

Display of 'Skulptures' shatters conceptions of childhood, reality

By Julie Decker
Emerald Contributor

Portland artist Dennis O'Connor's "Skulptures," currently on display at the EMU Gallery, are as haunting as the name implies.

This exhibit is not for the weak, nor for those who lack imagination. It is not for those with a fragile view of reality — O'Connor's sculpture's challenge the viewer to be shocked.

O'Connor's art background includes a year of study at the Oregon Art Institute in Portland. His work has previously been shown in Portland at Pullian/Nugent, Blue Gallery, Artquake and most recently at the Northwest Artist Workshop.

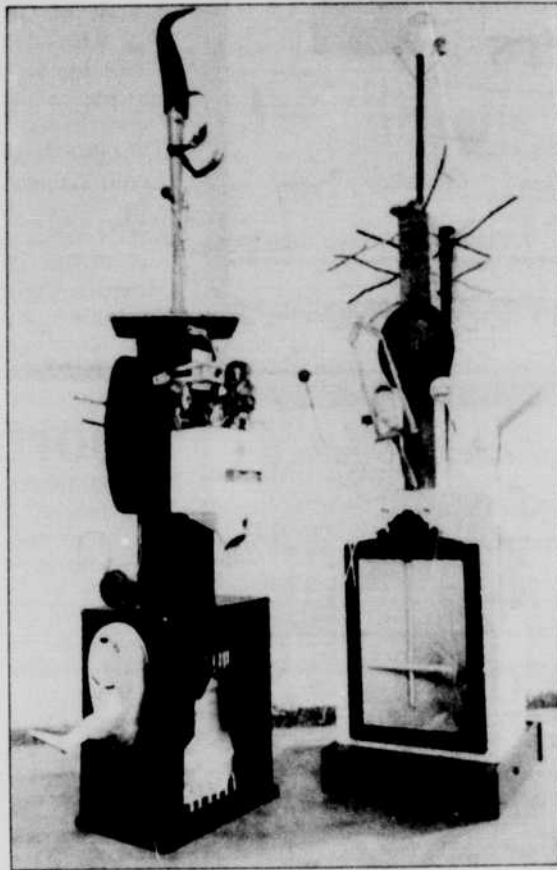
The "Skulptures" currently on display are made up of work done in the past two years. They are a fusion of rough hewn, severed and displaced found objects that are fashioned into towering totems.

One can only guess whether the fabric of the sculptures equals the fabric of the artist's mind. If so, O'Connor's mind may be a dark place, foreboding, yet daring the wayward traveler to become trapped in its mysterious compartments, caught in the mechanized web of its intensity.

If O'Connor's images are descriptive of reality, then the world may be full of nameless, shapeless faces — faces which are filled with horror and morbidity. The machinery and technology of today are not merely signs of advancement, but rather symbols of control, representations of lives being thrown together, processed and producing a cloned society of mindless dolls.

The exhibit includes several sculptures, each with a different touch, but still maintaining a continuous flow of strong, subjective mental images. Heads of dolls, wooden spoons, crab claws and bright geometric shapes all re-occur throughout the exhibit, included as part of the network of machinery.

Throughout the exhibit the viewer is pulled in, becoming part of the process, slowly reformu-



Courtesy Photo

Dennis O'Connor's "Skulptures" are totem poles of a different reality. They are on display until Oct. 6 in the EMU Gallery.

lating reality and shattering the concept of innocence.

Bound figures hang from a recklessly balanced mass made up of symbols of war. The

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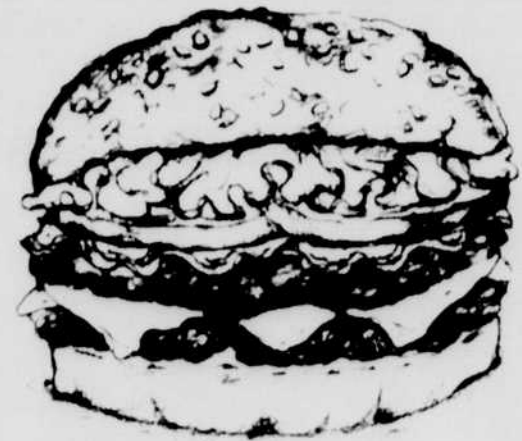
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