

White House to show off Kentucky artists' work

By Jim Warren

Herald-Leader staff writer

An artist often finds fame by breaking out of his shell. Sometimes, he finds fame in one.

At least that seems to be the case for Kathleen Ferguson, John Tusca and Dana Tindall, three Kentucky artists who were invited to design eggs for the annual White House Easter Egg Roll Monday on the White House lawn.

Each year, about 150 American artists are selected to decorate eggs for the event, which dates back to the 1870s, said Muffin Williamson, a White House spokeswoman.

Tindall, Tusca and Mrs. Ferguson were selected from a list of names submitted to the White House by the Kentucky Department for the Arts.

The White House provided each with two small wooden eggs on which to draw or paint their designs.

Mrs. Ferguson, however, chose to cast two decorative eggs in bronze. Tusca and Tindall went the traditional route and painted wooden eggs.

The eggs decorated by the artists won't actually be used in the Easter Egg Roll but will be on display at the White House as a part of the event. Afterward, they will become part of the Reagan administration archives and could end up in the Reagan Library, if one is built, Ms. Williamson said.

The artists were notified of their selection in early February.

Ms. Ferguson, a sculptor who lives in Lexington, was about to leave for Oregon, Ill., to cast several bronze sculptures at an art foundry there.

"So I took the wooden eggs with me," she said. "I kept looking at them, trying to decide what I was going to do, and it came to me. Why not make some bronze eggs instead of painting the wooden



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Kathleen Ferguson with some Easter eggs in her studio

ones?" It was kind of an offshoot of what I was in Illinois to do in the first place."

Ironically, she noted, the casting was done not far from Dixon, Ill., Reagan's hometown.

One of the eggs she created is called "Birth of a Bunny" and celebrates the fun aspect of Easter. The other, "Rose Garden Hatching," is "my tongue-in-cheek version of a Faberge egg."

Tusca, a sculptor and professor of art at the University of Kentucky, chose to decorate his wooden egg "with a series of tiny figures all over the place." It's called "Spring Has Sprung."

"I'm glad I was asked," he said. "As I refer to it, it's another line on your resume."

Tindall, who lives in Ludlow and works for a Cincinnati audiovisual firm, tried two different approaches.

"I had been doing some paintings of cars from the 1950s, big land sharks," he explained. "So I tried to paint a Cadillac on one egg. But it came out looking a little like Danger Mouse's head."

Tindall's second egg was painted to look like a chicken, complete with tiny running shoes.

A native of Texas, Tindall moved to Kentucky a few years ago.

Tusca grew up in New York but has been a Kentuckian for more than 25 years.

He created the bust of former U.S. Sen. John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky that was unveiled at the state Capitol in Frankfort a few months ago.

A native of Wisconsin, Ms. Ferguson moved to Kentucky a few years ago after working in New York. In addition to her sculpting, she is teaching a community education course at UK.

The first White House Easter Egg Roll was held by President Rutherford B. Hayes and patterned after similar events in England. It is open to youngsters 8 and under.

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