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Dana Tyndall's mixed media construction, "Everybody Loves a Clown," is on show at Zone One gallery.

Works of innocent wonder, worldly irony

Dana Tyndall exhibits colorful mixed-media constructions at Zone One

By Frank Thomson

There are certain artists, certain style, that are perfect for certain spaces or certain seasons. The funky energy of Dana Tyndall's mixed media constructions resonate well in the Zone One Gallery. Tyndall's subject matter—appliances, milk shake machines, dishwashers, and piano lessons—presented with a child-like directness seem strangely appropriate to the Christmas season. The artist combines a dash of innocent wonder with a healthy dose of irony, and a sprinkling of underlying anxiety.

The central figure in "Everybody Loves a Clown" is a woman photographing a birthday cake. A clown appears over her shoulder. The woman's camera is old-fashioned, like a '50s era Kodak Brownie. Attached to the camera is a flood light that periodically blinks, simulating the action of a

flash bulb. The cake has two candles and a backward numeral two on top to celebrate a second birthday. The clown is going boo, the woman's face is green, and the camera is constantly flashing in our face. As we look upward at the birthday cake from the point of the recipient, one thing becomes apparent. We are not having a very good time.

"Agitator" shifts perspective literally as well as metaphorically. Here the point of view is more downward, into a washing machine. Within the machine a colorful, circular form representing a load of clothes rotates to the left and then back to the right. An internal light source gives the spinning mass a quasi-monumental feel. Tyndall offers a task that seemingly has no beginning, and no end in view. Sisyphus doing laundry, not rolling stones up hills.

Dana Tyndall steps out of "Self-Portrait as a Captain of Industry" and into the gallery. The figure of the artist—attired in blue suit and white shirt—emerges from the massive gift frame. The suit serves to symbolize the artist's role as business man. The large gold frame indicates the importance of the "painting" and indirectly the importance of his subject. Within the painting Tyndall reveals the secret to success in business, the ability to pat one's head and rub one's stomach at the same time.

Tyndall's constructions are reminiscent of Red Groom's art work. Grooms and other artists burst on the scene in the early sixties when Abstraction and Minimalism were the leading movement in American art. Grooms reversed the prevailing wis-

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dom that less is more into a belief that more is not always enough.

Perhaps the most elaborate of Tyndall's pieces in this exhibition is "Juvenile Hell." As in "Everyone Loves a Clown," this work looks back to a less than pleasant memory of childhood. It is a three-part work. The main segment is in the form of a piano. On top is a small scene showing a young man playing a piano. A whip-wielding female—presumably the piano teacher—stands behind the boy, and a

skeleton pops out of the top of the small piano. In front of the larger piano is a stool with a rotating top, to the side is a small cutout figure of a man in a bow tie. His cartoon-style speech balloon says, "Heh, Heh, Heh, pull my finger."

When the finger is pulled lights are supposed to flash, skeletal arms reach down toward the keyboard.

Grooms offered up possibility that sound, movement, and image can be merged into one art work. Tyndall takes the possibilities offered by Grooms into different directions. While Tyndall's works have an initial sense of humor and irony, there is also an underlying air of anxiety, toward events in the past and probabilities for the future.

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