

Critics' Picks, February 2008

## "Site 92: Phase II"

SMACK MELLON GALLERY  
92 Plymouth Street  
January 12–February 24



View of "Site 92:  
Phase II." Foreground:  
Anne Peabody, *Coal  
Chain*, 2007.  
Background, from left:  
Mia Pearlman,  
*MAELSTROM*, 2007;  
Sonya Blesofsky,  
*Study for Gair Boiler*,  
2008; Anne Thulin,  
*Two White*, 2007; and  
Steven Millar, *Overlay*,  
2008.

In "Site 92: Phase II," artwork hugs the gallery's pillars, balloons from its windows, and spills from the walls onto the floors, jolting the viewer into a more reflexive relationship with Smack Mellon's space. Responding to the fact that the Gair family, which owned the former boiler building, earned its fortune selling cardboard and packaging, Sonya Blesofsky creates a boiler out of packaging paper, cardboard, tape, glue, and string and nestles it between two pillars. Producing a similar disconnect between her materials and her subject, Gail Biederman sketches an abstract map on the wall with yarn and nails. Heide Fasnacht plays with possibilities of architecture in a work, made of black tape, that continues from the wall onto the floor, while Ken Landauer's handcrafted, oversize furniture demonstrates and exaggerates the scale of the gallery space. Composed from a somber palette of mostly whites, browns, and blacks, the show's works force the viewer to consider the site's history and its phenomenological conditions. Anne Peabody references the neighborhood's nearby shipyards in *Coal Chain*, 2007, in which a chain hangs from the ceiling, attached to a huge rusty anchor that rests atop a pile of shattered coal. Billowing white fabric cubes affixed to the windows by Anne Thulin expand and contract, as if breathing—interrupting the viewer's space with a playful sense of menace.

—Lori Cole