

PULSE

New gallery is for the up and coming

The White Elephant Gallery, which opened last March in the Fort Point Channel area, is Museum School graduate Tiffany Shea's greatest dream: a 1,400-square-foot concrete space in which she can do absolutely anything she wants.

"You can hang things from the ceilings, the walls, from pipes, and have things coming up from the floor," says Shea, her enthusiasm bubbling up despite attempts to project a calm, business-like demeanor. "It is exciting, because it's always changing and there are so many possibilities."

After struggling with the decision of whether to be a nonprofit gallery, Shea and her partner, Sal Mancini, decided the best move would be to charge the artists who show in the space to help pay for the upkeep.

"We take a 25 percent commission plus charge artists that are showing \$100 per week," says Shea. "We'd rather not have to do that at all. But we can't charge the public to see an exhibition. That would be unheard of, and nobody would come."

So far, most of the artists have been connected with The Museum School or the Massachusetts College of Art.

"I like up-and-coming artists, because they are still experimenting a lot," Shea says. "But for the future, I would also like to attract some more well-known professional artists, and to become more established in the Fort Point community."

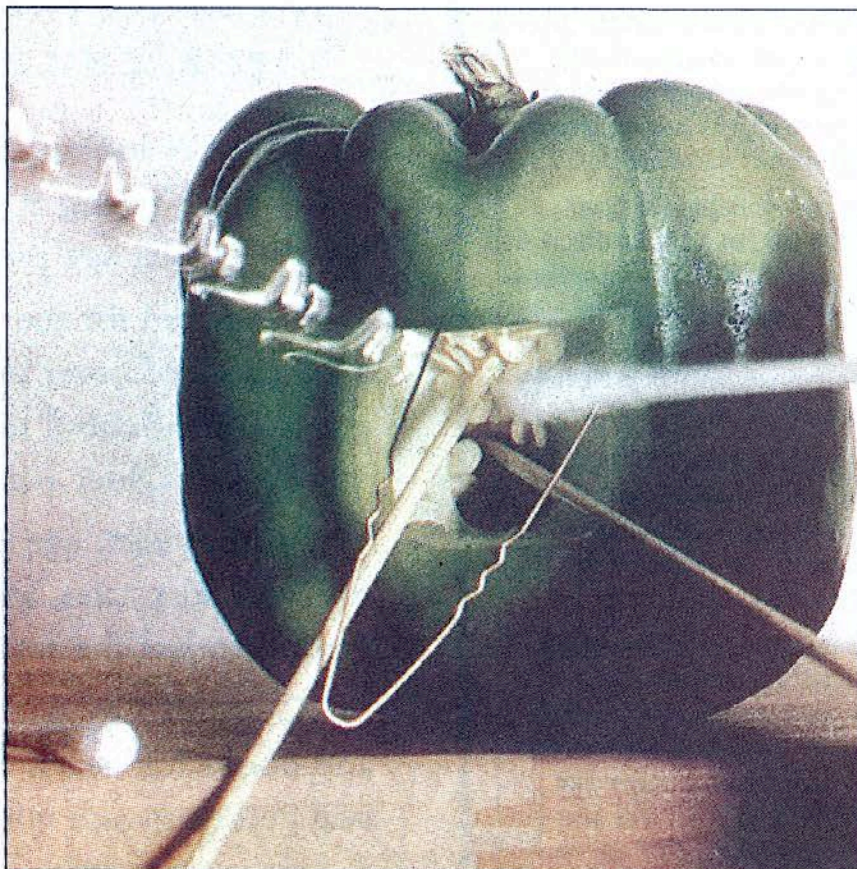
Once a dead-end road with the Children's Museum at one end and Mobius in the middle, Congress Street, where the gallery is located, has recently been converted into a direct route to the airport. Shea has already seen an increase in foot traffic and visitors.

"It is no longer an isolated neighborhood," she says, "and now more people are coming in off the street."

The current exhibition concerns a theme that seems to be influencing a lot of artists in these unsettling times, the concept of defining "home."

"It is all about domestic space," says Julian Hoeber, who helped curate the exhibition and also shows some of his own artwork in it. "It contains a broad range of work that shows how the places they live affect the artists' work."

Ellen Wetmore, a Museum School graduate, reacted to the challenge by building large metal replicas of the moths that had



Among the works at White Elephant Gallery is "Extraction, 1996" by Jeffrey E. Warmouth.

been invading her house, and placing them all around the gallery space.

Jeffrey E. Warmouth brought his wacky sense of humor to the gallery with a collection of devices that perform futile tasks, such as can openers that, when an observer steps on a switch, power forks and spoons that spin around nonsensically in frying pans filled with wing nuts and eyeballs with screws in them.

"I'm influenced by absurdist comedy and entertainment," says Warmouth. "Every piece I do has an element of joke telling or subversion."

"Architectural Subjectivity: The Home as Identity" runs through Feb. 14 at The White Elephant Gallery, 369 Congress St., second floor. Hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 357-8177.

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