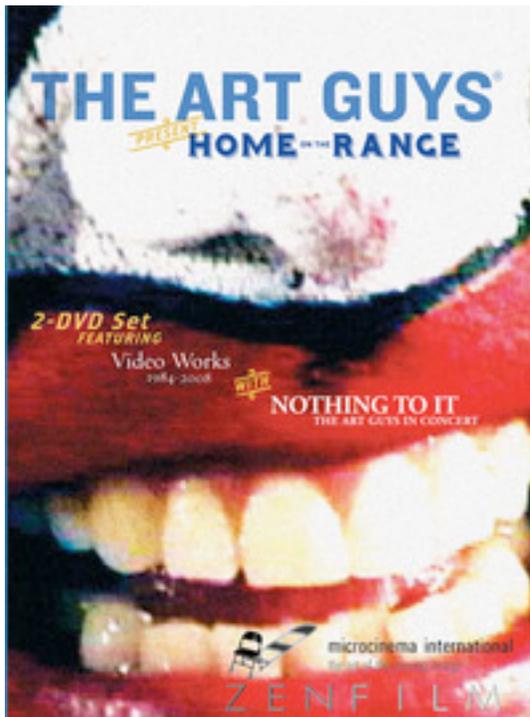




## The Art Guys Are *Home on the Range* With New DVD

By Troy Schulze in [Art](#)  
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Hot on the heels of their recent marriage to a tree, The Art Guys (Jack Massing and Michael Galbreth) unveiled their new DVD last Thursday at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. The two-DVD set, titled *Home on the Range*, features video works spanning 1984 - 2008, and the evening-length performance *Nothing To It*, taped on May 3, 2008 at the University of Houston's Wortham Theatre.

True to Samuel Beckett's maxim "Try again, fail better," the videos run the gamut of sublime successes and spectacular failures, from the mesmerizing 1983 piece *Music for B.B.'s*, in which an endless stream of ball bearings is poured through a glass tube, shot from several angles, to a gut-wrenchingly embarrassing 1995 striptease performance at LaBare.

Vintage Channel 13 News footage accompanies works like 1988's *Dining at Denny's* and 1995's *At Your Convenience*, both public performances in which Jack and Mike spent 24

hours at a diner booth and working at a Stop N Go, respectively. It's hilarious to watch Don Nelson and Melanie Lawson flail "art/life" comments in an attempt to astutely sum up the two anti-theater pieces -- possibly two of the most low-key behavioral stunts in the history of Houston performance art.

The must-see Nothing To It disc finds the Guys in full theatrical mode, complete with a ringleader-style introduction.

After an almost interminable hoot-and-holler crowd pump-up (Jack and Mike spoofing a Microsoft conference), they welcome the crowd with Kiss Piece, applying red lipstick and planting a big smack on every member of the audience (foreheads, cheeks, lips and even a few asses).

In between about five interludes during which the Guys chug beers with some additional performers and a few audience members, highlights of the evening include Make Love to the Camera, Baby, a video of a mouth sloppily making out with the camera lens while Jack supplies live vocal accompaniment, and Danger Music, a tribute to Fluxus artist Dick Higgins. Jack also performs the piece. He prepares, and then rips loose a series of lung-busting howls with utter commitment. It's stark and humorless, an arresting contrast to the largely comic nature of the evening.

The DVD includes a booklet with a sweet introduction by Contemporary Arts Museum Houston senior curator Toby Kamps, as well as photos and footnotes.