

## Edgewater gallery Good News Only teaches teens how to curate

Senn High School students organize exhibitions featuring professional artists. *By Lauren Weinberg*



Good News Only Gallery, Chicago.

Photo: Good News Only

[Good News Only](#) is far from the epicenter of Chicago's art world. Located at 5604 North Ridge Avenue in Edgewater, the gallery occupies a small, sunny storefront a few doors away from a laundromat and across the street from a Walgreens. But its ongoing first show, "Here, Not Here," wouldn't seem out of place in the West Loop.

GNO founder Elizabeth Shank pairs works by veteran photographers [Rosalind Solomon](#) and [Nathan Lyons](#) with photos by local artist [Curtis Mann](#), whose altered found images appeared in the 2010 Whitney Biennial; Vietnamese-born photographer [Tri Luu](#); and [Zoe Strauss](#), whose ten-year retrospective opens at the Philadelphia Museum of Art this week.

The exhibition's impressive lineup isn't surprising, given Shank's résumé: She served as the director of New York's [Bruce Silverstein Gallery](#) (which lent her the photographs for "Here, Not Here") before moving to Chicago in April 2010. When GNO's next show opens in March, however, it won't be curated by Shank. Instead, its professional artists will be chosen by teenagers participating in the nonprofit gallery's 12-week internship program, which launched in the fall with six students from Edgewater's [Senn High School](#).

Shank, who lives in Edgewater, volunteers as a tutor at Senn. When I met her (along with GNO interns Zoe Steinhardt and Asante Lofton) at the gallery last month, she recalled, "I heard bits from the neighbors about how, in the past, the neighborhood and the students did not get along, they were rowdy teenagers.... But [Senn is] a really inspiring place; the students are wonderful." Steinhardt and Lofton are in the new Senn Arts magnet program; they tell me they decided to join GNO after visiting the gallery with their teacher.

GNO is inspired by the high-school students whom Bruce Silverstein Gallery hired through New York's [Center for Arts Education](#). While Shank was thrilled to see those teenagers gain confidence and new skills from their internships, she realized a commercial gallery can give high-school students only limited responsibilities, such as "resizing JPEGs, answering phones." Shank hopes to take GNO "so much further," empowering its interns to select the themes for exhibitions, curate the artworks, keep track of inventory and create press materials.

"For those who are already interested in art and are going to college, it'll be good for their résumé," Shank says; meanwhile, she adds, students who intend to work after graduation will benefit from exposure to a small business. Shank has taken GNO's interns on several field trips to prepare them for the challenges ahead, visiting shows and introducing the teens to curators at the [Art Institute of Chicago](#) and [DePaul Art Museum](#), among other institutions. Lofton enjoyed hearing Art Institute curator Elizabeth Siegel explain how she planned the layout of "[Timothy H. O'Sullivan: The King Survey Photographs](#)," which involved determining the best height for the artworks and other details crucial to the visitor experience.

Asked what types of art the students will present, Shank says she wants them to work with media other than photography, and hopes to strengthen GNO's contacts outside that field through excursions to local galleries and artists' studios. Before the interns' March exhibition opens, she also hopes to find a home in Edgewater for a public-art project, [Candy Chang's](#) interactive mural [Before I Die](#). This month, the interns are curating virtual shows on Tumblr and critiquing them as a team—good training, Shank believes, for considering the visitor's point of view. "I'm trying to drive home the point that we're not doing this for ourselves."

*"Here, Not Here" runs through February 10 at Good News Only.*

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