



ART

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Two's a Crowd: Chicago's 9th Annual One of a Kind Show and Sale

By Sarah Maehl

There was an episode of *I Love Lucy*, where Lucy and Ethel each bought a dress purportedly "one of a kind" only to find they had bought the same exact dress. Hrmph! The discovery that something that they thought was truly unique in fact was *not* awakened a primal competition between the best friends, ending up in two destroyed dresses and a ruined friendship (however temporary).



Indeed there *is* some magic in owning a thing so rare that there is truly nothing else like it in the world, and as Lucy and Ethel demonstrated, the desire for such a thing is both powerful and dangerous. Be safe this holiday season and go to Chicago's 9th annual One of a Kind Show and Sale at Merchandise Mart. And bring a friend!

From fashion accessories to fine art to fancy food, the OOAK Show is chock full of honest-to-goodness one-of-a-kind goods from over 500 artists and artisans. The show's dates—December 3-6—are a convenient reminder that Christmas is hurdling madly toward us and you have no idea what to buy anyone.

"We're trying to create the perfect venue for holiday shopping," said Lisa Simonian, vice president of marketing for OOAK, who explained that besides just stuff to buy, attendees can enjoy artist demonstrations, participate in craft workshops, listen to live music or watch a fashion show while snacking on some gourmet foods.

Though the Chicago show launched in 2001, the OOAK Show history starts more than 30 years ago with a group of friends in Toronto. But doesn't everything?

Chicago's OOAK show continues to evolve. "One thing we're excited about for this year," Simonian told the Conduit, "is our new partnership with Etsy [the online market for handmade goods]." Etsy will have its own pavilion at the show with more than 30 artists. They will also be hosting some of the craft workshops we mentioned.



While the artists and artisans featured at the show come from all over North America, Chicago-centric will be eager to check out Hiroshi Ariyama (prints), Dolan Geiman (mixed media), and Clifton Henri (photography) among others.

A complete list of featured artists is on OOAK Show's website. If you want to see your name on that list for next year, the application should up in February and a jury made up of team members and various field experts will decide participants in May. A tip from Lisa Spimonian: "We're looking for quality, things that are truly handmade, and we also try to balance out the categories of the kinds of things offered at the show."

Here are the essential details. For more, go to www.oneofakindshow.com

Thursday, December 3 (12noon – 9pm)

Friday, December 4 (11am – 9pm)

Saturday, December 5 (10am – 7pm)

Sunday, December 6 (10am – 5pm)

Tickets: \$12 for Adults, \$9 for Students