

Sculpture

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also a superb example of Edmondson's caryatid birdbaths simply titled *Birdbath*. Edmondson's use of female figures to support his birdbaths indicates a source of inspiration—the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition, which included a full-scale replica of the Parthenon (still a prominent feature in Nashville's Centennial Park) and adjacent pavilions such as the "Streets of Cairo." Clearly Edmondson assimilated form, structure, and image from a wide range of experiences before beginning his art career. He may not have had an academic education, but he was an educated man whose alertness to the possibilities of expression and formal and conceptual inventiveness transcended the limitations of his background.

Edmondson was the first African American artist to have an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Unfortunately his 1937 exhibition did not bring him the fame that his sculpture warranted. His work slid from public view and he died in poverty, nearly forgotten, his studio complex destroyed, his sculptures scattered. Until recently he was primarily known through the series of exceptional photographs that accompanied the exhibition. It is to Rusty Freeman's credit as curator that Edmondson's work is now receiving the accolades it deserves.

—Judith Page

Atlanta "Breadth"

Eyedrum Gallery

Socio-political and personal themes dominated "Breadth," a show that fêted the diversity of American sculpture from the Southeast. True to its name, the exhibition was an all-out feast. Atlanta-based sculptor Bill Spence organized the exuberant invitational, which filled the gallery before spilling out the front entrance, across the walkway, and into a nearby warehouse. From huge to hand-sized, the three-dimensional works by 43 artists largely involved studies in metal and stone, though not without

some serious flirtations involving kinetics, new media, motors, fire, and water.

A mixed bag of assemblage, installation, and straight-ahead sculpture occupied the main gallery, where David Isenhour's freshest work was the quiet standout. *Saturday A.M. 1976* brought new dimension to cartoons and comic books. Sanded ultra smooth and finished with auto paint, his wood carvings first turned a simple drip into an iconic shape, then captured tongues, antennae, and other body parts of imaginary creatures.

Dan Franke's *Goes So Fast* didn't actually move. His elliptical metal-framed sculpture was animated by a cycle of flashing lights and sound. Huckleberry Starnes projected his self-portrait into a small action figure, *Wood Shop Huck*, complete with tools and molded plastic packaging. In contrast, *Kenosis: The False Meet of Empty* objectified Hitler's macho zeitgeist. Robert Cheatham engaged viewers in a blow-your-mind game that involved a monitor playing *Triumph of the Will*, an audio suite of anthems, a coffin-sized box, an erect carved wooden penis, and a blackboard marked with philosophical rants.

Hormuz Minina used the narrow hall-like project room to good effect with a curiously uneasy installation. On entering the completely darkened space, the viewer definitely felt *Detached From* reality. Patterned light at the far end of a long slender tube suspended diagonally from just below shoulder height toward the ceiling com-



Above: Monika van Schellenbeck, *Fluff-O-Matic*, 2002. Pink fluff and steel, 8 x 6 ft. **Below:** David Isenhour, *Saturday A.M. 1976*, 2002. Carved wood and paint, each part 7 in. diameter.

pelled one to hunch down and peer up inside. A red light cast on the mouth of the cylinder colored the thin stream of water that ran down inside and out into a metal basin below. The allusion to blood-letting became undeniable when the tiny images in that fascinating kaleidoscope were discovered to be multi-hued transmutations of nuclear explosions.

Fire and the popping sounds of propane charged the opening and closing nights of "Breadth" with positive energy. Jeff Loy's welded steel fantasies gurgled light and heat. Charley Smith and Grady Cousins constructed mobile infernos that they wheeled through the crowd. But Monica van Schellenbeck's laugh-out-loud *Fluff-O-Matic* stole the show. Situated in the rougher ware-

house space among the most monstrous works, her motorized sculpture was an irresistibly funny hunk of girl power. Fuzzy hot pink "tentacles" attached to a huge drum revolved with a crazy, lopsided rhythmic beat, evoking the hypnotic power of television or clothes tossing in a dryer, though on the scale of a car wash.

Magnitude and plenitude being key, the biggest really did get most of the attention. David Keating touted his über ego in *Make a Name for Yourself*, a sky-high totem pole burnished with the artist's name. Zachary Coffin's monumental *Prayer Wheel* translated the idea of spiritual strength into an almost unfathomable physicality. Two massive boulders hanging off a metal T were perfectly balanced, spinning on a single point.

