

WIRED NEWS**Etoy Heads for New York City**by Steve Kettmann

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Now that they have won an apparent victory over Santa Monica-based eToys, the Internet artists of etoy have their eyes on taking Manhattan.

Negotiations have not been finalized, but a Manhattan gallery is prepared to host a two-week etoy conceptual art exhibit in April that will give New Yorkers a chance to see the Zurich artists' work somewhere besides cyberspace. It will be only the second gallery show ever for etoy, said the agent calling himself Zai.

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"We always avoided gallery spaces in the past," he said. "We once did something in Budapest because that was Budapest and that made it interesting. But we are not really artists who do our work in galleries. The Internet is the main thing for us.

"But we love the idea of seeing all the toywar tentacles going out there and touching as many places as possible," he said. "We were not that much in the art concept for a while. Our whole show was placed in the courtrooms and the newspapers. Now it's interesting to move it more back to the art concept."

Getting the toy giant eToys to offer to drop its domain-name lawsuit was one thing. Now etoy wants to take the buzz they have going from an international Web mobilization on their behalf and keep it going.

The theme for the show? Toywar, of course. The [online game](#) etoy is running at its [www.toywar.com](#) Web site just keeps growing. To accommodate the more than 1,000 players who have signed up for the game, etoy must keep expanding it.

"We have to design battlefields every day," Zai said.

Etoy also has to kill people off. Nearly a third of the players in the game are now stuck in coffins.

"They are not really dead," said Zai. "They are dead. But they have one month where they are represented on the battlefield. They still can go to the health center and buy new energy and get some life again. We are building three battlefields to place the dead people."

The show in New York will make the most of the battlefield concept; there were 13 of them at last count.

"It will be a whole new environment where you can see huge toywar battlefields in different rooms," Zai said. "There will also be a table where you can talk about investment in etoy or exchange your shares. If people want to get money out of it, they can give their shares and get money there."

"It's not an isolated art piece you just look at it. You are involved and we are involved. It's a whole process. It's like doing surreal business. People have to be there the whole day."

Why New York? Well, why not? Where else do you go if you want to make a splash in the art world?

"Somehow we had a huge center of defenders in New York," Zai said. "Of course, San Francisco was important, too. That's an important city for this whole cultural movement."

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