

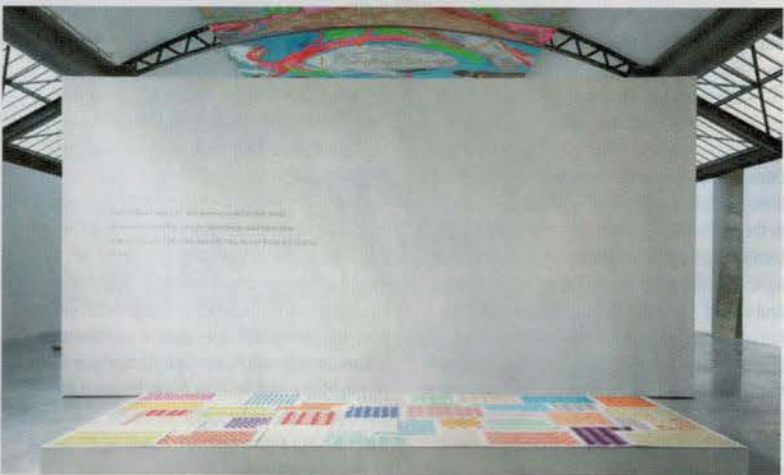
THE SWEAT OF THE BROW

EN | The private art space CAB is presenting a group exhibition by artists from Chicago. The leitmotif: physical work, labour, and toil. **SAM STEVERLYNCK**

Though the bankrupt Detroit may appeal more to the imagination, CAB is organising a group exhibition from another "working class city": Chicago. The Belgian curator Dieter Roelstraete, who spent some time working in the American city, was invited to collaborate with Abigail Winograd to compile a retrospective of the Chicago art scene.

The lubricating oil uniting the ten artists? The notion of work and physical labour, which is well suited to Chicago and its heavy industry. **Marissa Lee Benedict & David Rueter** treat this theme best in their fantastic video, *Dark Fiber*. The film features the pair installing fiberglass cables in all kinds of different locations. They do so from San Diego to Chicago, connecting the land physically as they go. There is also a fuse box installed at the entrance to the exhibition space, with numerous cables coming out of it, as a nod to the video. **Theaster Gates**, on the other hand, treats racial issues in the exhibition. Among other things, he is showing a little box containing a rolled up fire hose, composed of old hoses from the 1960s. The work is a bitter reference to the heavy-handed treatment of African American demonstrators by the police force. In Catholic tradition, **Zachary Cahill** has created a ceiling painting entitled *Work Is Tiring/Heaven Can Wait*, a rather facile reference to the book *Hard Labour* by Cesare Pavese. **Tony Lewis** is apparently not quite as lazy as Pavese. For more than two days, he took an imprint of a basketball court on special kraft paper and has brought the result - a canvas arranged messily on the floor - to CAB.

The exhibition offers an overview of the art scene in one city, which is itself an artificial project. The overarching theme may be a good association to bring the artists together, but some of the works do not fit these delineations. This is especially true of the paintings, by **William Pope L.** and **Matthew Metzger** for example. But that is just a side note to what is otherwise a great show.



ARTISTS IN AND FROM CHICAGO COURTESY OF CAB

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