

THE WAY OF THE SHOVEL: ART AS ARCHAEOLOGY


Over the last decade, the contemporary art landscape has been shaped by a pervasive interest in history and archival research. This is the point of departure for *The Way of the Shovel*, a show that brings together thirty-four artists who study the past through its material traces. In this exhibition, archaeology serves as the leading metaphor.

This survey of what has been termed the historiographic turn in art consists largely of artworks made since 2000 and imagines the art world as an alternative “history channel”—a platform for telling histories that challenge established master narratives. Indeed, the exhibition in part revolves around art’s capacity to help us remember that which is in danger of being forgotten, glossed over, or marginalized.

Although broad in both geographical and generational scope, *The Way of The Shovel* also includes work that focuses on the intricacies of local history—including the history of the very ground that MCA Chicago stands on. The past, after all, is not that distant a country. In many ways, it is closer to us than our confusing and impenetrable present.

The Way of the Shovel: Art as Archaeology was organized by Dieter Roelstraete, Manilow Senior Curator, and Karsten Lund, Curatorial Assistant.

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