

# ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Christobal Perez photos / Chronicle

# Iron Will



Artist's metal sculpture is his response to 'horror of Sept. 11'

**Top:** Sculptor Ed Wilson's room-size installation *Ironist Interior* comprises 68 separate pieces in steel and iron created over 15 months. It is on view at Redbud Gallery through Feb. 2.

**Left:** A detail from Wilson's *Ironist Interior* features a life-size glove, softball

By **PATRICIA C. JOHNSON**

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**P**ICTURE the interior of a room in a small cabin. Its walls are unequal parallelograms; the window is tilted. It is completely furnished, and evidence of habitation is everywhere. There is a table with its drawer agape to reveal a softball, a mitt and a gun. A bundle of letters, an ashtray, a telephone and a lamp sit on its surface. Books on a shelf lean into each other near a stack of cardboard boxes. A broom stands in one corner, an umbrella hangs from a hook and small framed pictures hang on walls. The door is made of eight decorated panels.

Now imagine all this life-size and in iron and steel. You still will not be prepared for the presence of Ed Wilson's tableau.

Fifteen months in the making, *Ironist Interior* comprises 68 objects cast, forged, fabricated, burnished and patinaed to subtle, monotonal coherence and exceptional detail. It's part of *Ed Wilson: From the Inferno*, on view at the Redbud Gallery through Feb. 2.

Wilson, born in Louisiana in 1953, got a master's degree in art from the University of Houston and has exhibited in a variety of venues, such as the McAllen International Museum in 1999 and Artscan Gallery, which held a solo exhibit of his work two years ago.

Working exclusively with metal, Wilson combines assemblage with fabrication. The skillful meld of techniques results in objects that faithfully reproduce or re-create their nature. Shotguns, work gloves and a human skull are part of the inventory. Social and political commentary, a firm antiwar stance, inform their existence.

"I'm concerned with issues other than aesthetic ones," Wilson says. "But sometimes, I do things just because they're beautiful."

He conceived of the title *Ironist Interior* to suggest not only the medium and the one who works with it, but also the irony of something beautiful born of tragedy.

The dark tones of the materials suggest charring, and the mise-en-

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