

Holiday home»
Glam it up with chic
candleholders. » 10F

ROOM

Gifts for germ phobes and the super-handy » 4-5F



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Photos:
Glenn Asakawa,
The Denver Post



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SECOND ANNUAL WRAP STAR CHALLENGE

People have long enjoyed a little secrecy with their gift-giving. In the U.S., the practice got serious in 1917, when Hallmark introduced red, green, white and holly-covered holiday tissue paper and effectively launched the modern gift-wrapping industry. ■ These days, creative givers sometimes trump the wrapping selection at the mall by using unusual materials to elevate a simple gift box to functional art. ■ For the second year, The Denver Post solicited wrapping ideas from 10 of Colorado's art and design taste-makers by giving each an identical box. Vote for your favorite in the group by sending e-mail to lifestyle@denverpost.com. The deadline is Dec. 21. Look for the results in this section on Dec. 27. The creator of the winning box will receive a complimentary holiday meal, or a \$100 donation to a favorite charity. *Elana Ashanti Jefferson*

1. Christmas Island. Denver Modernism Show founder Dana Cain devised this tiki wrapping to reflect the popularity of tiki-themed events and collectibles among Modernism fans. She called on her boyfriend, artist Peter Ilig, to anchor a ceramic salt shaker to the top of the box. Bamboo, palm fronds, a grass skirt, leopard print fabric, drink umbrellas, fake flowers and butterflies round out the look.

2. Christmas Cardinals. HW Home (hwhome.com) fashioned this wrapping from craft paper, guinea plumage, natural twigs, real eggs, artificial branches and rosehip berries. It reflects the natural materials abundant in the store's stock.

3. "N.S. de Guadalupe (Gift in a gift)". Chicano artist Jerry Vigil used tissue paper, ribbon, puffy paint and an image of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe to create this tribute to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

4. "It followed me home... can I keep it?" Artist Lauri Lynne Murphy's original wrapping is like a square stuffed animal with its fake fur, nose and eyeballs. "Kids... could play with their toy without unwrapping it," she says.

5. Feather Your Nest. A series of 19th-century English bird nest prints on show at Tam O'Neill Fine Arts (311 Detroit St., 303-355-7711, tamoneillfinearts.com) inspired this box from the gallery. It is wrapped in Fabriano Italian art paper and silk ribbon, then topped with a real grass nest and a painted gold bird.

6. The Art of Wrapping. "This keepsake is part recycled, part collage, part paint," says artist Tracy Weil from Wellworks (3611 Chestnut Place, 303-308-9345, wellworks.com). The red and white sunflower, inspired by "The Thinkers You Can Think," by Dr. Seuss, is a Weil calling card.

7. From Deco to Disco. Iconography from the '70s sparked this wall-paper logo and glass-ball-topped box from Mod Livin' (5327 E. Colfax Ave., 720-941-9292, modlivin.com). The ribbon is red because the sale of red products at Mod Livin' benefits the global fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

8. Treasure à la Louvre. The Denver Art Museum contributed this box, which is based on its current exhibit "Artisans & Kings: Selected Treasures from the Louvre." The colors in the box are like a pair of ornate gold and maroon chairs in the exhibit that were gleaned from the holdings of French royalty.

9. Holiday Blowout. This box is a holiday fantasy come to life for Patricia Branstead, the owner of KOZO Fine Art Materials (10 E. Ellsworth Ave., 303-733-2730, kozofineartmaterials.com). It echoes the excitement and mystery of the unexpected that children often associate with the holidays.

10. Holiday Cheers. Painter and interior designer Richard Nielsen dressed up his box using oil pastels and graphite to "celebrate the creativity of collectible works of art" available through the Nielsen-Metier showroom (965 Santa Fe Drive, 303-722-0072).