

## Patrick LoCicero and Gay Cioffi

I'm not sure I "get" any larger meaning from Patrick LoCicero's distinctive oil-and-collage artworks. But they sure are decorative. Most pieces by the Seattle-based artist feature a smattering of small, painted objects (toys, pillows, baseball gloves) against a background collage of varnished papers (such as Sears catalogs and book pages). Some of his works suggest the late-19th-century *trompe l'oeil* of William Michael Harnett and John F. Peto. Others have visual structures that recall the suprematist abstractions of the '20s or the incongruous dreamscapes of their surrealist successors. Still other LoCiceros isolate objects such as hats in deadpan style, perhaps in homage to Magritte. His most striking works, however, are the compositions made from long, thin, vertical strips of old paper (*Umbrellas* is pictured); from a distance, they emulate the texture of tree bark, but up close, their tiny printed details emerge. An adjoining room at the Ralls Collection features works by D.C.-based photographer Gay Cioffi, who specializes in planar images of urban walls, doors, windows, and fences. Most of them owe a debt to Minor White's 1957 masterpiece *The Three Thirds*—a horizontal photograph of three spooky yet harmonious windows—but Cioffi's versions are an uneven lot. Her best works capture the supple texture of stucco, the deep shades of rusty metal, and the overlapping complexities of layered chain-link fence—not as pretty as LoCicero, but visually interesting nonetheless. LoCicero's and Cioffi's works are on view from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday (except from Wednesday, Aug. 15, to Friday, Aug. 17, when the gallery will be closed), to Friday, Aug. 31, at the Ralls Collection, 1516 31st St. NW. Free. (202) 342-1754. (Louis Jacobson)

