



COURTESY PHOTO

Grady Kimsey's "A Lingerin' Arrival" is on view at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art in Sarasota.

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Grady Kimsey's evocative figures display layers of reference, meaning

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SARASOTA — Masked characters making mercurial entrances and exits upon the silent stage of the imagination, Grady Kimsey's figurative mixed-media sculptures are marionettes liberated from their strings.

They stand before us, still tied to some unseen deity conjured up in the space between them and the viewer, like actors materialized from the waking minutes of a troubling dream.

Kimsey's sculptures fuse the mystery of primitive fetish objects with the interior psychological tensions of Surrealism. They are exotic and elusive spirits, suggesting the flux and imprecision of self-identity, creating a mood enhanced by the recognition that some figures have more than one face.

The work raises questions about the degree of truth and illusion in recalled dreams, and the distances between external and internal realizations of the self — a chasm widening in the complex soul of modern man.

REVIEW

**Grady Kimsey
and Anthony Rice**

Mixed-media figurative sculpture and paintings. Today through April 6 at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art, Mira Mar Gallery, 1284 N. Palm Ave., Sarasota. Call 366-2093.

Kimsey's figures also evoke layered references to doll folklore.

Dolls have been used as fertility objects since the dawn of civilization. In the modern world, for example, the bride-and-groom figurines on a wedding cake fulfill this ancient tradition. Dolls have also been used in association with magic, as charms for healing or warding off evil. Kimsey's sculptures carry all these associations within the subliminal texture of his creations.

And because of the nuances

of his constructions, he moves them out of the understanding of doll-making and into that of art.

In "A Lingerin' Arrival," an orange, upward-looking figure appears to address an unseen force. Its left hand holds a tall staff surmounted by a pennant. The erect body, dressed in a black tunic beneath a cloak of tattered strips of multi-colored cloth, stands upon a six-wheeled gray/green chariot. At the front of the chariot is an insect-like form with folded wings.

The mood of the sculpture implies incantations and telluric mysteries. The costuming suggests the role of a shaman or acolyte in an ancient and secret ceremony.

In the same exhibit are new acrylic paintings by Anthony Rice. Colorful evocations of the primitive soul alive in modern man, Rice's paintings are an appropriate match to Kimsey's sculpture. Both artists address similar issues of our interior selves from viewpoints within near-parallel aesthetic universes, where both go searching for the essence of the primal within us all.