Be Happy (A Proposal)*, which laid out a series of Kong's works — inspired by one of the artist's central slogans — that he hopes, with the help of a team of painters and designers, will be transformed into a block-long mural that would run along an embankment wall along Glenwood Avenue. The proposal was submitted to the community-based public arts initiative the Mile of Murals, which launched in 2007 with the aim of soliciting 19 large-scale murals — 10 block-long walls, seven viaduct walls, and two overpasses — from artists and collectives. Situated across from Kim's Corner Food, the mural would be a large-scale echo of the store's interior collages, with crisp shapes and real leaves under cellophane tape.



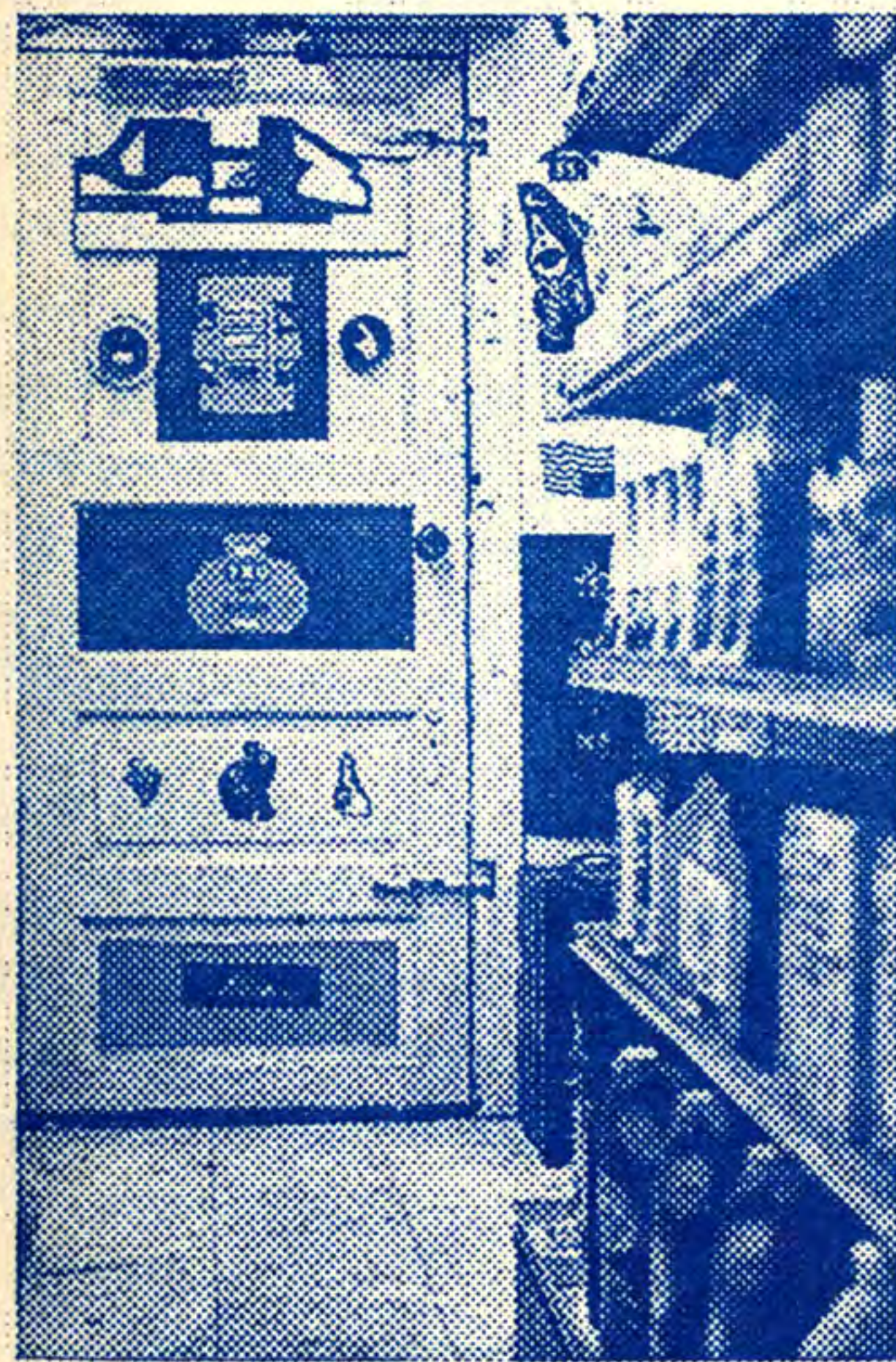
"Thomas Kong, The Robbery: Selected by Jason Lazarus" at The Back Room at Kim's Corner Food (image courtesy Dan Miller)



Detail of one of Thomas Kong's collages at Kim's Corner Food

In the cut-and-paste landscape of Kim's Corner Food, 2D collages sit below or dangle above their 3D counterparts like mirror images and are reminders of art's own stake in capitalist production. Like a graveyard of the American dream where the dead are reborn, Styrofoam cups become minimalist sculpture while old luncheable containers offer up cardboard snacks. In one of the clearest enunciations of this ghostly landscape, the collaged skeleton of an old cash register — which usually sits at the base of an aisle but now forms part of a Back Room installation of Kong's work, selected by artist Jason Lazarus — is a potent container of money and art, use and reuse.

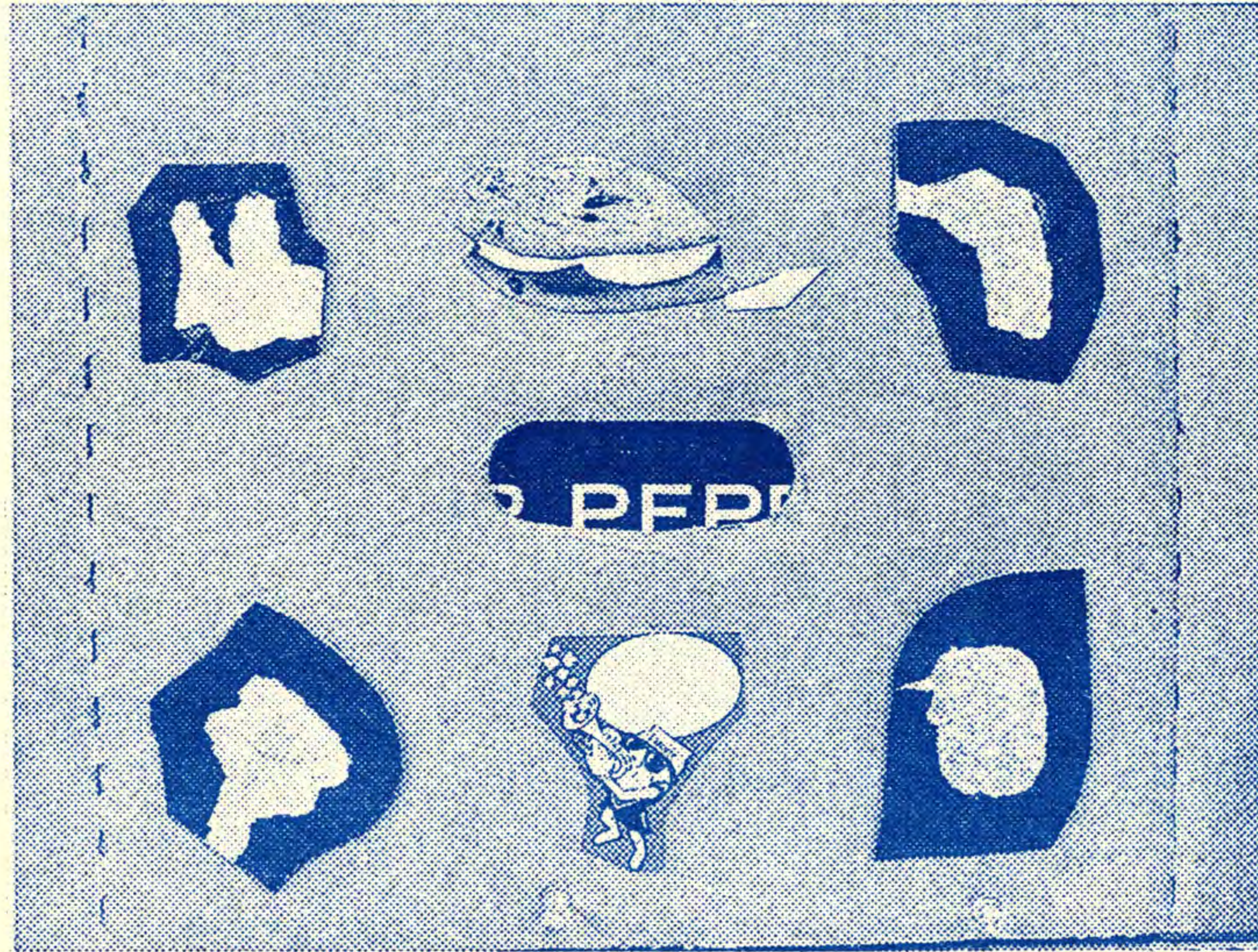
Though drawing on the visual vocabulary of advertising, by mostly reusing materials Kong resists our obsession with the new. Like a true bricoleur, he uses what's on hand — a bottle of Elmer's white glue, tape, staples, a thumb tack — to affix his cut outs at an astoundingly steady speed. At one point in our interview, Kong ripped open a packet of Ramen seasoning and, with powder scattered, began gluing the plastic onto a piece of cardboard; in a flash, the disposable container transformed into artistic material.



Interior of Kim's Corner Food with collages by Thomas Kong (click to enlarge)

Kong also draws from the image bank of the outside world. While typically bearing recognizable signs, his collages always gesture beyond their immediate content. In one piece that hangs near the store's freezers (now given over, in part, to display), paper fragments that run along the center all function as re-contextualized advertisements. But as the outer pieces — abstracted by tearing or, perhaps, displacement — hint at, these fragments also function as shapes and shades which find their likeness on sidewalks, in the sky, and all around if we just look closely enough. For Kong, who says he finds motivation in both the divine and on the ground, the act of looking closely reigns supreme.

Kim's Corner Food is located in Rogers Park, which remains one of Chicago's most ethnically and culturally diverse neighborhoods. The current murals featured in the Mile of Murals are a colorful echo of their varied landscape: one, completed in 2009 by two artists and a group of summer campers, features some of the area's key historical figures, among them Potawatomi Chief Metea. It seems fitting that, just as Kong's collages continue to draw sight lines between art and the scraps of our immediate environment, so would the wall draw a lasting line between the store, the people who pass by, and the neighborhood beyond its edges.



Detail of one of Thomas Kong's collages at Kim's Corner Food

Thomas Kong: *Be Happy (A Proposal)* continues at Roman Susan (1224 W Loyola Ave, Chicago) through April 26.

Navigation: Dan Miller Kim's Corner Food Mile of Murals Roman Susan The Back Room Thomas Kong

Like 256 Share Tweet G+



Hyperallergic welcomes comments and a lively discussion, but comments are moderated after being posted. For more details please read our comment policy.

1 Comment Hyperallergic Login

Recommend Share Sort by Best

Join the discussion...

Mary Collins Wehrle · 3 months ago He says he was inspired by the cutouts of Henri Matisse

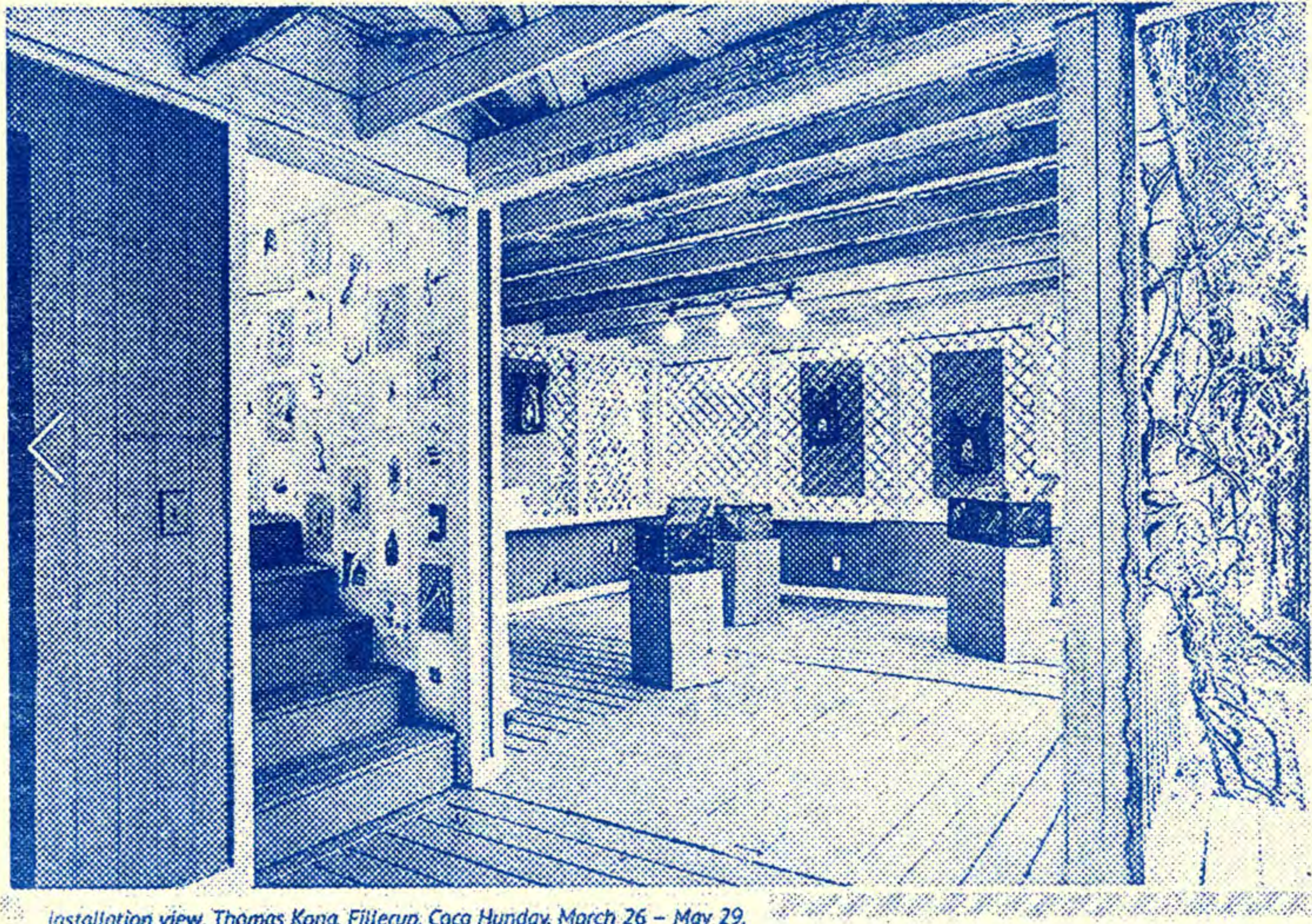
Hyperallergic is a forum for serious, playful and radical thinking about art in the world today. Founded in 2009, Hyperallergic is headquartered in Brooklyn, New York. [Learn More](#) →

Like 340k Follow 82.7K followers

Get our Newsletter 87k

About Newsletter Store Archives Weekend

Facebook Twitter Instagram Google+ Tumblr RSS



Installation view, Thomas Kong, *Fillerup*, Coco Hunday, March 26 – May 29,

Thomas Kong at Coco Hunday

DANNY OLDA on May 19, 2016 at 7:03 AM

Shortly after emigrating from Korea to the United States, Thomas Kong began a job as a “pump man” at a gas station where he learned his first English phrase: “Fillerup.”

Now, as the title of his current solo exhibition at Tampa’s Coco Hunday, the phrase stands in contrast to his decidedly uncluttered collages. Instead, it references the packed car that drove his work from Chicago to Tampa, Florida and, perhaps, the storage spaces his work inhabits in both cities – a convenience store’s backroom and a two car garage-cum-gallery space respectively.

Thomas Kong owns Kim’s Corner Food, a convenience store in the Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago where he works seven days a week. The self-taught artist creates collages using advertising and packaging materials found in his shop and displays them throughout the store. The artwork additionally fills an adjacent archival and presentation space known simply as the Back Room. Artist Dan Miller, the organizer behind *Fillerup*, works as a coordinator for the Back Room and facilitates outbound exhibitions of Kong’s work. For the exhibition, Miller drove a sizable collection of Kong’s collages to Tampa and engaged six artists (Dawn Grayford, Nadia Ivanova, Rhonda Massel Donovan, Libbi Ponce, Jessi Ramirez and Emiliano Settecasì) currently studying at the nearby University of South Florida to curate the exhibition.

Kong’s collages display an intensely satisfying self-restraint, patience in their abstract composition and use of color and text. He carefully navigates his source material, largely skirting imagery in favor of emphasizing texture, color and his confident line. The artist slices curves that settle into amorphous shapes before thoughtfully foregrounding them in expansive fields of brown cardboard. Ultimately, it may be his ease with empty space that lifts Kong’s work above a considerable amount of both “fine art” collage and advertising while still having a foot firmly planted in each.

Contrasting with the austerity of Kong’s individual works, though, is the body as a whole. Thomas Kong is prolific – to the extent that engaging a half-dozen artist-curators is surprisingly not excessive. Collages are installed tightly in bands near the top and bottom of the garage gallery walls. The exhibition spills beyond the gallery’s typical exhibition space and into the adjacent patio, up a spiral staircase and into the house’s living areas. Yet, still, collages are stacked on racks, in milk cartons and on the floor leaning against the walls, waiting to be flipped through like used vinyl records.

This prolificacy speaks to a function of Kong’s artwork that doesn’t, and perhaps can’t, find expression in a typical gallery exhibition (or even fully in this relatively atypical one). The works of art are untitled and undated. When that’s paired with the sheer number of pieces, the singularity of each collage begins to dissolve. That isn’t to say they all blend into each other. Rather, considering the work as individual discreet art objects feels as if it’s a misread of the larger body of work.

In an interview with Miller, Kong explained the impetus behind his art-making saying, “The first time I was motivated by the store; the store decorations, you know. So, first of all the shelves of the store, all the shelves, the shelves were kinda empty-like or dirty-like, so I just thought about laying something on the shelves, you know, like the bottom of the shelves, so the merchandise looks nice.”

Kong’s collages, initially at least, functioned as adornment or ornamentation. The work is supplementary to the shop and its products. Yet, to see Kong’s collages on a shelf beside bags of Cheetos or on freezer doors, it is made apparent that the capacity to embellish and the art’s intrinsic connection to the store’s goods doesn’t diminish the work’s artistic merit. Rather, it makes a deep intuitive visual sense. Further, seeing Kong’s collages on white gallery walls, even those of an alternative space like Coco Hunday, it becomes clear that gallery exhibitions largely present an artwork’s use-value awkwardly at best. It’s difficult to imagine a gallery that showcases Kong’s work as effectively as a convenience store. This seems evident to Kong and Miller and, to their credit, it is as if through *Fillerup* they take it up as a challenge.

“I am also very invested in the exhibition as a form, and have tried in my own practice for several years (to varying degrees of success) to evade or play with its boundaries,” Miller related to me in an email. Indeed, much of Miller’s practice seems to be aimed at tugging at the ragged edges of the capital “E” Exhibition. It’s what pairs him so well with Thomas Kong. Kong’s work doesn’t seem to deal in terms of exhibitions, series or even individual works of art. Though that’s the only language our gallery system generally speaks, it’s within this loss in translation that the two collaborate and may be the exhibition’s most compelling thrust.

Fillerup is necessarily, even self-awarely awkward. However, its incongruities are redemptive and perhaps one of the exhibition’s most fascinating aspects. *Fillerup* acts almost as a soap bubble test, revealing where gallery exhibiting and curating fails to make space (literally and dialectically) for a body of work like that of Thomas Kong’s. And in that sense, by falling short it hits the mark.

Thomas Kong: *Fillerup* (organized by Dan Miller and curated by Dawn Grayford, Nadia Ivanova, Rhonda Massel Donovan, Libbi Ponce, Jessi Ramirez and Emiliano Settecasì) is on view at Coco Hunday in Tampa, FL until May 29th, 2016.

SHARE THIS:

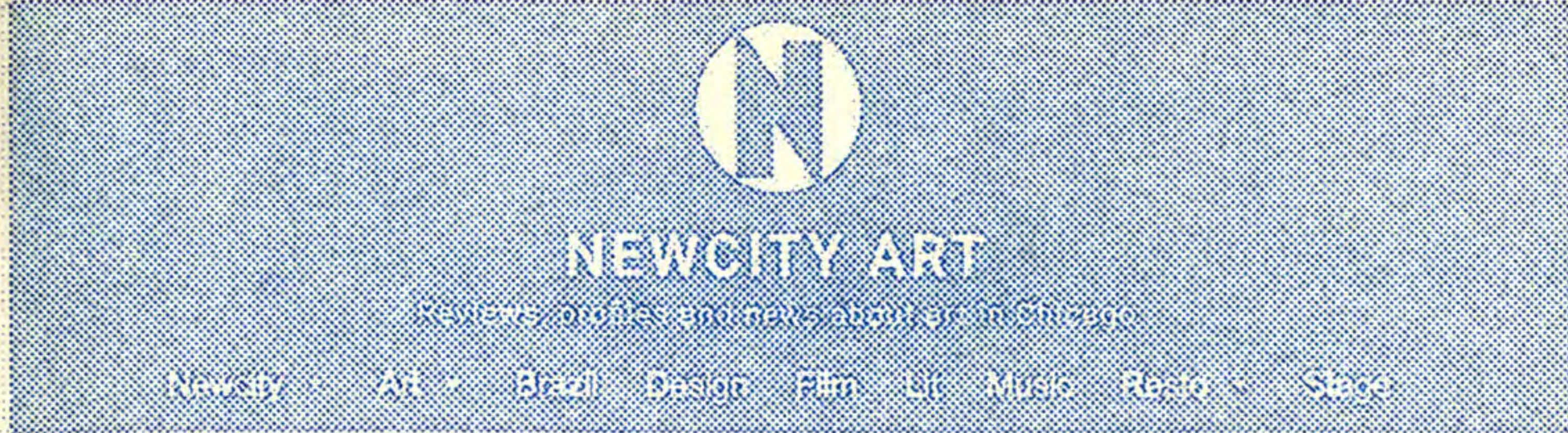
CATEGORIES	FLORIDA	REVIEWS				
TAGGED	COCO HUNDAY	DAN MILLER	DANNY OLD	DAWN GRAYFORD	EMILIANO SETTECASI	JESSI RAMIREZ
EDITED/POINCE	NADIA IVANOVA	RHONDA MASSEL DONOVAN	THOMAS KONG			



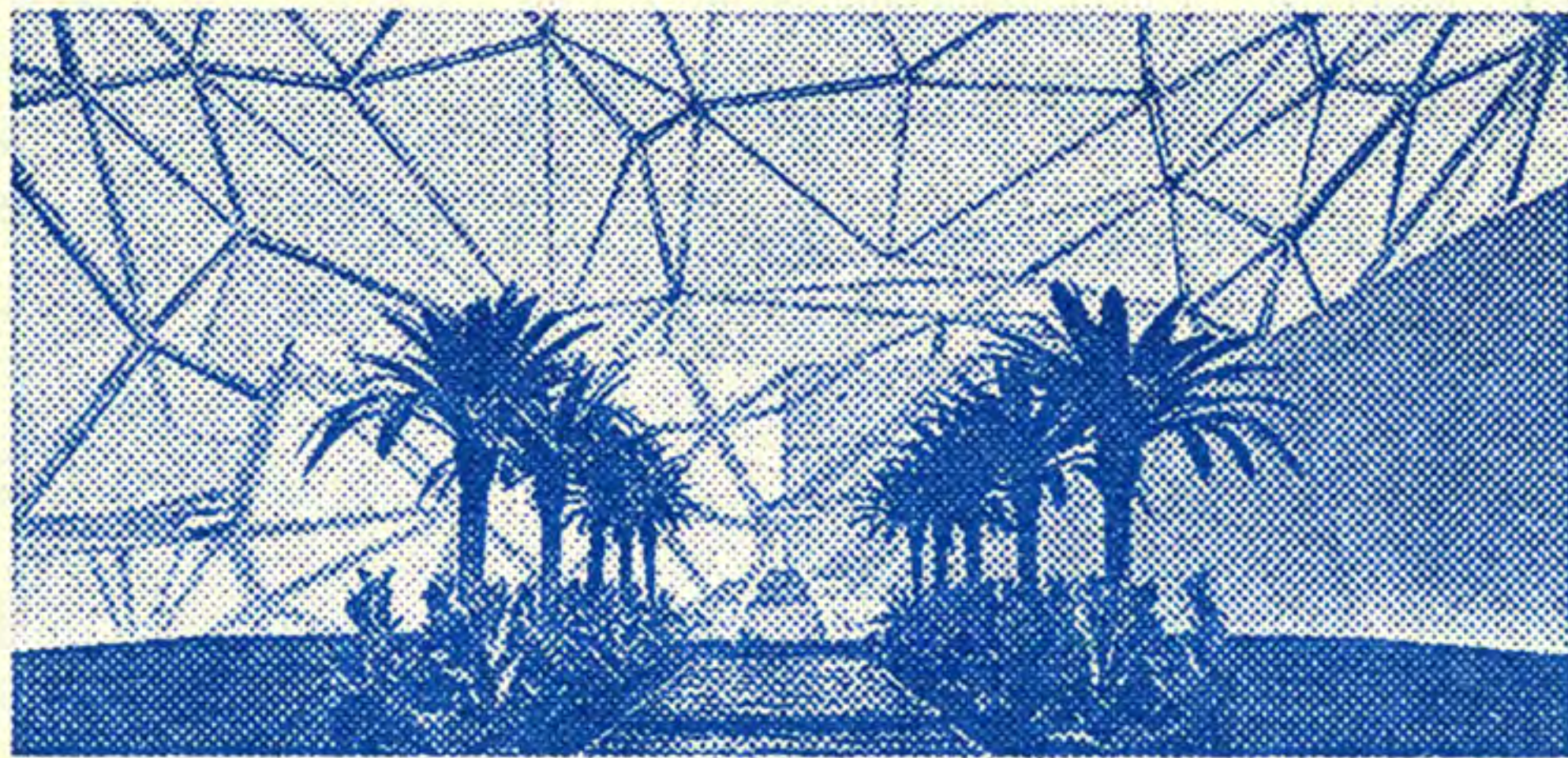
DANNY OLDA

Danny Olda is an art critic, editor, and independent curator currently working on the west coast of Florida. His writing can regularly be found in a variety of regional and national arts publications. Additionally, Danny serves as the editor the non-profit arts and culture blog *Articulate* and director of the Clearwater Arts Alliance.

1980-1981-1982-1983-1984-1985-1986-1987-1988-1989-1990-1991-1992-1993-1994-1995-1996-1997-1998-1999-2000-2001-2002-2003-2004-2005-2006-2007-2008-2009-2010-2011-2012-2013-2014-2015-2016-2017-2018-2019-2020-2021-2022-2023-2024-2025-2026-2027-2028-2029-2030-2031-2032-2033-2034-2035-2036-2037-2038-2039-2040-2041-2042-2043-2044-2045-2046-2047-2048-2049-2050-2051-2052-2053-2054-2055-2056-2057-2058-2059-2060-2061-2062-2063-2064-2065-2066-2067-2068-2069-2070-2071-2072-2073-2074-2075-2076-2077-2078-2079-2080-2081-2082-2083-2084-2085-2086-2087-2088-2089-2090-2091-2092-2093-2094-2095-2096-2097-2098-2099-2100-2101-2102-2103-2104-2105-2106-2107-2108-2109-2110-2111-2112-2113-2114-2115-2116-2117-2118-2119-2120-2121-2122-2123-2124-2125-2126-2127-2128-2129-2130-2131-2132-2133-2134-2135-2136-2137-2138-2139-2140-2141-2142-2143-2144-2145-2146-2147-2148-2149-2150-2151-2152-2153-2154-2155-2156-2157-2158-2159-2160-2161-2162-2163-2164-2165-2166-2167-2168-2169-2170-2171-2172-2173-2174-2175-2176-2177-2178-2179-2180-2181-2182-2183-2184-2185-2186-2187-2188-2189-2190-2191-2192-2193-2194-2195-2196-2197-2198-2199-2200-2201-2202-2203-2204-2205-2206-2207-2208-2209-2210-2211-2212-2213-2214-2215-2216-2217-2218-2219-2220-2221-2222-2223-2224-2225-2226-2227-2228-2229-2230-2231-2232-2233-2234-2235-2236-2237-2238-2239-2240-2241-2242-2243-2244-2245-2246-2247-2248-2249-2250-2251-2252-2253-2254-2255-2256-2257-2258-2259-2260-2261-2262-2263-2264-2265-2266-2267-2268-2269-2270-2271-2272-2273-2274-2275-2276-2277-2278-2279-2280-2281-2282-2283-2284-2285-2286-2287-2288-2289-2290-2291-2292-2293-2294-2295-2296-2297-2298-2299-2300-2301-2302-2303-2304-2305-2306-2307-2308-2309-2310-2311-2312-2313-2314-2315-2316-2317-2318-2319-2320-2321-2322-2323-2324-2325-2326-2327-2328-2329-2330-2331-2332-2333-2334-2335-2336-2337-2338-2339-2340-2341-2342-2343-2344-2345-2346-2347-2348-2349-2350-2351-2352-2353-2354-2355-2356-2357-2358-2359-2360-2361-2362-2363-2364-2365-2366-2367-2368-2369-2370-2371-2372-2373-2374-2375-2376-2377-2378-2379-2380-2381-2382-2383-2384-2385-2386-2387-2388-2389-2390-2391-2392-2393-2394-2395-2396-2397-2398-2399-2400-2401-2402-2403-2404-2405-2406-2407-2408-2409-2410-2411-2412-2413-2414-2415-2416-2417-2418-2419-2420-2421-2422-2423-2424-2425-2426-2427-2428-2429-2430-2431-2432-2433-2434-2435-2436-2437-2438-2439-2440-2441-2442-2443-2444-2445-2446-2447-2448-2449-2450-2451-2452-2453-2454-2455-2456-2457-2458-2459-2460-2461-2462-2463-2464-2465-2466-2467-2468-2469-2470-2471-2472-2473-2474-2475-2476-2477-2478-2479-2480-2481-2482-2483-2484-2485-2486-2487-2488-2489-2490-2491-2492-2493-2494-2495-2496-2497-2498-2499-2500-2501-2502-2503-2504-2505-2506-2507-2508-2509-2510-2511-2512-2513-2514-2515-2516-2517-2518-2519-2520-2521-2522-2523-2524-2525-2526-2527-2528-2529-2530-2531-2532-2533-2534-2535-2536-2537-2538-2539-2540-2541-2542-2543-2544-2545-2546-2547-2548-2549-2550-2551-2552-2553-2554-2555-2556-2557-2558-2559-2560-2561-2562-2563-2564-2565-2566-2567-2568-2569-2570-2571-2572-2573-2574-2575-2576-2577-2578-2579-2580-2581-2582-2583-2584-2585-2586-2587-2588-2589-2590-2591-2592-2593-2594-2595-2596-2597-2598-2599-2600-2601-2602-2603-2604-2605-2606-2607-2608-2609-2610-2611-2612-2613-2614-2615-2616-2617-2618-2619-2620-2621-2622-2623-2624-2625-2626-2627-2628-2629-2630-2631-2632-2633-2634-2635-2636-2637-2638-2639-2640-2641-2642-2643-2644-2645-2646-2647-2648-2649-2650-2651-2652-2653-2654-2655-2656-2657-2658-2659-2660-2661-2662-2663-2664-2665-2666-2667-2668-2669-2670-2671-2672-2673-2674-2675-2676-2677-2678-2679-2680-2681-2682-2683-2684-2685-2686-2687-2688-2689-2690-2691-2692-2693-2694-2695-2696-2697-2698-2699-2700-2701-2702-2703-2704-2705-2706-2707-2708-2709-2710-2711-2712-2713-2714-2715-2716-2717-2718-2719-2720-2721-2722-2723-2724-2725-2726-2727-2728-2729-2730-2731-2732-2733-2734-2735-2736-2737-2738-2739-2740-2741-2742-2743-2744-2745-2746-2747-2748-2749-2750-2751-2752-2753-2754-2755-2756-2757-2758-2759-2760-2761-2762-2763-2764-2765-2766-2767-2768-2769-2770-2771-2772-2773-2774-2775-2776-2777-2778-2779-2780-2781-2782-2783-2784-2785-2786-2787-2788-2789-2790-2791-2792-2793-2794-2795-2796-2797-2798-2799-2800-2801-2802-2803-2804-2805-2806-2807-2808-2809-2810-2811-2812-2813-2814-2815-2816-2817-2818-2819-2820-2821-2822-2823-2824-2825-2826-2827-2828-2829-2830-2831-2832-2833-2834-2835-2836-2837-2838-2839-2840-2841-2842-2843-2844-2845-2846-2847-2848-2849-2850-2851-2852-2853-2854-2855-2856-2857-2858-2859-2860-2861-2862-2863-2864-2865-2866-2867-2868-2869-2870-2871-2872-2873-2874-2875-2876-2877-2878-2879-2880-2881-2882-2883-2884-2885-2886-2887-2888-2889-2890-2891-2892-2893-2894-2895-2896-2897-2898-2899-2900-2901-2902-2903-2904-2905-2906-2907-2908-2909-2910-2911-2912-2913-2914-2915-2916-2917-2918-2919-2920-2921-2922-2923-2924-2925-2926-2927-2928-2929-2930-2931-2932-2933-2934-2935-2936-2937-2938-2939-2940-2941-2942-2943-2944-2945-2946-2947-2948-2949-2950-2951-2952-2953-2954-2955-2956-2957-2958-2959-2960-2961-2962-2963-2964-2965-2966-2967-2968-2969-2970-2971-2972-2973-2974-2975-2976-2977-2978-2979-2980-2981-2982-2983-2984-2985-2986-2987-2988-2989-2990-2991-2992-2993-2994-2995-2996-2997-2998-2999-3000



Eye Exam: Making Space for Art



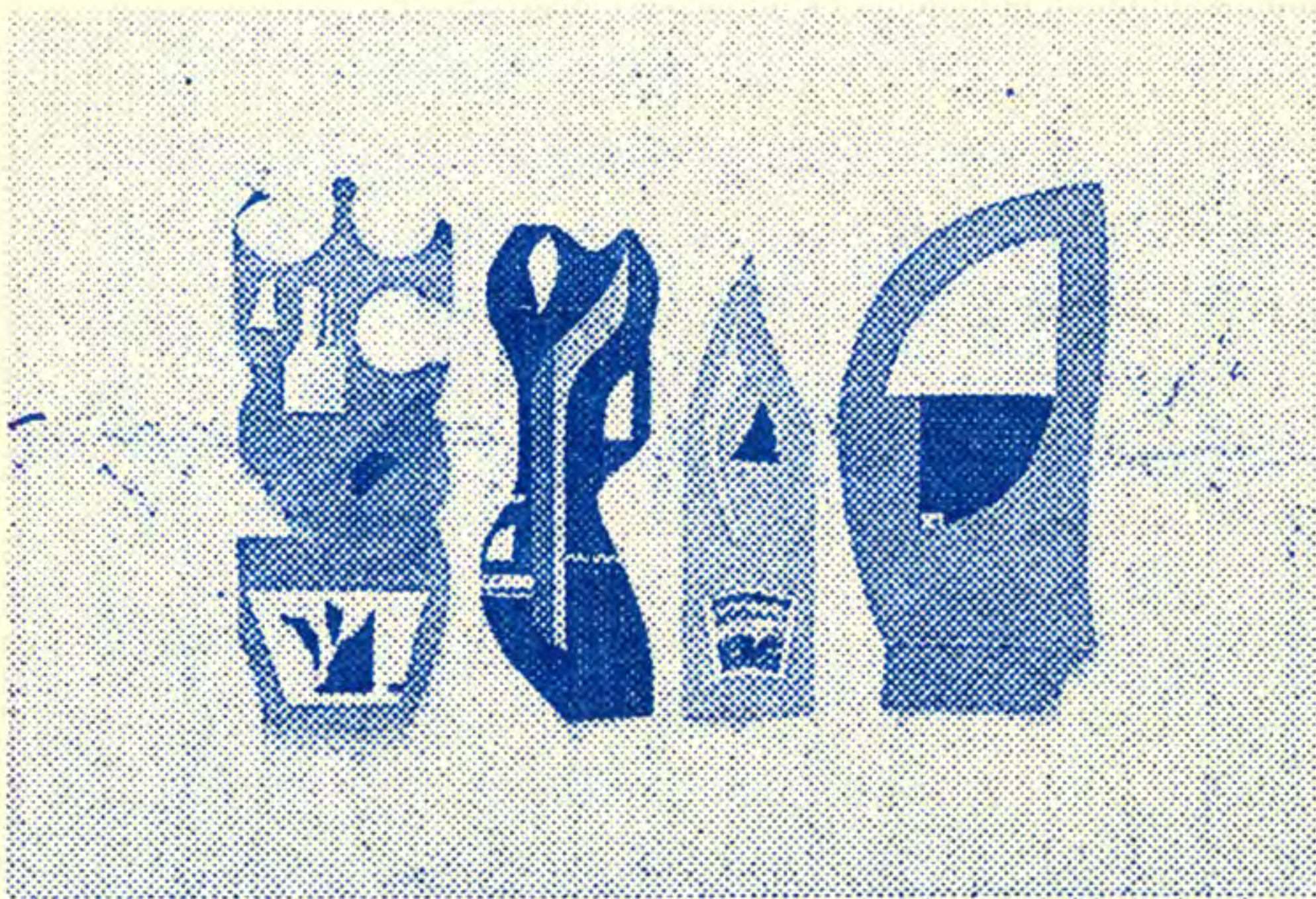
Atrium of the Digital Museum of Digital Art (DiMoDA)/Photo: DiMoDA

By Elliot J. Reichert

A mixture of shock and dread has been circulating among Chicago’s arts community since Threewalls, a nonprofit gallery and longtime fixture of the alternative arts scene, announced it could no longer afford its West Loop loft space. Albeit saddening, the news came as no surprise to those who have witnessed the past decade or more of the West Loop’s aggressive development from meatpacking and cold-storage warehouses to luxury condos and Michelin-starred restaurants. As former Newcity art editor Jason Fournberg recently reported in *Chicago* magazine, more gallery move-outs are slated for the summer to make way for development projects, and by the fall, there will be little left of the West Loop art scene as we know it.

It’s absurd to mourn the inevitable result of a process that the arts were instrumental in realizing. It’s equally absurd to willfully forget that the spaces the West Loop galleries occupied were once the sites of industries that employed more people than the whole of Chicago’s art economy ever will. Problematically, art’s role in gentrification is a fact that seems troubling to cultural workers not so much because of the damage it does to communities of color, but because the fact of that damage threatens to undermine the purported values of the art itself. After all, what good is art if it cannot seize the inherent power of its complicity and turn it around to make positive change? This is a question that Threewalls, as a nonprofit with an explicit community-oriented mission, will have to reckon with as it seeks a new home in a neighborhood that will necessarily be less affluent than the one it just left. The departing commercial galleries have a different prerogative: how to drive foot traffic and sales to support their artists in further flung neighborhoods? In truth, these goals are not so different from each other, and one wonders if it really makes sense to be a nonprofit these days when private buyers have more funds than the public is currently willing to offer.

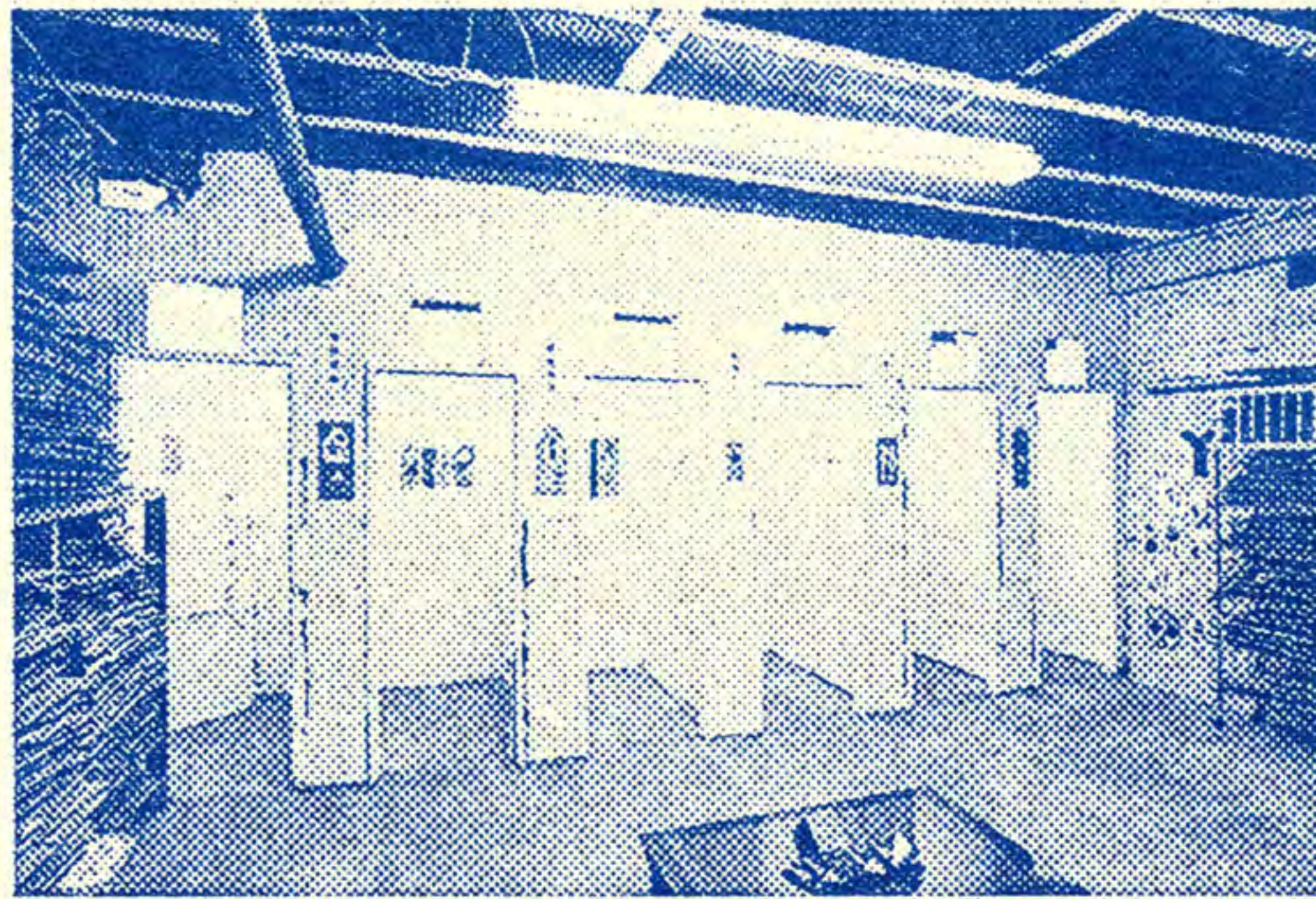
With all this in mind, I’ve been looking for alternatives to the alternative art scene. Last week, I visited the Stolbun Collection, a new space run by Seth Stolbun, a painter who studies at the School of the Art Institute. On Michigan Avenue across from the Cultural Center, he hosts exhibitions in a room the size of your therapist’s downtown office, but with all the immaculate austerity of a professional, white cube operation. For a few more weeks, Stolbun is presenting the Chicago debut of the Digital Museum of Digital Art (DiMoDA), a digital exhibition platform devoted to art conceived and realized in virtual spaces. Unlike other online art projects (like the Google Art Project), the artworks displayed in DiMoDA are digital pieces that replace physical art forms and “live” online as data. The space is



Thomas Kong, untitled cut-paper collages, circa 2010-16. Installation view, “Selected by Steven Husby,” *The Back Room* at Kim’s Corner Food, January 24–April 4, 2016.

Back in the real world, the upset at Threewalls dealt a blow to Chicago’s self-image as a city rife with alternative art spaces that thrive despite little financial support. However, its recent turmoil might serve as a helpful lesson for emerging alternative projects. Perhaps growth is not the right model, and maybe it doesn’t make sense to emulate established institutions when there is already so little room at the top. I found myself wondering these things as I spoke recently with Dan Miller in The Back Room of Kim’s Corner Food, a convenience store and gallery in Rogers Park operated by Thomas Kong. Over many years, Kong has filled his ground floor shop with collages made mostly from leftover product packaging materials. The result is a stunning exercise in site-specificity: collages emerge from the chaos of canned goods and cigarette cartons like so many camouflaged surprises. The symbiosis between material and context is so dense as to appear at times indistinguishable. With Kong’s arrangement of forms in the space of each collage and each collage arranged in the space of the store, the entire place becomes a work of art. And, unlike much art these days, it rewards careful, sustained looking.

Miller, an artist who came to the United States from Australia to get his MFA at Northwestern, met Kong after passing by his shop and noticing the curious decorations on its windows. Over time, Miller partnered with Nathan Smith and Kristin Abhalter of the nearby Roman Susan gallery to help Kong build a website and exhibit work in group shows. Most impressively, they answered Kong’s dream to have a gallery in an unusual way: by clearing out the store’s back storage room and transforming it into an archive of Kong’s work. Twice so far, Miller has invited other Chicago artists to comb through Kong’s oeuvre and curate a selection in the whitewashed, brightly lit, former storage bays of the semi-subterranean gallery, now called The Back Room. Both curators so far have been abstract painters whose formalist sensibilities did wonders with Kong’s cardboard-backed collages. Steve Husby, whose selection is currently on view, also produced a handsome zine with an interview between Kong and Miller and “typologies” of Kong’s forms. Later this year, former Chicago art maven Jason Lazarus will make a selection from Kong’s work, and Miller is bringing a stack of collages down to Tampa for a show at Coco Hunday, Lazarus’ new garage gallery.



Installation view, “Selected by Steven Husby,” *The Back Room* at Kim’s Corner Food, January 24–April 4, 2016.

Miller is careful to distinguish what he does in The Back Room from curating. He thinks of himself more as a facilitator or a producer, a term that foregrounds the collaborative conditions of this aspect of his practice. Indeed, the art world has historically maintained the illusion of singular authorship despite all evidence to the contrary. With thousands of MFAs conferred each year in the United States alone, the current system is not only dishonest, it’s unsustainable. In Chicago, projects like DiMoDA and The Back Room point the way toward new spaces for art and collaboration, alternatives to the alternatives that are currently failing.

Share this:

 Facebook  Twitter  Email  More

Related



Breaking News: Threewalls Appoints Executive Director, Artistic Director to Depart In “Galleries & Museums”

Newcity’s Top 5 of Everything 2015: Art Top 5 Art Anniversaries School of the Art Institute of Chicago (150th) The Renaissance Society (100th) Arts Club of Chicago (99th) Smart Museum (40th) Loyola University Art Museum (10th) – In “Top 5 Lists”



News: Threewalls in Transition In “News etc.”

PREVIOUS POST

[Review: ROOTS/Roots & Culture](#)

NEXT POST

[First Day: A Conversation with James Rondeau, the New Director of the Art Institute of Chicago](#)

0 Comments


Newcity Art

Login

Recommend

Share

Sort by Best



Start the discussion...

Thomas Kong Interview Korean.docx

FileEditViewToolsHelp

Fit

View only

Thomas Kong 인터뷰
이 지수
2016년 2월 24일

당신의 작품의 절제된 구성과 여백을 많은 사람들이 특별하게 보는데, 이런 성격의 작업이 어디에서 나온다고 생각하십니까?

나는 복잡하고 가득한 것을 천하다고 여겨요. 비어있는데에 간단하게 있는 모양이 더 좋아 보인다고. 그런데 젊은 사람들이 와가지고 보고는 좋다고 하는 것들을 보니까 그렇더라고요. 간단한걸 좋아한다고. 나는 좋아보이는 판에 좋아보이게 붙이는 것 밖에는 할줄을 몰라요.

어떤 사람들은 당신의 작품에서 미국 소비주의를 비판하는 것이 아니냐는 질문을 합니다. 스스로의 작업이 비판적이라고 생각하십니까?

재미있는 질문이네요. 나는 전혀 그렇게는 생각하지 않아요. 나는 보기에 좋은 걸 붙이는 거예요. 내 주위에 있는걸 재료로 사용한거고. 그 외에 나는 몰라요. 신경쓰지 않아요.

The Back Room Project에 대해 어떻게 생각하시나요?

나는 항상 감사하게 생각해요. 나한테 Dan 하고 서로 주고 받는게 많아요. 서로 다른 것을 준다고. 나도 많이 배우고. Dan 이 다 하나로 묶어 준거니까 내가 아주 고맙게 생각하죠. 그건 Dan이 해낸 일이고. 공부할 한 친구니까 내가 배우는게 있고, 저기 있는 그림들은 다 내가 한거지만 Dan이 거기에 가능성을 준거지. 계속 할 수 있게 해주고. Dan을 안만났으면 물론 차이가 있었겠지. 나는 Dan을 인간적으로 좋아해요. 나를 많이 도와준것도 있지만. 항상 내 말을 잘 들어줘요. 항상 알아봐주고. 내가 얘기하면 일단 해보겠다고 가서 안되면 안된다 되면 된다 얘기를 하지. 제안에 대해서 그거 안됩니다 얘기는 안한다고.

벽화 작업에 대한 생각이 궁금합니다.

마을에 담벼락에 그림그리는것도 많이하는데 정치적인 아니면 뭔가 제시하는 메시지가 들어간단 말이지. 도시나 마을에서 하는건데 지나다니는 사람들한테 보여주면서 정치적인 목적을 이루려는거지. 다른 뜻이 있기도 하지. 근데 나는 그거지. Be Happy가 내 뜻이에요. 이 말이 살면서 쓰는 말이잖아. 죽어서 쓰는 말이 아니잖아. 살아가면서 쓰는 말이기 때문에. 살아가면서는 이렇게 살라는거지. 명령이야 명령. 이거는 뭐 했으면 좋겠다가 아니라 해라 야. 명령이야 이거는. 명령이기 때문에 해야돼. 해도 되고 안해도 되는게 아니고.

미술사와 현대미술에 대해 배우고 싶은 생각이 있으신가요?

네, 관심이 있어요. 관심이 생겼어요. Dan이랑 얘기를 해보고 공부하는 친구니까 이것저것 보여주고 하니까 아주 재미가 있더라고.

이제는 작업이 가게 운영보다 더 중요하다고 생각하시나요?

반반이죠. 똑같아요. 아직까지는 같아요. 같은 비중을 두고 있어요. 앞으로는 작업의 비중이 더 커지겠죠. 이 비즈니스를 접으면, 곧 접게되겠죠. 그러면 이제 비중이 이것밖에는 없죠.

초창기에는 콜라주가 가게 장식을 위한 것이었다면, 지금은 무엇을 위한건가요?

이제는 내 나머지 평생을 보내는 데 사람들한테 기쁨을 주는 거죠. 즐거움을 주는거야. 그걸로 생각을 한다고. 그래서 내 캐치 프레이즈가 Be Happy라고. 명령이라고. Be Happy는 살아서 하는 말이지 죽어서 하는 말이 아니란 말이야.

Thomas Kong Interview English.docx

FileEditViewToolsHelp

Fit

View only

An interview with Thomas Kong
By Jisu Lee
Feb 24, 2016
Translated from the Korean by Jisu Lee

Many people praise the restraint in your collages – that you give everything enough space to breathe. Where does this quality in your work come from?

I don't appreciate complex and packed qualities. Simple shapes speak to me more. I saw young people coming here and looked at what they like and they seemed to like simple ones better. They like simplest things. I just know how to put things at the right place on a right plane.

Some people see in your work a critical element, even perhaps a criticism of American consumption. Do you think your work is critical?

That's an interesting question. I don't think so at all. I just glue things that look good to me with the materials that happened to be around me. I don't know anything else and I don't care.

What do you think of The Back Room project?

I am always thankful. Dan and I communicate a lot. We give and take. We give and take different things. I learn a lot. Dan put together everything so I am very thankful for him. It is what he did. He studied art so I learn that from him. The works are all mine but Dan gave possibility to them. He makes me keep going. There would have been a difference if I hadn't met him. I like Dan as a person. He always listens to me, always looks after me. When I say something, he always seeks the solution first and says if it would or wouldn't be possible. He never just says no.

What do you think of the mural plans for the wall on Glenwood Avenue based on your collages (with the assistance of Nathan, Kristin and Dan)?

Murals often have political uses. Cities and towns paint murals to bring messages to people, to convey the political purpose or other meanings. But for me, the message is "Be Happy".

Would you like to learn more about art history, or about contemporary art?

Yes, I am interested. It became interesting. Dan has told me about and showed me some of this stuff and it's interesting.

At this stage, is your art practice more important than the store itself?

It is half and half. The same so far. It has the same weight. Art will become heavier when I close the store, which I think will happen pretty soon. Then all of the weight will be on art practice.

You said you started making collages to decorate the store, what is it for at this point?

Now, it is to give happiness to people for the rest of my life. To give fun. I think of it that way. That's why catch phrase is "Be Happy". It is a command. Be Happy is the phrase to use while we're living. It is not for when we're dead.

What did you do with all your spare time in the store before you started making art?

The store was busy at that time, so I didn't have this much time, but I read the bible. The bible is so interesting. Very interesting. When I'm reading the bible, it is so fun and when I'm making art works, it is so fun.

Do you wish you started making art earlier?

No, I don't.

Did you hope for somebody to acknowledge your works?

Not at all. I did not. I just did it because I like doing it. It is fun and it felt like I was going somewhere.

Did you expect to have a show at a gallery?

Not at all. I was doing what I was doing and I met Dan, then Nathan. And I met John Neff, the professor. I met a lot of people, but all of them came. I never go out of here. I did what I do and they started to want my work. They want my works for shows. So I let them use my works. Then I realized that people like these works. How would I know otherwise? I just know how to make these. I just find proper space, for proper material on a proper plane with proper color and that is all I would do anyways. I can't go out. They wanted to have shows so I had a few. So I went there twice. I had to close the store in the evening. The people there were all art-related people who either make art, or have interests in art, or teach art. So I hear them talking about art. I like young people gathering, and them talking. They are not very negative. Old people fear death, so they are negative and have lot of thoughts. Young people are lively, they eat well and they do well in everything. They have energy. I like that and I like them looking at my work displayed. I feel good. It looks good the way the curator displays it, and with the lighting and everything it looks even better. It looked good; right. People live with their deceived eyes anyways.

You seem like you treat your works quite roughly. How much affection do you have towards your works?

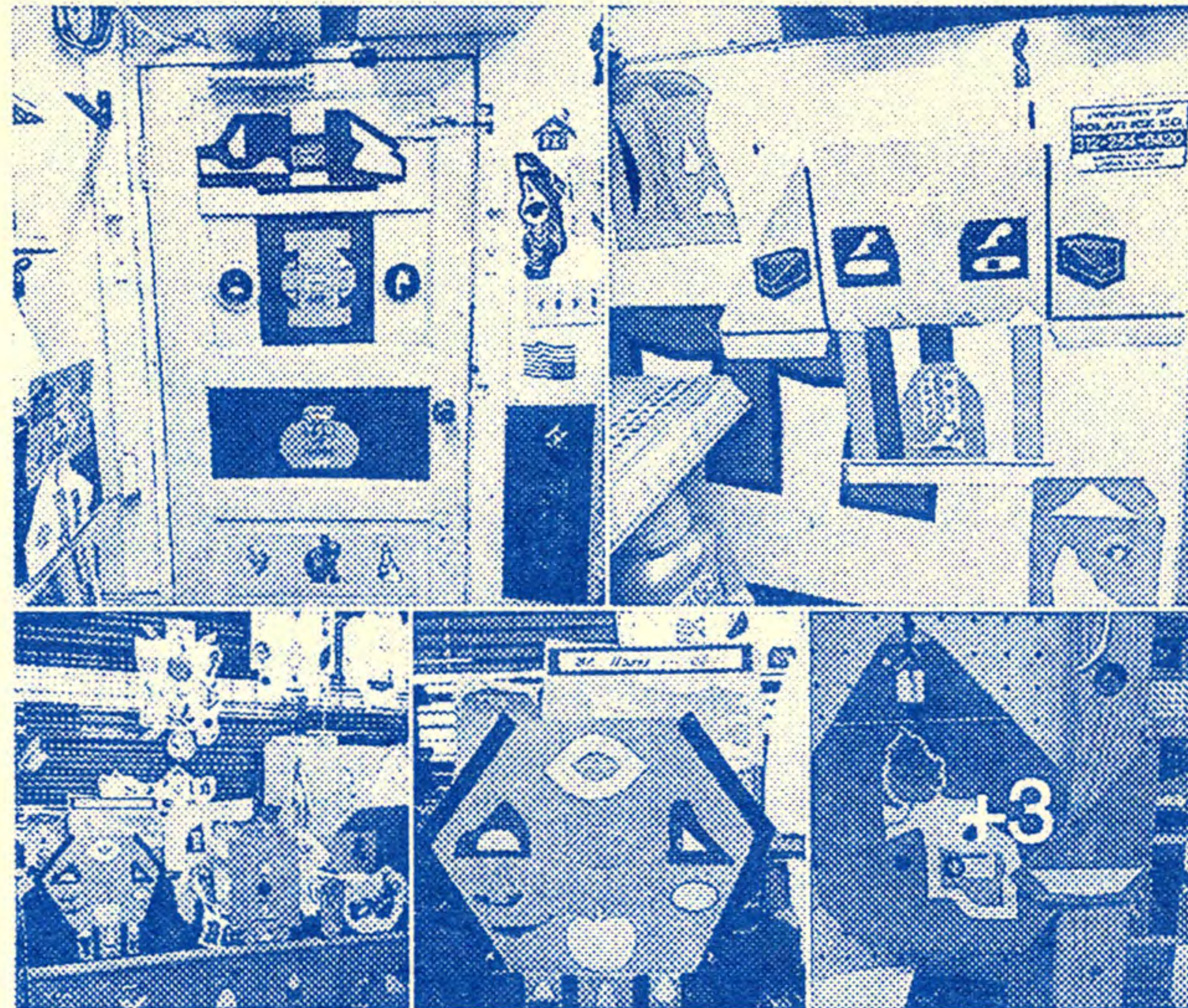
I treat them rough because I can always make more. Some artists have a lot of things to care for, from materials to the details, but my works, I can make them more whenever I have found materials. The value is given with the artists' names and the trading price. It talks about money. How much it costs. I am not into it yet. Now we are talking about handling preciously, but I am handling my works preciously in my own standard. It seems like I am treating it roughly, putting them in a box, giving them away, but if the person I am giving it to knows how to appreciate my works, then giving it to them is a very precious thing. That is a precious way. That is. To make people happy is so precious. Being paid is a matter for later.



Marc Fischer added 7 new photos.

2 January · 🌐

On a whim, at the suggestion of my wise wife, I finally visited Kim's Corner Food in Rogers Park today to see Thomas Kong's amazing creativity that fills every surface of his store. Thomas was extra friendly, remembering me from his recent exhibit at Night Club gallery in my neighborhood, and he kindly allowed me to take these photos. This is such a fantastic environment. Dan Miller, next time I'll plan ahead and bring your phone number so I can get the full tour from you!



👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

👤 Jason Lazarus, Erin Hayden and 72 others

1 share

14 comments



For the completely optional cost of a can of Ginger Ale, I could not have asked for a more enriching aesthetic experience.

Like · Reply · 👍 4 · 2 January at 16:37



Whoa awesome

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · 2 January at 16:56



This looks amazing

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · 2 January at 16:50



Glad you could meet Thomas, Marc! Next time make sure to check out the Back Room! 😊

Like · Reply · 👍 2 · 2 January at 17:00

➦ Dan Miller replied · 2 Replies



Yowza

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · 2 January at 17:12



Nather what does this store actually sell? i love the art.

Like · Reply · 👍 2 · 2 January at 17:21



Ohh you KNOW I like this!!

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · 2 January at 17:30



Miyoko, it's a pretty typical kind of corner store (snacks, candy, soda, cleaning supplies, some canned goods) but the owner Thomas has placed the collages he makes on every possible surface. They are in a constant conversation with the products and he... See more

Like · Reply · 👍 4 · 2 January at 18:24 · Edited

➦ Gwenn-A&I Lynn replied · 7 Replies



Nather So amazing. I love that it's a convenience store. Amazing.

Like · Reply · 👍 1 · 2 January at 18:30



I haven't stopped by there in a while. This is new.

Like · Reply · 2 January at 19:09



This is what I want from abstract art in the year 2016. Ellsworth Kelly is dead. I want exceedingly well-balanced collages AND Flamin' Hot Cheetos in the same room, on a corner in a neighborhood, with the artist present, with hours that make it easy for anyone to visit, with an abundance of spirit, heart and generosity. Give me this store over another soulless fucking art fair any day and every day.

Unlike · Reply · 👍 14 · 2 January at 18:52 · Edited