

Glass, wood, bronze craftsmanship highlighted at relocated Folliard Gallery

THIRD WARD newcomer Tory Folliard enticingly explores the interface between fine arts and applied crafts in "New Forms," a bizarre but beguiling group effort that holds forth through Oct. 18 at the Folliard Gallery, freshly relocated at 233 N. Milwaukee St.

High-quality workmanship is in abundant supply in the cast-glass sculptures of Janusz Walentynowicz, the inlaid, veggie-inspired furniture of Craig Nutt, the cast-bronze screens of Linda Rosenus Walsh and the curious, quasi-environmental pieces of Lib and Eric Cummings, who sign their work, simply, L.E. Cummings.

Of the group, Walentynowicz — born in Poland and trained in Denmark and the US — is the most riveting and intense. A friend and sometime associate of the Illinois-based painter and sculptor Nicholas Africano, he shares Africano's concern with the solitary figure, ruminating poetically on the human condition.

But Walentynowicz's craftsmanship, intricately layered and with an expressionistic touch, heightens the emotional clout and lends a distinctly personal signature.

By contrast, Nutt, a master

woodworker who transforms cucumbers into nuclear weapons in "Nuke/Cuke" and sends lethal-looking peppers aloft in "Flying Cayenne," is positively light-hearted, albeit socially minded.

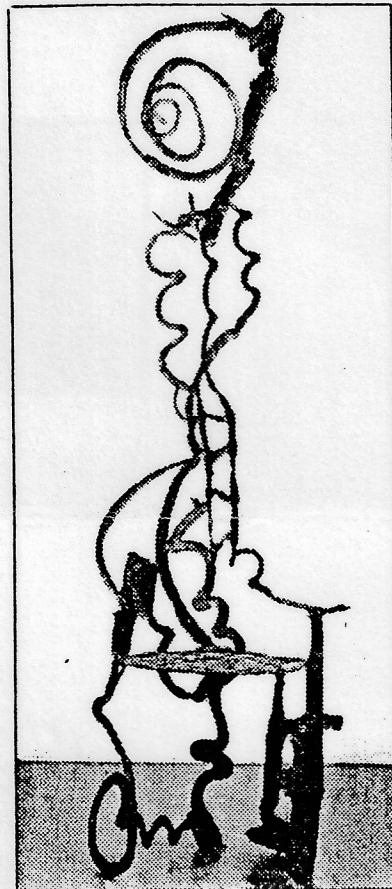
So, for that matter, is Walsh, whose lighter-than-air screens (sand-cast and welded, then given a brilliant patina) would honor any garden.

Of particular interest is a single subtle piece, entirely fashioned from wood, by Tom Eckert. Juxtaposing a knife and a piece of woman's underwear, this maple/linden creation, beautifully lacquered, contrasts softness and hardness, sharpness and vulnerability.

Foreshortened but totally persuasive, it is at once amusing and chilling — a good example of the sort of statement that can be made, in muted but telling terms, by the fine crafts.

Rounding out the show are diverse works by Ramona Audley, Christopher Berti, John Lewis, David Swanson and Russel Vogt. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. There is no admission charge.

— James Auer



LINDA ROSENIUS WALSH'S "Musical Chair: Cynthia," in bronze, is at the Folliard Gallery.