

Visual arts

Humor, inventiveness mark Tindall's work

By David Minton
Contributing art critic

Dana Tindall's assemblages have in the past been so readily appealing and accessible that one can't help but be attracted by their humor and brightness.

An exhibit of recent assemblages, "Dana A. Tindall," at the University of Kentucky's Rasdall Gallery is typically attractive.

It is fun work, obviously. From the moment you walk into the gallery and see two whirling washing machines painted in joyously sweet colors and on spin cycle, you can't help but be hooked.

The work draws viewers in several ways, actually.

Aside from their immediately funny aspect, Tindall's works are marvelous for the way they are constructed.

They are like pop-up reliefs, given depth not through sculpting but by the addition of flat, painted pieces to other flat, painted pieces. The pieces accumulate, so there is a slightly choppy three dimensional effect.

And in these works, Tindall has taken a step forward with the use of motors for moving parts and tape machines for sound effects.

A wooden record player turntable slowly revolves, cranking out "Pop Goes the Weasel," but the pop is never heard. That pop is "the most unsurprising surprise known to man," the artist says, so he has dispensed with the payoff.

In a landscape with twinkling stars, you hear crickets, then the sound of a passing automobile that fades in, builds to a roar and fades out. The viewer's vantage point is from under the car's wheel in a spot in the grass where a bicycle has been overturned.

Tindall's work also has its ex-

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pressive side. A self-portrait shows the artist as what he calls "a suit" — a salesman — which he was once upon a time. It's called "Self-Portrait as a Captain of Industry." He's looking down his nose at you in a self-satisfied way, as so many executives seem to be doing in those portraits that hang in board rooms and corporate buildings. An ornate gilt frame with its own lamp encloses the image. And this captain's arms move: He pats his head and rubs his stomach at the same time — appropriate gestures in this case.

What makes Tindall's work fantastic is that it is so many things at once: invitingly funny and expressive — but not in the moribund way too many expressive works are. It also is wonderfully inventive in terms of both imagery and craftsmanship.

If you are already familiar with Tindall's work — he's had exhibits at the Heike Pickett Gallery, been included in group shows at the Headley-Whitney and other regional sites and had his work shown extensively in the Cincinnati area — you will note that he's made changes, all of which are improvements.

In addition to the use of motors and tape recorders, these pieces are larger in scale than most previous works. And an effort has been made to assure that viewers see past the humor.

"Dana A. Tindall" will remain on view at UK's Rasdall Gallery through Nov. 1. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or by appointment. For information, call 267-8867.



"Self-Portrait as a Captain of Industry" shows artist Tindall wearing a business suit and rubbing his head and patting his head at the same time.