



Who's been busting artist Scott Wayne Indiana's broncos?

Horse Broken

On a recent Monday morning, a neatly attired posse—two men, one woman—sidled up to the curb in front of Jackpot Recording Studio on SE Morrison St. They hitched up a six-inch plastic horse to an iron ring embedded in the sidewalk, topped it with a toy cavalryman and moseyed off.

Witness Gene Hall was flummoxed. “I was too distracted by the horse to notice much about the people,” he says. “But they obviously knew what they were doing.”

This plastic palomino is just one of a host of tiny equines whose withers have been tethered in front of record stores, vintage clothing boutiques and hipster watering holes around town in recent months, a movement spurred by artist Scott Wayne Indiana’s aptly named Horse Project (www.39forks.com).

“Urban environments have always been inspirational for me, not for the structures and crowds, but for the details that go unnoticed,” explains Indiana. “The horses are an effort to tell people, ‘Pause now and then. Take a look around. What are you missing?’”

The Horse Project has had no trouble wrangling volunteers: By early July, self-appointed ranch hands had installed and documented some 200 of the wee steeds. “I would like for kids and families to adopt rings near them and look after the horses throughout the year,” says Indi-

ana. “This is already happening in a lot of neighborhoods.”

Some horses have indeed gotten the 4-H treatment—passersby have provided them with hankie-sized blankets, plastic riders and miniature feed buckets. But even as citizens began tending their charges, rustlers and outlaws were leaving their own sinister brand.

Several horses have disappeared, and some have even been defaced. Joseph Chamberlain of Pix Pâtisserie bemoans

Requiem for a tiny, decapitated gray gelding

the decapitation of the pastry shop’s gunmetal-gray gelding. “A lot of us were actually really sad. We wondered who could do such a thing.”

Adam Lister, at Dot’s Café, is feeling similarly choked up over a purloined pony. “Every time I came out here, I’d stand it up on its little feet. It’s very sad that we don’t have it anymore.”

Perhaps, of course, this vandalism is a public art project of its own—a reminder that art is a never-ending process of setting up and tearing down. And smashing into tiny bits and bridles.

Or not, speculates Dot’s Fred Fry. “Someone probably backed over it in a Humvee or something.” —Anne Adams