

SOUTHERN DENTON COUNTY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE FAR-OUT



Good/Bad Art Collective members, right, gather near one of their exhibits, an ice sculpture of the logo for the rock group Van Halen, surrounded by food to resemble a table that would be backstage at a concert. Above, Michael Garcia tries to find a comfortable position while mounted on a wall in the *Vulnerable* exhibit at the collective's gallery in Denton. The gallery was founded by University of North Texas students.

Denton art collective's showings are off the wall — and on it, too

BY CATHERINE S. DAILEY

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DENTON — Michael Garcia said he is so shy, he figured that a piece of art would evoke more conversation than he could. So he recently decided to suspend himself on a gallery wall.

That wasn't difficult. He had just joined the Good/Bad Art Collective.

Since May 1993, the student-run gallery has been home to the far-out, hosting more than 150 events at its studio at 120 Exposition St. in Denton.

"We're all really into art and into making unconventional things happen," collective spokesman Shane Culp said.

As patrons trickled into the collective's most recent exhibit, titled *Golden Fred Savage*, which is the name of a drink, Garcia was wearing a T-shirt and boxer shorts and was strapped into a gallery corner with thick cables.

The entry was titled *Vulnerable*.

"It's horrendous pain," Garcia said as he squirmed and stepped up on the cables to find a comfortable position. "But it makes me more vulnerable. It's hard for me to open up. I'm encouraging people to ask me personal questions."

A pair of dark dress slacks were hung next to him out of reach. To his right was a small wood shelf supporting a glass of water adorned with a lemon slice.

"It's kind of there as a tease," he said. "I could take a drink, but then I'd have to go the bathroom."

This kind of zaniness is encouraged, collective director Greg Frost said.

"I think it was a strong first showing," he said. "I think one of the ways it exemplifies Good/Bad is that it allowed people to interact with the art — literally."

The gallery was founded by University of North Texas students who had met in an art class and wanted a more creative outlet than they could find on campus or in the community, Frost said. The approximately \$400 monthly rent for the site comes from donations and dues from about 20 members.

To contain costs, the gallery is open only during events, which are about every two weeks, Frost said. Exhibits are one night only.



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Examining an exhibit of the Good/Bad Art Collective are Cari Ashworth, left, and Marilyn Brannon. The heart-shaped box contains cat litter and a photograph.

"We do that so people can't be passive. They have to show up," Frost said.

Culp said the gallery's ideas often stem from brainstorming sessions at monthly membership meetings. About 12 to 20 people gather to offer ideas.

At the *Golden Fred Savage* exhibit, a softly rounded, glittery sculpture was filled with foam in the shape of a wave. On close observation, the "wave" crept back and forth against the wall.

The mechanized piece, created by Marshall Garth

Thompson, a UNT graduate, was called *Yo Ho Hum*.

"I thought it was one of the more intriguing pieces," said Alex McDonald, a photographer from Denton.

McDonald said he also enjoyed *Velvet Jones Said I Was Kicked in the Butt By Love*, created by Danielle Norris.

A litter scooper lay next to a red, heart-shaped box that contained cat litter and a photograph of a man. Viewers could listen to electronic music through a headset. Miniature ceramic angels on strings hung above the display.

Artists said they enjoy it when people look at their work twice, maybe more. Collective members Dan Bailey, Karl Conrad, Chris Weber and Will Robison liked the experience of Good/Bad so much that they started a gallery when they moved to Brooklyn, N.Y.

"It was a lot of hard work, and they did it all themselves," Culp said.

At the Arlington Museum of Art, Good/Bad artists displayed *We're On Our Way To Dinner But We Have to Pick Up Something First ...* It filled the museum's upper mezzanine.

As some unsuspecting patrons entered the museum, a collective member offered them a key to "Apartment 2B" in a complex called "Pena Heights."

When they got upstairs, a collective member welcomed them, took the key and entered their names in a computer, which communicated the names to members waiting in the "apartment."

The patrons had to go down a hall and then a darker hall. When they saw the sign for 2B, they entered the darkened unit.

Inside, collective members surprised the customers with a cake with their names on it. The patrons were then taken out the back door. Members performed the tour for about 80 people, Frost said.

"[The apartment] was extremely real," he said. "We even wired it for electricity. If you put a roof on it, you could live in it."

The collective's works delve into the mystery of art, Frost said.

"It's exciting to see people react who don't see art on a day-to-day basis," he said. "[The work] makes people question what they value in art."