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Reviews and listings of Chicago art galleries and museums

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Time Out Chicago / Issue 155 : February 14, 2008 - February 20, 2008

### Art review

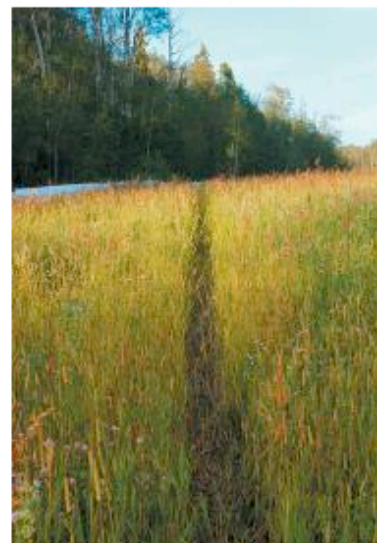
## "Mapping the Self"

★★★★★

[Museum of Contemporary Art](#), through Mar 2.

At first, "Mapping the Self" seems jerry-rigged, its theme derived from Chicago's citywide Festival of Maps and whatever the MCA could scrounge from its collection and local artists. But it turns out to be a coherent, if slightly cluttered investigation of the relationships between artists and geographical and conceptual space.

Deb Sokolow's paranoid, disjointed masterpiece of illustration, *The Pentagon*, maps out the tale of a Chicago restaurant used as a front for homicidal Defense Department indiscretions with sharp wit, quirky conspiratorial asides and an aggressive graphic style.



Sarah Alford and Peter von Tiesenhausen, Untitled (Alliance project), 2007.

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Barbara Koenen's *Baluchi Drixa* isn't as simplistic as its stuntlike nature suggests. In re-creating a post-Soviet invasion Afghan "war rug" with spices, Koenen refers to the ephemeral nature of Tibetan monks' sand mandalas; she makes her intricate patterns of tanks, grenades and AK-47s knowing that they will be destroyed.

Peter von Tiesenhausen takes sociopolitical art to an even higher level. When ConocoPhillips wanted to run a pipeline through the Canadian artist's Alberta property, he traced the path it would take with sculptural installations that enabled him to copyright his land. This genius move suggests the infinite potential of art to challenge and redefine boundaries.

— Jason Mojica

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