

Below: "Free & Hazel (Ages 12 & 8), Roslindale, MA 2006" by Robert Knight is at Gallery Kayafas.

**MERENGUE! VISUAL RHYTHMS/
RITMOS VISUALES**

At: Museum of the National
Center of Afro-American
Artists, 300 Walnut Ave.,
Roxbury, through Nov. 23.
617-442-8614, [www.ncaaa.org/
exhibitions.html](http://www.ncaaa.org/exhibitions.html) or
www.merengueboston.com

CHUCK HOLTZMAN:

WOOD SCULPTURE 1980S

At: Victoria Munroe Fine Art,
179 Newbury St., through
Nov. 29. 617-523-0661, www.victoriamunroefineart.com

ROBERT KNIGHT:

MY BOAT IS SO SMALL

At: Gallery Kayafas,
450 Harrison Ave., through
Nov. 22. 617-482-0411,
www.gallerykayafas.com



Merengue: Homage to Tatico Henriquez" in tribute to the late, old-style merengue accordionist in 1988. He divided his brilliant yellow canvas in half: On the right, the traditional performers have broken hearts and ears sliced off; the singer's tongue has been cut out. On the left, LPs fly and trumpets blare around a boombox.

Jésus Desangles' transgressive 1993 painting "Music and the Woman" challenges instrumental merengue as a traditional domain of men. In it, a woman sets her genitals atop a drum

and plays a phallic-looking pipe. It's brazen, yet the woman seems as much a stand-in for the music itself as for the men who play it.

"iMerengue!" paints a vivid social history of a music that has fueled passion; it also charts a bit of art history, from the storytelling strains of the 1930s through modernism and the more subversive elements of contemporary art.

Wood works

Chuck Holtzman, once better known as a sculptor, has for several years made lush and

trappings, both scruffy and ornate. These, too, anticipate Holtzman's drawings, with their hovering cut-out shapes and whiz-bang complexity. What they lack is the sense of mystery the artist these days evokes with the smoke of charcoal dust.

Child's world

Robert Knight's psychologically dense photographs of children's rooms and their possessions at Gallery Kayafas throw the values of his subjects and their parents (sometimes they're indistinguishable) into sharp relief. There are no people in them, but they work as portraits.

"Free & Hazel (Ages 12 & 8), Roslindale, MA 2006" disorients with its giant map of the world on the ceiling, photographed at such an angle so that it appears in front of us, with a wall below. Do Free and Hazel have a passion for geography? Or are their parents eager to teach it? A tutu, a child's drawings, and a magazine ad of a woman in a bikini, shot from the rear, hang on the side of a bookcase in "Piper (Age 5), Somerville, MA 2008." Knight offers a brew of children's dreams and parents' hopes. Sometimes popular culture barrels in. His photographs are both enchanting and disturbing.