

# Living Arts

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## There's no place like home . . .

. . . as 18  
artists  
share  
their  
visions of  
domestic  
drama

By Cate McQuaid  
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The Revolving Museum, under the stewardship of ringmaster Jerry Beck, has brought another three-ring circus of an in-

### Art Review

stallation to the Mills Gallery at the Boston Center for the Arts. In

the past, Beck and company have converted the space into a giant pinball machine and a carnival arcade. Now, in "Arranged Marriages, Family Rooms and Laundry Detergent," the group of 18 artists turns its attention to more domestic pursuits.

Beck has randomly paired his artists  
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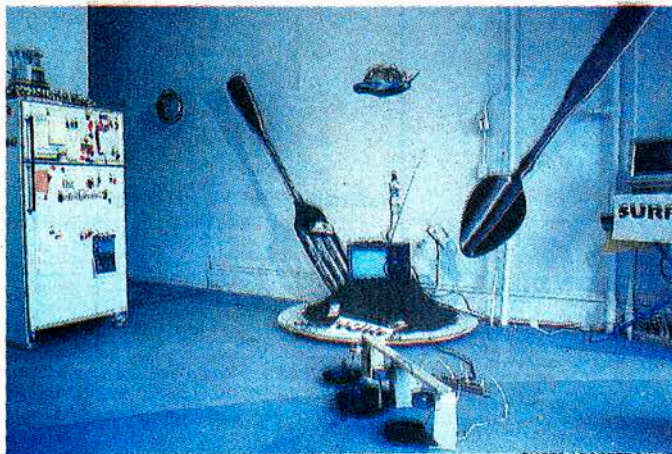


PHOTO / ROBERT GILLIS

Jeff Warmouth and Michael Dwyer's undomesticated kitchen in the Mills Gallery's "Arranged Marriages" show.

# An artistic fun house at the Mills Gallery

## ■ MILLS

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(these are the "arranged marriages") and set each couple to creating a particular room in a house. It's a designer show house gone berserk. Dream house? This is more like a nightmare house.

That's not to say it's bad. It's just creepy. The unconscious detritus of family life, usually swept under the rug, is in full view. The bathroom, for instance, designed by Jeff de Castro and Ken Travers, resembles a cavern smeared with feces. There's even a deck along the edge, all pristine white tile, with tiny telescopes set up for the casual visitor to peer at the muck that lies just over the edge.

As in a designer show house, some of the rooms hit and some miss. The child's bedroom, put together by Mauricio Alberto Cordero and Wayne Viens, is the strongest room, a wonderful evocation of the power of the unconscious and its vividness in a child's view of the world. The walls are lined with dolls bound in netting and black fabric. One baby doll's head is smothered in twine; two other dolls are wrapped together in a phallic shape. Creatures, both beautiful and sordid, hover over the bed and spring off the wall.

There's an album of sketches and notes titled "Childhood Fears and Budding Sexuality." Posters with graphite drawings and meandering, lyrical texts hang on either side of the door. Written in careful penmanship over a drawing of a curvaceous model: "My friend had a Cheryl Tiegs poster. He couldn't draw, and he would rub up against it real hard."

The TV room, devised by Elise Mannella and Steven Davis, makes its point comically. In the center of a bench cushioned with plaid upholstery, a video monitor flickers with the delightfully salacious image of a man playing with his remote. Other screens are set up in a pagodalike totem. A computerized memo recorder hangs suspended over notes declaring, "Your remote desires are always in control, and your remote voice creates the best barriers." In the TV room, in other words, everything is remote.

Other rooms are less effective. The kitchen, put together by Jeff Warmouth and Michael Dwyer, attempts to cover too many ideas and comes out like a Dagwood sandwich that you can't get your mouth around. The attic, by Leigh Me-



PHOTO / ROBERT GILLIS

**Dolls line the wall of a child's room at the gallery by Wayne Viens and Mauricio Cordero.**

### ARRANGED MARRIAGES, FAMILY ROOMS AND LAUNDRY DETERGENT

An installation by the Revolving Museum  
At: Mills Gallery, Boston Center for the Arts, 549  
Tremont St., South End, through April 13

deiros and Jeff Smith, isn't much more than a dark, wooden attic - although it will record your voice in conversation and echo it back to you.

The master bedroom, by Jim Fossett and Suzanne Stokes, scores visually more than conceptually. A projector suspended over a bed places images of two people asleep, tossing and turning. The same images, in backlit transparencies, line two walls. The effect is elegant and subdued and doesn't seem to fit with the sharp humor of the rest of the house. Also, Fossett and Stokes have installed a shower behind a locked door; peer into the peephole, and glimpse a video of the resident couple in the shower together. It seems an after-

thought to the poetry of the sleeping images.

The exercise room, conceived by Tom Cole and Shannon Curry, falls flat visually but has great audio. The two performed at the opening (and will perform again at a Revolving Museum benefit sleepover at the Mills on April 5), and it may be that the room is useless without its performance component. The audio, featuring Cole barking out aerobics moves, is a hoot. He uses the same cajoling, rhythmic tone to make a variety of points. "To the left and right and good, and now you're in a coma, that's good."

If "Arranged Marriages, Family Rooms and Laundry Detergent" doesn't always hit the mark, Beck and his Revolving Museum associates are to be commended, as always, for their sheer audacity. A spirit of playfulness runs through the house like a kid on a rampage. Considering that home sweet home is far from perfect, this is a good facsimile.