

Oregon Small Scale Sculpture

by Mike E. Walsh

Sculpture by twenty-eight well-established artists from throughout Oregon make up the excellent *Oregon Invitational Small Sculpture Show* curated by artist Harold Hoy and currently on display at the Art Department Gallery at Lane Community College. The exhibit provides insight into mediums as diverse as light construction, mixed media assemblage, colored-water circulator and more traditional mediums including wood, stone, metal and ceramic.

Each artist exhibits one work with a height, width or depth smaller than eighteen inches. Unlike the egalitarian free-for-all approach of the earlier *First Biennial* at the Maude Kerns Art Center held in September, Hoy presents a balanced professional assessment.

The most thought provoking works in the exhibition are Bill Will's mixed media red painted box with a mirrorized interior titled *From Your Perspective*, and Jerry Mayer's assemblage of found objects, photo copies and illuminated interior titled *Ten Days Delivery*. Both works emphasize interior perception, unlike traditional sculpture's rhetorical plasticity and solid form. Will, by constructing a box with interior

mirrors and doors, allows the viewer to perceive a personalized infinity. Mayer's assemblage recalls the incarceration of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II. His cage is constructed of metal filing baskets, photo copies and illuminated interior and exterior lights which symbolically imply confinement and the reality of this nightmare which unjustly suspended the rights of an American minority.

Several other works incorporate political views speaking directly about the present. Richard Notkin's *Cube Skull Teapot* is among these. Meticulously constructed of clay, it is symmetrical in orientation, with a base composed of dice and the lid an atomic mushroom cloud on a chess board. Notkin's sculpture, though small, signifies more than a "Tempest in a Teapot." In a similar vein, Tom Wilson's "untitled" wood shrine, with an interior of broken mirrors and a skull, metaphorically ritualizes society's technological suicide in a nuclear age. The universality of Laura Alpert's cast bronze abstracted male torsos *Ghosts Standing*, with mutilated

male genitalia, imply a perverse cultural self destruction.

Abstract metal sculpture is in abundance and none succeeds better than the constructivist welded bronzes, with intersecting planes, by Tom Hardy, Bill Blix and Robert Hess. Sculptors Gary Hammer, Vern Luce and Michihiro Kosuge weld, assemble and fabricate their works of steel. Each then paints surfaces to create a new reality: Hammer constructs a Neo-expressionist-Punkish stylization of the human head; Luce, a Post-minimalist wall-hung shape suggesting a fragment from an industrial walkway; and Kosuge a Post-minimalist-expressionist sculpture composed of house shapes with a coating of garish expressionist color that all but denies the physicality of the work.

The many other entries are too numerous to mention in detail. However, other artists included are Clint Brown, Paul Buckner, David Cotter, Steve Gillman, Kim Hoffman, Manuel Izquierdo, Bill Moore, JoAnne Peekema, Richard Pickering, Stephan Soihl, Paul Sutinen, Bruce West, Dan White, Bruce Wild and Jan Zach. Their works can be seen at the Art Department Gallery through Dec. 13.

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