

CHEESE + CRACKERS, GIN + TONIC, AND NOW...ART + VISION

Spex (formerly *Eyeland of St. Johns*) presents ART+VISION with the photography of Tom Blandford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – August 8, 2008 - Highland Park, IL - Spex (formerly called Eyeland of St. Johns), a North Shore destination for luxury eyewear and sunwear, holds their fifth ART+VISION event with photographer Tom Blandford. The reception takes place on Wednesday, September 24 from 5-8 pm, at 1819 St. Johns Ave., Highland Park, IL 60035; 847-266-6400; spexchicago.com. The show will run through October 29, 2008. A trunk show by Danish eyewear line Lindberg will also take place during the reception, featuring the entire 2008 eyewear collection. A selection of drinks and hors d'oeuvres will be provided by City Park Grill.

This event also marks the complete re-branding of Eyeland of St. Johns to Spex. The summer-long transition - primarily a name change - culminates in this six-week micro-exhibition series with artist Tom Blandford. The event is sponsored by Chicago Magazine and Lafont eyewear.

Through ART+VISION, Spex seeks to provide local talent a diverse and receptive audience within the context of a unique retail environment. Spex has always believed in the importance of encouraging the talent that drives all creative endeavors. These well-attended shows are largely due to local creatives who are given a platform for exposure and community connection. Store manager Steve Burek says, "There's been a phenomenal response to this event and I'm proud to continue on with it. Encouraging new artists to display work in our store enables the community to get to know them, while everyone gets to know the uniquely designed eyewear we offer. It's a perfect fit."



Photographer Tom Blandford shoots close up photos of textures and distressed surfaces, then adds a dimension of quirky visual "commentary" by drawing in caricatures that interact with the landscape of the photo. Tom explains, "Through this lens, peeling paint on a wall becomes a cliff at the edge of the world, or a line of rust on a garbage can becomes a rolling wave on the sea. If nothing else, I hope this series reaffirms the truth that when we're open to it, art is everywhere." Blandford is a writer, actor, director and visual artist in Chicago. He's currently enrolled in the directing program at Second City and is working on several feature length film scripts. He has performed and written shows for Second City's "Unhinged" and "Donny's Skybox Theater" with the sketch comedy group, The Outsiders. He has received several national writing awards in advertising for *The Radio Mercury Awards*, *Communication Arts* and *The One Show*. His artwork recently appeared in the art magazine *Annalemma*. For more information on the artist, visit easyforthebirds.com.

Spex offers artfully crafted eyewear and sun wear to a stylish and discerning public with an eye for beauty and function. Their services range from contact lens fittings and eye exams to eyewear styling and repairs. Product lines are frequently updated, while attentive and knowledgeable customer service rounds out the experience for the savvy shopper. Dr. Marnee Velick, specializing in primary eye care, is the in-house optometrist and encourages all customers to come in for a comprehensive eye exam. Most major medical and routine vision insurances are accepted.

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