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Chase ready for new surroundings

By Cate McQuaid
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Chase Gallery moves from Newbury Street to Harrison Avenue this week, where it will take over the space O+HT Gallery vacated in June. Co-owner Jeff Chase says the gallery will be open to visitors starting Aug. 5.

Chase is the fourth gallery to vacate its Newbury Street digs in recent months, following the closures of Kidder Smith Gallery and Nielsen Gallery and Mercury Gallery's removal to its Rockport venue.

The move was prompted by the news that 129 Newbury Street, where Chase Gallery has been located for the last 11 years, is going to be renovated. Although the gallery's lease is not up, Chase and his partner Jane Young decided to avoid working in a construction zone.

"We started looking on Newbury Street first," he said, but found that rents were too high. "Nobody wants to charge anything but top dollar. We can't pay \$120 or \$110 per square foot."

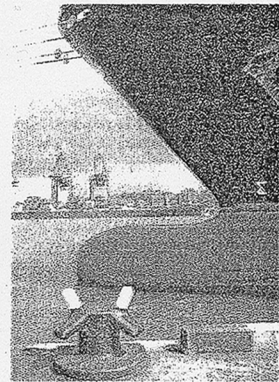
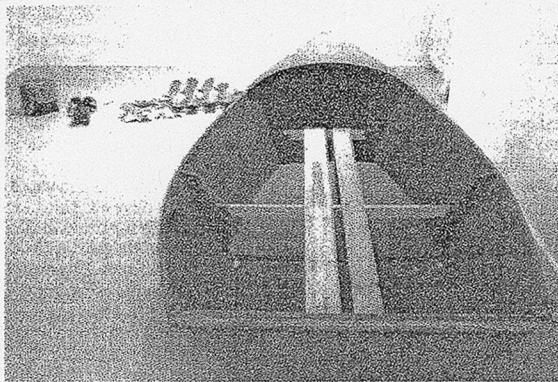
At 450 Harrison Avenue, the rents run between \$20 and \$30 per square foot, according to Chase. Even moving into a larger space, the gallery will save on rent, and that's crucial in this economy.

"We still sell quite a bit of art," Chase said. "But this is the biggest downturn I've seen, and I've been in the business since the early 1980s. [The lower rent] makes it very easy for us to continue to do what we do."

Imagine

"To the Eyes of the Man of Imagination," wrote the poet, artist, and visionary William Blake, "Nature is Imagination itself." The spark of coming-to-be is an energetic and mysterious one, whether you're talking about a small, green sprout or a glimmer of an idea. Curators Randi Hopkins and Emily Isenberg have seized on this theme in "And the fair Moon rejoices: contemporary visionaries in the wake of Blake" at the Boston Center for the Arts' Mills Gallery. It's a potent exhibit, crackling with that quickening spark and underlined with life's fragility.

Sculptor Tory Fair, who has



ANIKA BACHHUBER (ABOVE LEFT)

Top: Tania Kitchell's "Air No. 2" is a photograph of her breath on a cold night. Left: A view of David Olsen's installation "Submersions." Right: Andrea Frank's "Untitled (Singapore)."

been making flowers out of cast rubber for several years, makes a terrific leap into figurative work with her three pieces, each featuring a life-size human held up by and tangled amid brawny, aggressive blooms. In wall text, Fair says her pieces "Driving," "Walking," and "Sleeping" represent "times I am enveloped in my imagination." The tug and power of that particular overgrown garden is palpable.

Cristina Lei Rodriguez drapes dead trees in tinsel, rhinestones, chain mesh, and more, creating works that seem unearthly yet

rooted. In "Gnarled," you can see the fingers of roots scratching the floor. Smothered in sparkling, pewter-toned finery, the piece takes on an almost human form, like a glittery witch rising in fury to curse us all.

Finding the mystical in the mundane, Tania Kitchell documents the interaction of her own body with the environment. "Air Nos. 1-5" is a series of gorgeous black-and-white photographs of her breath on a cold night. Her sculpture of text etched in white Plexiglas looks like a shadow. First it documents time and

temperature, then it reads "Paving stones cold to the touch / cluster of tiny flying insects hover a metre above the ground . . ." It's just a moment — fleeting, but anchored by poetic detail.

Justine Kurland's comic and at times unsettling color photos of groups of nude people in gardens and woods recall the purposefulness and naiveté of any utopian, back-to-nature movement. Anti-romantic sculptor Larry Bamburg breaks the theme of nature down in order to reconstruct it, DIY-style, in "Iceburg

AND THE FAIR MOON REJOICES: contemporary visionaries in the wake of Blake

DAVID OLSEN: Submersions

At: Mills Gallery, Boston Center for the Arts, 539 Tremont St., through Aug. 16. 617-426-5000, www.bcaonline.org

ANDREA FRANK: Ports and Ships

At: Carroll and Sons, 450 Harrison Ave., 617-482-2477, www.carrollandsons.net

[sic], et cetera and so on" with the tools at hand: paper, plastic, scraps of fluff, and one dead cricket flying about on monofilaments, like gnats swarming.

Finally, Sharon Harper's four-channel video installation "Afterimage" shows lightning stuttering across the screens, brightening the sky, and seeming to throw us into shadows beneath tall pines. That moment of illumination is a metaphor for inspiration that races through the entire exhibit.

"Submersions," David Olsen's video and installation in the Mills Gallery's EXIT Room, directly links to Joseph Beuys's view of the artist as a shaman. Olsen, using Vulture as his avatar, rows through polluted Newtown Creek in New York City, applying a variety of spiritual solutions, such as lowering a seal skull into the water. His tools have been laid out on the gallery floor. The piece highlights the gulf between the world of metaphor and the world of science and questions how we might bring them closer together.

Water views

Andrea Frank's crisp, bracing color photos of ports and container ships at Carroll and Sons is a consistent delight; she makes the gritty, workaday world of shipping formally arresting.

In "Untitled (Singapore)," she frames a large ship docked in the distance with the sharp, nose-like curve of another ship's tip. "Untitled (Rotterdam)" shows a row of cranes lined up like soldiers with rifles propped on their shoulders. Frank casts a modernist's eye on all these crisp forms, but her backdrop of sea and sky opens the scenes out; you can almost smell the salt air.