



PHOTO BY EMMA WILCOX

This photo taken under the Pulaski Skyway shows an industrial landscape below the letters of a giant sign that spells out "REPEL."

Artfully geared for mass market

Technologies point to radical changes

ART

On Every Wall and Stitch, Cut, & Dye

Where: City Without Walls, 6 Crawford St. (on corner of Halsey), Newark

When: Through Nov. 1. Noon-6 p.m. Wednesdays-Fridays; 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays

How much: Free. Call (973) 622-1188 or visit www.cwow.org

BY DAN BISCHOFF
STAR-LEDGER STAFF

City Without Walls, Newark's long-running art institution devoted to emerging artists, opened its season this week with two exhibitions devoted to new technologies in art. The first unveils a project of executive director Ben Goldman's to mainstream the purchase of digitalized art prints, and the second is the unveiling of the environment for a new video game designed by CWOW artist Heidi J. Bolsvert and six Newark high school students. The video allows you to virtually explore an American air base in Iraq.

It's hard to imagine two shows that propose more radical changes in the way contemporary art products are distributed and used.

"On Every Wall" proposes to spread very high-quality digitized reproductions of artwork — including just about every imaginable medium, from a painting to a photograph, of a performance — for under \$300 apiece, each signed by

the artist. Priced to be popular, falling somewhere between the cost of a poster and the price of an original artwork, Goldman thinks of this project as moving the visual arts away from its traditional, investment-oriented economic model to "a more modern, mass-based economics like that of the entertainment industry."

"Nobody in music worries that selling a CD will undercut the value of a live performance," Goldman says. "Actually, it drives the people to the concert."

The show itself is unlike anything we've seen before at CWOW. Eleven artists chosen by Goldman submitted two artworks each, including paintings, videos, photos and film stills of a performance art event, which hang on the wall around the gallery. In the center of the space are racks holding the bubble-wrapped prints themselves — you could pick one up, buy it at the door, carry the work home and hang it in the clear, UV-resistant plastic frame provided. All the prints are 17 by 22 inches and inkjet printed in Ultrachrome pigments on archival paper.

The artists are a diverse group, chosen in part to show off the flexibility of the software that makes the process possible. Emma Wilcox, a Newark artist associated with the independent Aferro Gallery downtown, shows two of her haunting black-and-white photographs taken under the Pulaski

Skyway over the past seven years, including a glimpse of an industrial landscape caught between the letters of a giant sign that spells out "REPEL." Former Newark Museum artist-in-residence Greg Leshé is represented by two photos, one a performance in which Leshé moves about the city inside of cage of sticks, straw and debris, like a human tumbleweed. Hiroshi Kumagai shows brilliantly colored little painted jokes, like his image of a nuclear family with bags over their heads streaming across the print in a mauve Lay-Z-Boy leaving a trail of frosted doughnuts.

The real key to this idea is the quality of inkjet printing — what you get are absolutely clear, remarkably true color images, in the case of Kumagai just as piercingly deep in color as the original acrylics. Goldman points out that nowadays this kind of scanning has come to replace just about every other advanced technical form of reproduction, better than silk-screen or web offset by far.

What's radical about the video project is the six Newark high school students are helping to design a nonviolent video game that explores issues like organ harvesting, stem cell research and contemporary insurgent warfare. Not for entertainment, but to help people understand what these issues mean for society.

Dan Bischoff may be reached at dbischoff@starledger.com