

Less is more in King Plow sculpture exhibit

By Jerry Cullum
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Formerly an unwieldy free-for-all, the King Plow Sculpture Show has shrunk to fit the new gallery. There are only 64 pieces by 33 Athens and Atlanta sculptors.

In this case, less is more: Curated by James Hull, this exhibition contains an extraordinary number of good works by younger sculptors and their mentors.

The first things viewers are likely to notice — they're hard to miss — are immense pieces by George Beasley and Curtis Patterson. But the overall work ranges from monumental to tiny, and each piece succeeds at its chosen scale. Nothing here seems like a maquette for something bigger.

Jane L.S. Harper, for example, presents small ceramic models of the laundry room that are more than just appealing miniatures. Both pieces show a woman, seemingly gone over the edge, curled up among the folded bath towels or lying covered with crumpled laundry.

Harper's work is both unsettling and funny. Phyllis Winchester's oddly proportioned little ceramic bas-relief of a room-scape with an overturned cup and saucer, agreeable at first glance, seems increasingly unnerving on reflection.

Other attractive tours de force include Jennifer Torres Rzetelny's graphite-coated floor piece featuring mysterious cloth-wrapped forms, and Nicolas Fra-



ser's simple but elegant sphere of waxed cardboard. Jonathan Hills's twin pillars of shoes painted white are among the more visually arresting items in the back gallery.

The exhibition seems to have a fair amount of the symbolically sexual, from Kelly Jo Stump's phallic "Tool" to Bill Paul's installation of photographs and objects reflecting on the male condition in the age of AIDS. Most of

the other works' references are so subtle as to elude all but the most determined Freudians or censors.

Clark Ashton's immense gateway or altarpiece, "It's Later Than You Think," features twisted versions of traditional allegorical figures, from lions to vultures, plus winged or cloaked human forms. The small differences make all the difference.

Shape and surface texture make a statement in Julian Helms's stone circle, accompanied by a 47-word title explaining its meaning.

REVIEW

Fourth Annual King Plow Sculpture Show

Noon-5 p.m. Tuesdays-Sundays. Through May 20. King Plow Arts Center, 887 W. Marietta St. N.W. 885-9933.

THE VERDICT

Most of these extremely varied sculptures deserve long, loving consideration.

Julian Helms' stone circle, with a 47-word title explaining its meaning, proves that carefully arranged stones truly are sculpture. (An ordinary pile of rocks, whatever its merits, usually isn't.) Here, the shape and surface texture of each stone count.

Fans of Michael Murrell, Kerry Moore, Barbara Rheingrover, E. Marshall Davis III and other established sculptors will find exceptionally fine signature pieces, plus a few significant departures from usual styles. Probably the most striking departure is Robert Clements's 14-foot-tall metal column topped by a large glass globe, a literally monumental piece parodying public memorials.

Inevitably, reviews of shows like this leave a great deal out. Fans of current sculpture will have many discoveries to make beyond the pieces discussed here.

Jerry Cullum, an associate editor of Art Papers, is a free-lance critic and poet.