

MARTOS GALLERY

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East Marion family's home serves as exhibit backdrop

By Rachel Young | 08/18/2013 7:30 AM | The Arts, Top News



RACHEL YOUNG PHOTO | Art dealer Jose Martos and his 3-year-old son, Julian, relax on the front porch of their East Marion home, where a contemporary art exhibit can make it sometimes hard to distinguish between art and 'real life' items, such as Julian's toys. The exhibit, open to the public, was organized by Bob Nickas and runs through Sept. 2.

It's just past 3 p.m. at the East Marion home of art dealer Jose Martos and artist Servane Mary, when the couple's 3-year-old son, Julian, comes bounding down the stairs in search of Mr. Martos, who is sitting on a wicker couch on the front porch.

"Bonjour!" Mr. Martos says affectionately to the young boy, scooping him into his arms.

"Did you have a good nap?"

Julian smiles shyly and rests his head on his father's shoulder, looking content.



RACHEL YOUNG PHOTO | Artist Barry X Ball's "Collection of 24 Plastic Heads" greets guests who venture to the house's second floor.

It's a scene typical of regular life, but the way Mr. Martos and his family live is anything but ordinary. Their turn-of-the-century home, purchased last December, has been transformed into a contemporary art exhibit open to the public and organized by Bob Nickas. It features the work of various artists, many of them local. The property's coordinates were the inspiration for the title of the show — "Lat 41° 7' N., Long. 72° 19' W" — which debuted July 13 and runs through Sept. 2.

"The idea is to make people see art in the house where they live," says Mr. Martos, who grew up in Antibes, France, and owns Martos Gallery in New York City.

Art and life are seamlessly integrated into the property, from the whimsical sculptures dotting the ample lawn to the canvas paintings hung on the exterior of the house. And sometimes it's hard to make the distinction. On the porch a line of Julian's trains (toys) lies scattered near an army helmet (art) filled with water and a single piece of bubblegum (art).

Mr. Martos points to a red, white and blue sculpture made from mixed materials by artist Jason Metcalf positioned on the ledge of the porch.



RACHEL YOUNG PHOTO | An untitled sculpture resembling a large rock, created by artist John Miller, nearly fills the dining room.

“With this sculpture I like the color, I like the shape of things,” Mr. Martos says. “Each day I discover something new about it: oh, he used glue here; oh, he used wood for this piece. It’s like being in love with somebody. You live with them, you find out what you like, what you don’t. It’s the same thing with art.”

Inside the home, large statement pieces steal the show, including an untitled sculpture by John Miller that resembles a boulder and nearly fills the dining room. Other pieces, including Jim Lambie’s multicolored vinyl stairway carpet, are flashy but functional.

Each room in the house, except the master bedroom, is open to visitors. When he wakes up in the morning, 3-year-old Julian is surrounded by colorful oil paintings of owls by Bill Adams and a column of watercolors by Justin Lieberman.

After he gives a tour of the exhibit, Mr. Martos carries Julian down the cellar’s narrow concrete steps. The walls are coated with fluorescent lime green paint, the work of Ms. Mary.

“Mommy made this,” Mr. Martos tells Julian in French. “Bravo, maman!”

The little boy claps and, in an instant, they are a typical family once again.