

Objects create visual poetry

By KEVIN COSTELLO
CORRESPONDENT

Found-object assemblage, like poetry, depends on allusion to draw viewers into its orbit of veiled references.

Discarded bric-a-brac, such as parts of broken dolls, old bedsprings, pieces of wood and cloth are the materials for such sculptures, reconfigured into strange new inventions.

"Opposites Attract," a new exhibit at Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art, features such an exhibit by Dee Hood, a faculty member of the Ringling College of Art and Design.

Hood's sculptures are particularly refreshing in their lightness of touch and inventiveness, combining whimsy with physical and intellectual balance.

"There is something in the work that has both mystery and a sense of playfulness," she said.

Hood draws inspiration from the famous nail-fetish sculptures of the Bakongo from the Congo River Basin, who tap nails into their figures with the hope that they will activate the life force of the sculpture. "I have always liked seeing African sculpture ... the way they are put together — often crudely," she said.

She is also interested in the work of Joseph Cornell, one of the most renowned American assemblage artists.

"I pick things up in the street or in the woods," she said. "I enjoy finding discarded things



"BITE IT"

COURTESY PHOTO

[VISUAL ART]

Opposites Attract

Through Dec. 1. Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art, 556 S. Pineapple Ave., Sarasota. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Free admission. 366-2093; miramararts.com.

and giving them new life."

A good example of this approach is "Out There," a construction measuring about 3' feet tall.

The piece consists of a concrete head from a Hindu sculpture dangling in the air at the

end of a metal rod connected to a spring and mounted on a steel rectangular frame. The frame stands vertically, decorated with eight mattress springs.

Below this arrangement, a piece of rectangular green metal attaches to a circular piece of steel, with the whole thing mounted on a block of wood for stability.

As a poet does with words, Hood builds her objects spontaneously without drawings, intuitively arranging her miscellaneous materials.

Her intent is to give viewers "a spiritual resonance along with humor and wackiness" and to feel "totally energized by the work."