

Seth Czaplewski: Hiding in Plain Sight on Mitchell Street



Mitchell Street Arts — 710 W Historic Mitchell St, Milwaukee, WI 53204

Opening Reception: February 5, 6–9 PM

Exhibition: February 5–March 19, 2027

Mitchell Street Arts is pleased to present **Seth Czaplewski: Hiding in Plain Sight on Mitchell Street**, the artist's third solo exhibition and his first solo exhibition in his hometown of Milwaukee.

For Czaplewski, the exhibition is deeply personal. Several of the historic buildings depicted in the exhibition were built by members of his family after they immigrated to the United States from Eastern Europe. Through large-scale painting, archival research, family history, and conversations with people connected to the neighborhood, Czaplewski explores how the buildings of Historic West Mitchell Street preserve stories of migration, labor, family, and community.

The exhibition grew from Czaplewski's research into his family's history on Milwaukee's South Side. One recurring subject is the **Kunzelmann House**, built by his family. Located just behind

West Mitchell Street one block from the site of the original Kunzelmann Esser furniture storefront, the house has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past century. It became South Side Hospital in the 1920s, later served residents during the great depression as a government station, and eventually returned to residential use. The former storefront has also been transformed and is now residential lofts and Mitchell Street Arts, where much of the work in the exhibition was created.

These changing buildings provide Czaplewski with a way to examine how a neighborhood can preserve traces of its past while continually becoming something new.

"I am interested in what happens when you begin looking closely at a place you thought you knew," Czaplewski says. "The more I research these buildings, the more stories I find. The paintings have become a way of uncovering those histories while also listening to the people who are shaping Mitchell Street today."

Czaplewski approaches painting as a form of visual archaeology. His materially dense, large-format paintings investigate how memory becomes embedded in architecture and landscape. Rather than treating historic buildings as static monuments, he considers them living structures that accumulate meaning through successive generations of residents, workers, and communities.

The exhibition brings together this personal family history with the broader history of Historic West Mitchell Street, exploring questions of migration, labor, identity, belonging, and the transformation of place.

Seth Czaplewski: Hiding in Plain Sight on Mitchell Street opens February 5 with a public reception from 6–9 PM and remains on view through March 19 at Mitchell Street Arts.

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