

HIGH II: THE SEQUEL

The art community is busting out all over



BY FELICIA FEASTER

Atlanta will never be New York, but considering the signs of promising growth cropping up on all levels of the arts front, it may have a pretty good shot at a higher national profile.

A new gallery seems to open every week. SCAD-Atlanta plans to add to its growing empire with an art and culture center in the historic Peters House in Midtown. And the biggest boost to the art scene will come in November with the opening of the \$130 million **Renzo Piano** expansion of the **High Museum**. It's the kind of destination architecture that could convince art types to see the city as more than a fly-over zone.

We'll just have to wait and see if the lines for the inaugural **Andrew Wyeth** show beat the ones for the IKEA grand opening. Maybe if the High promised a Wyeth to the first in line, the odds of pup tents on the High lawn would be a little higher.

In preparation for that November debut, the High has just completed the last phase of its reinstallation of the permanent collection in the Richard Meier building. The process began in 2003 when the museum's second and third floors were reinstalled with European and American art arranged chronologically rather than thematically.

Parking was always an issue at Tew's previous gallery, but with ample free parking comes the new obstacle of luring unfamiliar gallery-goers into the Peachtree Hills complex, whose entrance some may confuse with the adjacent **Atlanta Decorative Arts Center**, which is not open to the public. But there are other benefits to the location. The close proximity of high-end furniture shops may inspire the moneyed homeowners and decorators who frequent the complex to do a little one-stop shopping and pick up some art for a part of their design scheme.

Meanwhile, in the former Galerie Timothy Tew space on East Paces Ferry is now **Chrysalis Gallery**, specializing in emerging Southern artists. Across town and an aesthetic world away is **Get This! Gallery**, the latest addition to the Castleberry Hill gallery boom. The enthusiastic, plugged-in proprietor is **Lloyd Benjamin**, a self-taught artist and semi-reformed train-hopper whose own work has been recently featured in a solo show at **Young Blood** and in *New American Paintings* magazine. Benjamin sees the gallery as a launching pad for emerging artists such as New York-based **Drew Conrad**, whose black-and-white photographs (on view through July 15) document the artist's wiseguy efforts to craft himself into an art star as commentary on our fame-crazed culture and the art world's own quest for the Next Hot Thing.