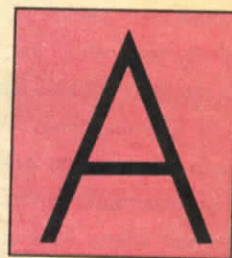




Kenny Scharf's Fun House



ANYONE

who hasn't lost the child in him would feel right at home in Kenny Scharf's fun house on Great Jones Street. You can sit back on a "smiling" Lazy Boy recliner and listen to the jukebox or watch the Flintstones on what is surely the most adorable boob tube in America.

Kenny, who is the impresario of do-it-your-selfism, "customized" his television in the same way he customizes toasters, radios, telephones, Cadillacs, even garbage cans. First he handpaints them with slashes and squiggles of Day-Glo color. If he's in the mood, he'll add a few of his famous cartoon faces, and then he'll decorate with fake fur, foam, Easter grass, seashells, toy trucks, dinosaurs, rhinestones, beads and broken mirror shards, among other things.

Back when Kenny was a student at the School of Visual Arts, he had an important revelation. "I realized," said this 26-year-old California-born artist, "that art had nothing to do with real life."

From there on in, he went custom-crazy. "You put on your TV every day, you talk

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on the phone, and that object by itself is very blah," he says. "But if you start seeing wonderful colors and sparkling jewels, it's got to transform your whole life."

He calls it the "Van Chrome Experience."

Kenny, his Brazilian wife Tereza and their 20-month-old daughter Zena live the "Van Chrome experience" every day in a floor-through loft whose walls would have been customized by now if it wasn't a sublet.

But the guy doesn't lack for visual stimulation. Besides his own collection of customized objects, "pop surrealist" paintings and toys by the truckload, there is a lively assortment of Fifties and Sixties furniture whose bright colors and curvy geometric shapes look as if they sprang full-blown right out of his canvases.

Traded for art, the furniture includes some rarefied pieces, like Verner Panton's red cone chair; George's Nelson's "coconut" chair, and the much-coveted "marshmallow" sofa. Not surprisingly, most of the furniture is from Kenny's favorite era, the future-oriented Sixties, when his favorite television show—*The Jetsons*—premiered, and when, crucial event of his life, his family got its first color TV. "I used to sit right in front of it," he recalls.

Since Kenny is such a gregarious person, the apartment is usually crowded with friends of a modish persuasion. As silly as it sounds, they are the final element in a visual mix that Kenny keeps changing. Customizing.



Wanting to merge art with life, Kenny Scharf's loft is a kaleidoscope of color. "Pop surrealist" paintings and '60s furniture—like the molded plastic chair, below—fill the space. He also

"customized" the telephone, left, and the Lazy Boy recliner and TV, below. Friends help in the fun, and they are (preceding page, from left) artist Fred Brathwaite, stylist Kim Hastreiter (standing),

architect Pat Griffin, performing artist John Sex, Kenny Scharf, photographer Tseng Kwong Chi (at window), Tereza Scharf with daughter, actress Patti Astor and designer Pilar Limosner (foreground).

