

# Review of *Early Adopters*

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Tribune art critic

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Adelheid Mers' "Early Adopters," at the 3Arts Gallery, is a collaborative project. Several artists--Michael X. Ryan, Deb Sokolow, Adam Brooks, Mathew Wilson, Isil Egrikavuk--contribute actual works, and other artists post online reports (at <http://adelheidmers.org>).

The theme of the show is the art community itself, with each piece reflecting on or questioning different aspects. It sounds like a show by artists for artists. But the wide range of approach and tone in the works succeeds in bringing them into a wider realm and into the perception of even casual viewers.

Deb Sokolow's narrative drawings about a critic who disappears has the widest appeal. As she did in a recent show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, she tells (and illustrates) a story with the apparent innocence of children's books and old-time movie serials. This plays more engagingly than anything else on view, yet it's decidedly personal, not merely crowd-pleasing.

By comparison, the rest of the pieces on view can seem solipsistic (Ryan), whimsical (Brooks and Wilson), more suited to broadsides (Egrikavuk) or dryly academic (Mers).

But the shifts in tone, from earnest to zany, help raise the corporate enterprise to something wonderfully inclusive and unpredictable.

Anyone with an interest in the idea of an art community should see this.

At 1300 N. Dearborn Pkwy., 312-944-6250.