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Style Section

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S.F. gallerist Martin Muller toasts absurd, cheery art



Artist Charles Arnoldi (left), gallerist Martin Muller and illustrator Mark Ulriksen at Muller's Modernism West atelier. Photo: Catherine Bigelow, Special To The Chronicle

No one else sets, or fills, a table like gallerist Martin Muller.

And while celebrating painter Charles Arnoldi and illustrator Mark Ulriksen during a recent dinner at his Modernism West atelier at Foreign Cinema, Muller declared: "The amount of talent at this table is red hot."

Among the place cards: artist Mel Ramos, publisher Nion McEvoy and editor Leslie Berriman, author Katie Arnoldi, photographer Leslie Flores, Ann and Tim Brennan, Kevin King, Litquake co-founder Jane Ganahl, and Karen and John Diefenbach.

But before the fine Foreign Cinema fare was served, Muller opened a show at his Modernism Gallery on Market Street, where a riot of new works by Arnoldi now share wall space with exquisite Ulriksen illustrations.

"Mark celebrates the absurd in the most successful, intriguing and exciting way," Muller toasted. "I'm honored we could exhibit 44 of your New Yorker covers in this show. And the new works by Chuck are of particular relevance because they're a synthesis of what he's developed in the last 20 years. The cheerfulness, that light, that joy that Chuck brings to his work is what should nourish all of our lives."

Pal Peter Allen raised some praise for Muller, too.

"Martin encompasses an entire spectrum of culture," he raved. "His gallery isn't about making a living. Martin strives to enrich our lives with art."