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The shipping news: Can a 20x80-foot industrial container be a thing of beauty?



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Theresa Casey, at right, and Rob Gray are IDS12 participants, shown here in their unfinished space to be unveiled at the show.

Aaron Lynett/National Post

Interior Design Show 2012: Can a 20x80-foot industrial container be a home of beauty?

Iris Benaroya talked with the designers behind How Do You Live?, an exhibit at the Interior Design Show, which is on until Sunday, to find out

The Dream Archive: Theresa Casey and Rob Gray

Relaying the soft-focus memory of a dream is frustrating and often funny: “There was a bear, but it was not a real bear, it was more like a bear-human — with fruit on its head, that wasn’t a head but a hat.”

Dreams are abstract. To choose such a theme for a 200-square-foot space challenge at a design show — when, say, a simple arrangement of space-saving furniture would have sufficed — is no mean feat.

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But that's Theresa Casey and Rob Gray for you. Easy isn't an option for this husband-and-wife team.

"My first priority when developing a home for a client is always to create a unique environment," Ms. Casey of Casey Design Group says. The space must reflect the client's personality. "No two projects in my portfolio are alike," explains the interior designer who once won a Gold ARIDO award for a booth that incorporated Second World War periscopes and distorted lenses as viewing ports into a taboo-laced red box.

No shrinking violet himself, Mr. Gray, a designer and graphic artist, has done commissions for the Art Gallery of Mississauga and the Textile Museum of Canada, where he recently created the graphics and catalogue for a retrospective of the textile work of Judy Chicago.

Ms. Casey and Mr. Gray's latest collaboration, The Dream Archive, sees a shipping container transformed into a dream portal. The space is mirrored on the walls and ceiling so the images seemingly repeat forever — sort of like the wonky world of the subconscious.

There's a study, which the team describes as a "reality" space displaying a book of inspirational interiors that have been projected on to it. And what's a dream without that most vainglorious of birds? Festooning two walls: real peacock feathers.



Mason explores the "primitive rituals that take place in the kitchen and bathroom."

Handout

Mason

A tin pot suspended over an open fire in a rustic-meets-contemporary kitchen? What cheek! But you can't expect any less from Mason. The exuberant design firm is the brainchild of

, pictured, and Stanley Sun, who run their business in Toronto's natty Junction. Despite the street cred, they've brought style to A-listers including Sony, Adidas and W Hotels.

Their aplomb, they say, is due to their varied backgrounds. Both have been involved in disciplines including visual arts, art theory