

“Artist Turns Pet Peeve Into Clever Act of Defiance”
-Alan Artner, Chicago Tribune, March 31, 2006

For anyone who grew to maturity in the 1960s, almost nothing is quite so satisfying in art as small acts of guerilla warfare carried out deftly, with a touch of humor. That's the nature of "The Car Project" by Jonathan Gitelson at the Peter Miller Gallery.

In the summer of 2004, the artist moved into a West Loop building across from a popular hip-hop club. He would arrive at his car each morning to find it had been plastered with fliers from the club and several others. So he began to collect the fliers and by the following January had more than a thousand.

Gitelson sewed the refuse to a cloth car cover, which in effect became a movable dump. His innocent act of revenge was then to park his car, with its cover of trash, in front of each of the clubs that had left him fliers. The exhibition includes both the original car cover -- which has begun to shed -- and large color photographs of the covered automobile, apparently caught in early morning light in front of eight of the clubs.

Owners or workers at the venues -- if any were around, the photographs are all unpeopled -- thus would find what Gitelson discovered each day raised to an absurd power. Of course, there's little reason for any of us to be interested in this except as an example of personal pique inflated to art. But the wry grandiosity of it conveys a certain satisfaction, and it's mixed with the secondhand pleasure of sharing in Gitelson's small act of comic defiance.