

Art



Ironist Interior (2003); cast iron and steel

QUICK SKETCH

Ed Wilson at Paradigm Gallery

WHAT: "From the Inferno," recent sculpture by Ed Wilson, at Paradigm Gallery in Deep Ellum.

BACKGROUND: When Leslie and Lionel Maunz reopened this small space last fall, it drew notice by including two noted local artists in a group show: painter Michael Roque Collins and longtime assemblage specialist Chase Yarbrough. Now the gallery has its first big out-of-town catch, Houston sculptor Mr. Wilson, a mainstay in that city's art scene since the late 1980s. The Louisiana native has sporadically drawn national attention, but this is the first major display of his sand-cast iron objects in North Texas.

The 26 works in "From the Inferno" include three iron assemblages; most of the rest are individual copies of elements in those assemblages. The most notable piece, *Ironist Interior*, was constructed in response to 9-11 and was first displayed at Redbud Gallery in Houston earlier this year.

HOW IT LOOKS: *Ironist Interior* is a re-creation of the tiny apartment of a working-class Joe, and it takes up most of Paradigm's front gallery. It features life-size metal replicas of 68 individual objects, not including the fabricated steel wall panels, door frame (actually hollow steel rails) and other details. The tableau's dark monochromatic patina and weightiness, both physically and metaphorically,

relate to tragedy, death and reverence.

The objects — baseball mitt and ball, bowl of fruit, wooden chair and writing desk, work gloves, butt-filled ashtray — address the mundanity of life and the suddenness of catastrophe. A 20-pound ball cap and an umbrella hang from a hat rack, a pair of work boots lounge in a corner, a wine bottle with a candle as a cork sits on top of a curious slanted table. It's set up as if the tenant will return any minute, but we know he won't.

The two other assemblages are almost anticlimactic compared with *Ironist Interior*, but one is much more literal and controversial. *Don't Forget to Wave Your Flag* is a statement about the cost of American conflicts such as Iraq: Dual pedestals hold a platform on which a combat rifle, a picture of a fighter jet and a pile of human bones lean against a furled U.S. flag. The other conglomeration, *Still Life in Brown*, is as elegantly romantic as *Don't Forget* is unabashedly disturbing.

Other pieces include *George W. Dreams*, the casting of a painting of soldiers, helicopters and tanks; *Armored Toy*, an odd tanklike sculpture made from castings of a turtle shell and broom handle and a steel chain taken from heavy machinery; and *Ironic Tool #2*, a broom with a .357-caliber Magnum pistol stuck to the top of its handle.

DETAILS: On display through June 21 at the gallery, 2704

Don't Forget to Wave Your Flag
cast iron and steel

Commerce St. Hours: Thursdays thru noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment.
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