

# SUNDAY EDITION

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SUNDAY LATE CITY FINAL

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## Intel gets inside the Whitney for this art exhibit

**A**rt museums used to be a chore. From the froideur of the front desk to the professional suspicion of the guards, you'd never feel welcome. Things have changed a bit in the '90s. Thanks to peppy gift stores and conceptual artists whose work takes no more than 15 seconds to "get," the corridors are full of teens, the baby-sling crowd and mint-sucking seniors.

And thanks to technology, going to a blockbuster show should be even more like a stroll through the Mall of America very soon.

Intel, our friendly diversified chip manufacturing giant, has its name all over "The American Century," part two of which (1950 through 1999) opens today at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

It's a Best-Of kind of show, and with everything from Jas-

per John's "Boring Flags" to Kiki Smith's "Tale" (a wax woman) it's as American as apple pie. Intel's contribution, as well as a chunk of cash, is to supply five tablet PCs which are an improvement on the audio guides that are now so popular.

The tablets are still being tested, but they are basically rugged, 3-pound laptops on which you can see video clips of the artists at work (Pollock, dripping).

Intel spokesman Ralph Bond, a techie who majored in art history, says they need to be lighter and not run from the hard drive: "I think in about 18 months the information will be automatically downloaded on a fast, wireless network from servers buried in the walls."

One thing he's learned already: the tablet has to show a



big "PLEASE LOOK AT THE ARTWORK" sign during most of the narration, otherwise people just stare at the screen instead of the originals.

Another truly great thing is the website, [www.artmuseum.net](http://www.artmuseum.net). As well as letting you view sculptures such as Jeff Koons's chrome "Rabbit" in 3-D and generally learn as much as if you bought the coffee table book, there's a great feature that lets you build your own tour online and send your friends to it. You pick out your favorite exhibits, add your comments, and it appears as a customized site, with all

the art in correct date order. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, I created one just for you, dear reader. Go to [www.artmuseum.net](http://www.artmuseum.net) and under tours type in: Joseph Gallivan's Tour.

About.com has had a bright idea: blow a chunk of its marketing budget on taking everybody to Las Vegas. And why not? A million bucks doesn't buy a lot of billboards these days, and everybody loves Vegas. (It's America's No. 1 travel destination.)

About.com, you'll recall, is the New York-based Internet directory that used to be called The Mining Company. It has 670 real live guides around the world to maintain expert sites on whatever subject you can think up. Knitting? They got it? Pregnancy? It's their busiest site. Amateur pornography? Yes yes yes.

Guides go through a 13-week "boot camp" to make sure they know their subject, can write, and are not flakes, then get a monthly stipend (about \$300) plus a cut of ad revenues. According to John Caplan, About.com's 29-year-old senior VP of marketing, one of them is pulling down \$10,000 a month but he wouldn't say who.

The point of the Sin City beano — dubbed the Red Ball, after the logo — is to introduce the fans to the guides. Some 450 of these guides are flying in from as far away as Korea and Israel to put on a day of presentations.

"We're an online brand celebrating humanity in an offline way," explains Caplan. "We're all about finding things quickly and joyfully."

■ Please send e-mail to [jjgallivan@nypost.com](mailto:jjgallivan@nypost.com)

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