

JUNE

edited by Ted Allen

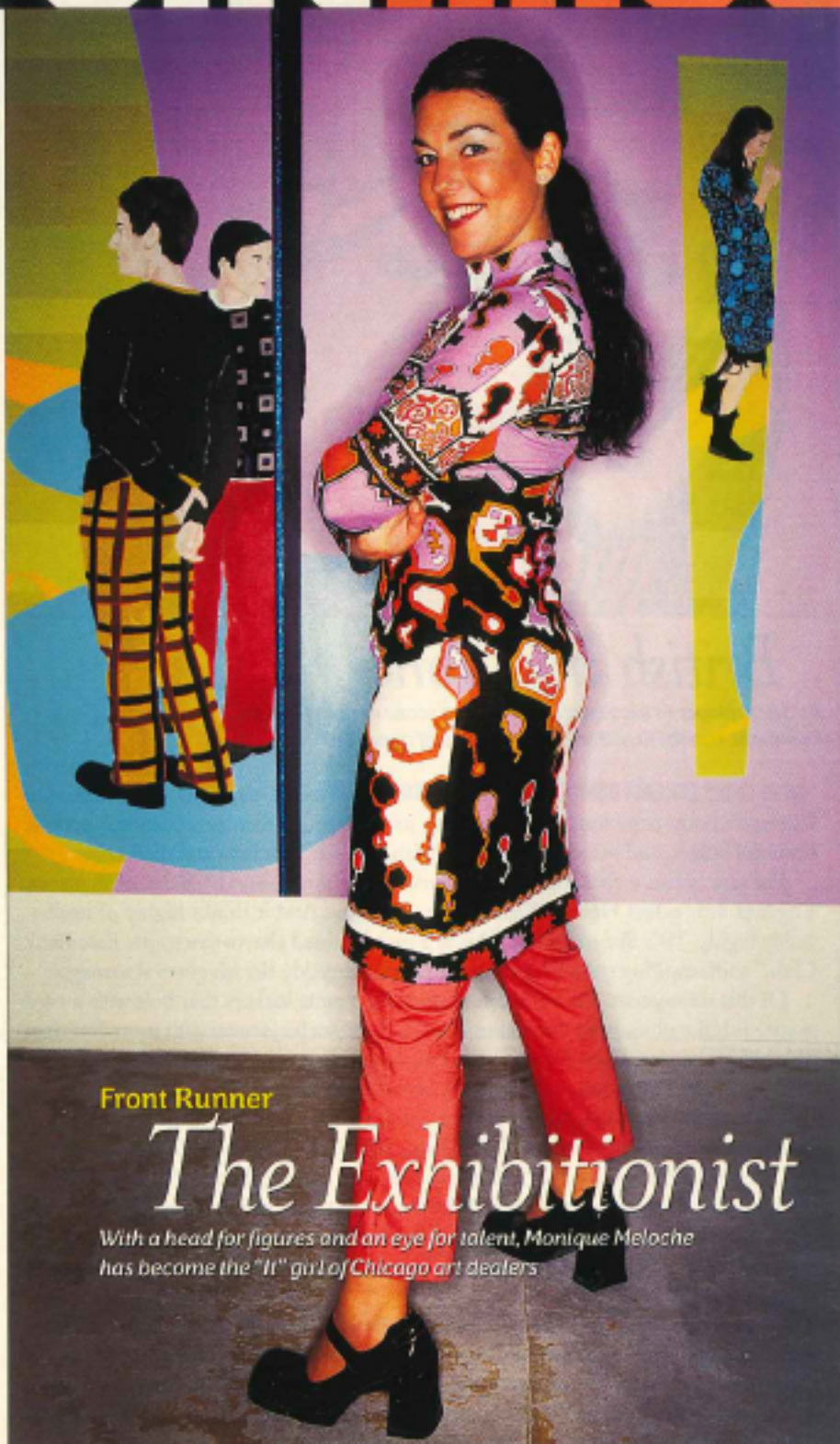
Frontlines

MONIQUE MELOCHE'S ENTREPRENEURIAL INCLINATIONS became clear at age ten, when her father threw an impromptu party. Sensing the guests might need sustenance, the future Chicago art dealer festooned a tray with cookies and pretzels and proceeded to offer the treats to her father's friends—for a dollar apiece.

Some 20 years later, Meloche combines that business acumen with an eye for art, and now reigns as the veritable "It" girl of Chicago gallerists. In the year since the opening of her namesake gallery she has shown her stable of 14 artists at art fairs around the world, garnered exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art (most recently John White Cerasulo, who shows at the gallery this month), and provided MTV with art for the Chicago *Real World* house. Her space on Fulton Street is a must stop on gallery-opening evenings for such local arterati as the MCA's director Robert Fitzpatrick, Judith Russi Kirschner, dean of the School of Art and Design at UIC, and Hamza Walker, education director of The Renaissance Society.

Meloche's own education began with an art history degree from the University of Michigan, followed by a master's from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her expertise evolved when she helped organize the survey exhibition *Art in Chicago: 1945 to 1995* as an assistant curator at the MCA. Aside from providing "the best class you could ever have" in local art history, Meloche says, the museum nurtured her curatorial skills as she worked on shows by the local painter Wesley Kimler and Sylvie Fleury, the Swiss conceptual artist.

After stints as director of the Rhona Hoffman and Vedanta galleries, Meloche struck out on her own. "I want to see big, good things happen for my artists. I want to get them in good collections . . . all over the world," she says. —DEBORAH WILK



Front Runner

The Exhibitionist

With a head for figures and an eye for talent, Monique Meloche has become the "It" girl of Chicago art dealers