

# The Washington Post

In the galleries  
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By Mark Jenkins

## Outside-In

Houses are central to all four artists in “Outside-In,” but the show at the Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery isn’t cozily domestic. In Carson Murdach’s sweeping drawings, red-roofed dwellings travel in packs, swarming across grand, monochromatic vistas. These modest structures stand in for their ambitious residents, who migrate, claim new territory and often despoil it. One of

Murdach’s pieces translates his vision into a 3-D tableaux, which fits with the work of the other three contributors, all of whom construct miniature dwellings.

Lee Wheeler’s are explicitly for the birds, although the sort of tough buzzards who might join a biker gang. His little homes are embellished with spikes, rusty metal and a painted skull and crossbones; one is in the shape of a human head, adorned with antlers. Michael Nakoneczny’s battered A-frames are on the same scale as Wheeler’s, but with small doors rather than circular bird holes; they’re both evocations of rural architecture and blank canvases for free-associated images. Mars Tokyo’s miniature buildings are “teatros,” grouped in sets and each devoted to a different theme. Tokyo (a.k.a. Sally Mericle) presents these immaculately assembled vignettes as sideshows from a Felliniesque carnival. But when the titles are translated from the Italian, their subjects are revealed to include nothing less than war, eternity and the unexplainable.



Mars Tokyo, “Teatro dell Argento Vivo (the Restless, detail),” mixed media construction, 2002-2008. (Mars Tokyo/ Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery)

**Outside-In** On view through Sept. 2 at Joan Hisaoka Healing Arts Gallery, 1632 U St. NW. 202-483-8600. [smithcenter.org/arts-healing/joan-hisaoka-art-gallery.html](http://smithcenter.org/arts-healing/joan-hisaoka-art-gallery.html).