

Walk in to Malton Gallery; leave with a smile

Mythology, folklore, fantasy and dreams provide artists with endless inspiration. At Malton Gallery, the art's all in fun, but there's a serious side for those who wish to find it. The gallery's three artists are Indre Lukas, Philip Lamie — both from Indiana — and Dana Tindall, a Cincinnati sculptor.

It is happy, unthreatening art.

"I see people walking by the gallery and peeking through the windows," gallery owner Don Malton says. "Then they start to smile. It's that kind of art."

Indre Lukas is the daughter of Lithuanian immigrants who fled their homeland when the German army invaded at the start of World War II. Escaping at the last moment, they rescued nothing except family photographs and a wealth of Lithuanian folklore.

Lukas is preserving that folklore, and other "proverbs of life, dreams and the heart," in her colorful, folk-style paintings, done on old discarded windows.

She began collecting old windows as a lark, and only when she started painting on the glass did she discover "the beauty, brilliance and richness of the colors."

Later she learned that reverse painting on glass is an ancient technique called "eglonise." Because the paint is applied from the back, the image has to be constructed in reverse, with the last details painted first.

The paintings are suggestive of children's storybooks, and their ti-



Owen Findsen

ties are often old sayings that inspire the images. Farm animals, rural scenes, mermaids and fish.

All three artists are fascinated by fish. Lamie carves wooden fish as works of painted sculpture. Tindall makes wooden lobsters on a plate and paints a table of freshly caught fish that flap their tails at the push of a button. It's funny at first, until you realize the fish are futilely struggling to survive.

Social message

This kind of serious undercurrent can be found throughout the show. Tindall is also into folklore, but his interest is contemporary myths. His paintings are really parodies of paintings, with some objects constructed in three dimensions, often extending beyond the frame. Some even have motors, sound tracks and lights.

"I've always been interested in cartooning," says Tindall, whose work suggests an affinity with New York pop artist Red Grooms. His works are always comical, but there is also a message of excess and over-consumption, of modern society gone amok.

"Not many people notice that,"

Tindall said.

In "Food Chain," a customized car zooms down a road next to a field of weeds. A discarded bicycle lays in the weeds. The background is a nuclear power station. The work has blinking lights and the sound of crickets chirping.

"Make a Wish" features the Wizard of Oz's ruby slippers, only now they're a pair of ruby colored men's shoes, standing empty in a street, surrounded by tall buildings. When the reader pushes the wish button, the shoes click their heels and a voice scolds the viewer for having such a nasty wish.

Lamie is at his most powerful

with his elaborate constructions, which often include fish and boats. These are playful scenarios turned into detailed models, but the underlying mood can be dark.

"Between Midnight and Dawn" is a fully rigged fishing boat moored to a dock, with a school of large fish swimming underneath it. A large whale, tied by the tail, is hanging from a beam on the dock.

Is it a model? A toy? Does it illustrate a story? Or is it a moral tale, a prophecy, a warning? Are the fish only waiting to take revenge for the loss of their brother? We wait in vain for the story to be resolved.

If you go

WHAT: Philip Lamie, Indre Lukas and Dana Tindall.

WHERE: Malton Gallery, 2709 Observatory Ave., Hyde Park.

WHEN: Through Dec. 21. Hours: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

INFORMATION: 321-8614.