

Chicago Tribune

ART: REVIEW

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Tribune art critic

Published December 8, 2006

"The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama" is the title of two related exhibitions at different venues. The first, and largest, of the shows is at the Loyola University Museum of Art (820 N. Michigan Ave.), the finest theme show of contemporary art in Chicago this year.

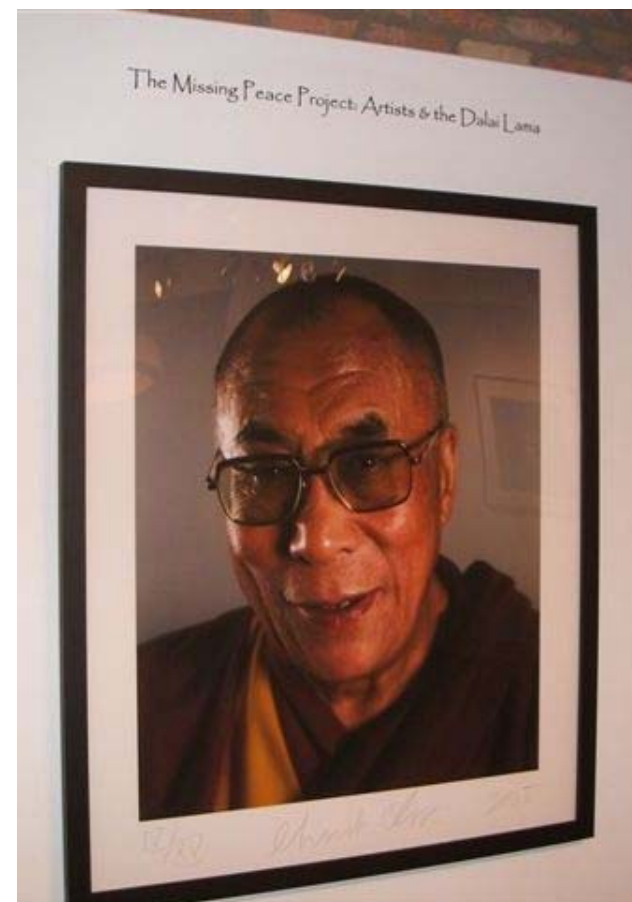
But for those daunted by the prospect of 88 artists from 25 countries creating work inspired by a spiritual leader and his values, the present "Missing Peace" show, at the Melanee Cooper Gallery, serves as a modest introduction, offering for sale 13 of the same pieces (from limited editions) as well as two original works not seen at the museum.

The new pieces are, respectively, a naive-looking painting by **Alain Despert** and a mixed-media work on paper in the form of a comic strip by Bernard Cosey. They both include representations of Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, as do other pieces here, notably the photographs by Richard Avedon, Chuck Close and Guy Buffet.

As at the museum, however, the show broadens to picture aspects of the Dalai Lama's native Tibet and, more important, interpretations of his ideals such as peace and compassion. These are the most engrossing pieces because they translate into the artists' personal languages issues that are not just about art but the process of living.

"The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama" at the Melanee Cooper Gallery through Jan. 31.

At 740 N. Franklin St., 312-202-9305.



"The Dalai Lama" 2005 by Chuck Close
Digital pigment print



"From Darkness to Light" 2005 by Alain Despert
30 by 48 inches, acrylic and enamel on canvas