



MIKE SHINE



by Annie Owens

Mike Shine's art work proliferates through nearly all aspects of his life, from his paintings on found drift wood, his work as creative director at design firm Butler Shine & Stern to his "surf shack" home and studio. Shine lives in the coastal town of Bolinas, California with his wife and three sons. "All are artists: Riley paints, Cooper is an animator and film maker, Sawyer draws and acts. My wife Marianne is also an actor."

A long time surfer and artist Mike Shine seems to draw no boundaries between life, work and play. When he shows in galleries he doesn't as much hang the work as much as he inhabits the space entirely.

We found this is especially true during a recent visit to White Walls gallery at the opening of a two-man show Mike did with Caleb Neelon. True to form, as part of his massive installation, Shine built a boon-dock inside the gallery hung with gloriously colored sandbags and up above, hanging from a noose on the ceiling, the notorious man-sized wolf suit. Visitors were encouraged to climb the steps leading up to a platform and spin the "Wheel of Good and Evil" - a truly hands-on experience.

Yet another thorough example of Shine's full-scale proclivity, we also paid a visit to San Francisco's Museum of Craft and Folk Art where Mike's work was the focal point of the "Inside/Outside" exhibit of artist's creative spaces. The installation allowed visitors to wander a nearly fully reproduced version of Mike's home. The experience begins before reaching the front door, which is flanked on one side by the likenesses of Alex and his troupe of ultra violent hooligans from *Clockwork Orange*, one of Shine's favorite movies. As we move through the rooms, the fully interactive experience is punctuated with the background music of Queen's Greatest Hits playing through an old bright orange Weltron 8 track stereo in the "living room." Drawing papers and pencils are laid out on a project table inviting visitors to sit down and add their own

personal touch to the installation or to just write a note to the artist on one of the many notepads left available. People sit around this table chatting with one another, as is often the scene no-doubt in Mike's real home where he sometimes invites guests to be creative. No detail was spared; for example, on one shelf I spied an array of various hot sauces, on another, a stack of 8 track tapes bearing the names of such bands as Van Halen, The Glenn Miller band and Elvis Presley.

Mike's upcoming projects include an animated stop-motion carnival film he's planning with his son Cooper. Shine is admittedly obsessed with carnivals currently and making a new series of psychedelic carnival games complete with evil twists. "I'm hoping to do an installation next year of a creepy carnival, with carnie-stuffers, games and prizes."

He also spoke of a short film based around Harry Haller, the main character of Hesse's *Steppenwolf*. "A big part of the appeal of *Steppenwolf* for me," says Shine "is the idea of Harry Haller living his life in constant flux. I'm fascinated by modern humans living our modern lives- but with ancient wiring and DNA. We're just an evolutionary blip from our ancestors who hunted with spears and slept in caves. We each have peculiar ways of dealing with that. Art, surfing, living in the country, are how I balance it all and escape - like Harry coming down from the Alps and into the city. Wolves appear a lot in my art. Duality is a big theme for me. So yeah, the film is about a Steppenwolf hanging out in both country and city. Wow that sounds like horseshit..." But full of shit Mike is definitely not. Look out for this project and much more from Shine later in the year. †

