

'Obama-rama'

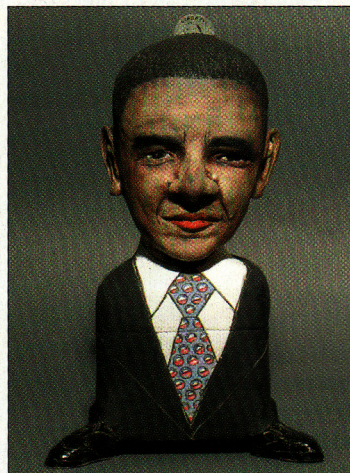
Projects

No other president in memory has inspired such a groundswell of art production as Barack Obama has. Recognizing this, painter Frank Hyder and print-maker Allan L. Edmunds came up with the idea for this artistic celebration of the country's new leader. There was no hectoring or didacticism in the 29 contributions here, which represented the president favorably or critiqued politics only with a broad brush.

Hyder's own *Fifty States of Obama* (2009), a big grid of small black-and-white portraits all based on a single photograph, shows that people see what they want to see in the man: a Lincoln look-alike, a demon, or just a guy with big ears. Cheryl Harper's sculptures, *Count on Me Obama Bank* and *Hillary Sphinx 2* (both 2008), were made in the style of old-fashioned caricature stoneware. Hillary is crafted as half-politico, half-donkey, with a yellow pump on one foot and a hoof in place of the other. Tom Judd's kinetic sculpture *Yes We Can Obama* (2009) waves woodenly and wears a resolute, painted smile.

Even Jim Brossy's large assemblage *No Imperialism* (2009), with its stenciled letters declaring "no war torture imperialism" like a no-trespassing sign, expresses a measure of patriotism through the soldier raising a flag. Henry Bermudez's *Obamaobama* (2009), a hanging of interwoven strips with repeating letters, was the most abstracted work in the show and also one of the most visually arresting.

Roberta Fallon and Libby Rosof, well-known locally for their art blog, contributed multiple interrelated works, including a sort of revival of the fanzine in the form of a witty photocopied booklet titled *Obama OK* (2009). The same tone of enthusiasm carried through



Cheryl Harper, *Count on Me Obama Bank*, 2008, stoneware and acrylic paint, 15" x 8½" x 9".

Projects

James Dupree's glittering collage, which unabashedly revels in what many feel is a redemptive moment in American history.

—Robin Rice