

Art

Several of the works, however, are too real to be false.

Exhibition goes with the faux

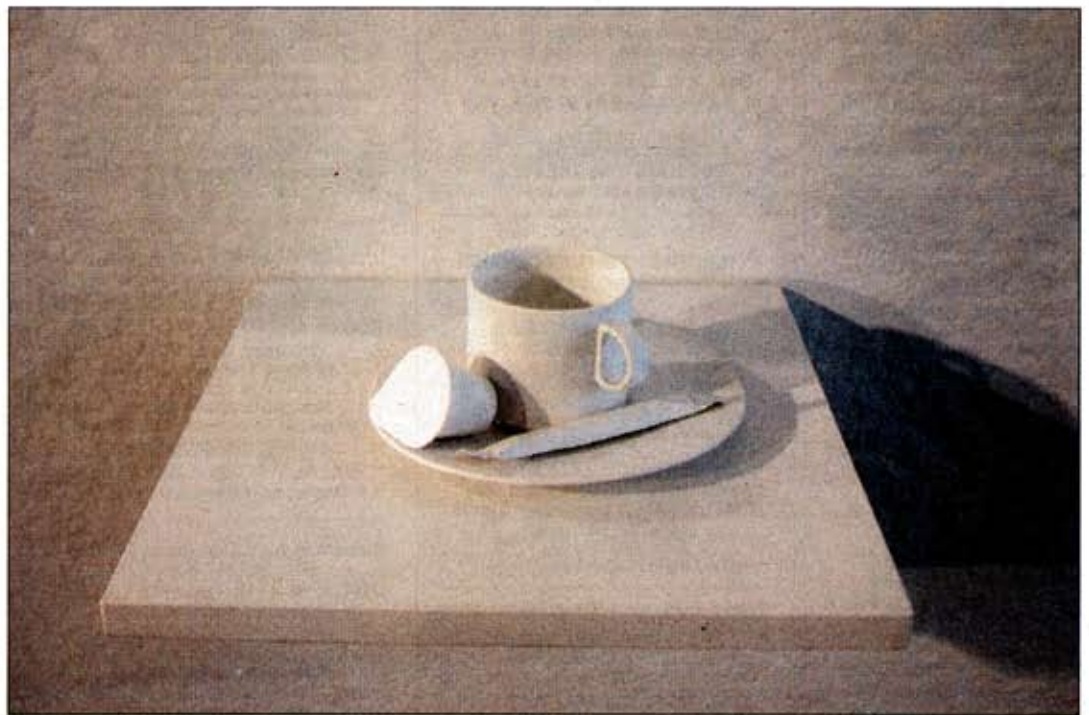
By Edith Newhall
FOR THE INQUIRER

For all its humor, "Faux Show" would be even better if it had stuck more closely to its theme. Only 14 of the show's 20 artists addressed the concept of imitation or fakeness.

I'm still puzzled by the inclusion of Steven Wise's two small paintings of numbers, Charles Hobbs' carved wood snake, and Merrilee Challiss' quiltlike, stitched-together drawings (created with Chris Lawson and Andrea Paschal). The latter two borrow from American craft traditions, certainly, but you'd never think faux.

The most sophisticated of the indisputably faux-minded contributions include Candy Depew's bone-china skull, shimmering with gold luster and crystals, Rain Harris' rococo confection of ceramic curlicues and wallpaper, Virgil Marti's trompe l'oeil beer-can wallpaper, M. Ho's large "copper" penny, and Joseph Hu's more quietly fake cardboard espresso cup and saucer — plus an ersatz sugar packet and cream container.

Paul Swenbeck's flowerlike wire-and-Plexiglas piece, which could pass for a ceiling



Joseph Hu's painted cardboard "Segafredo" is among the trompe l'oeil pieces in "Faux Show."

fan, or a '60s light fixture, or a combination of both (it isn't functional), Roberta Fallon's fictional Philadelphia Weekly review of "Faux," and Jane Irish's drawing *Free Speech* take a more abstract, and ultimately more satisfying ap-

proach to faux.

Chris Vecchio's sneaky, motion-activated sound piece emitting the startling noises of breaking glass, barking dogs, burping, and 333 other sounds, is, of course, the crowd pleaser. Imagine a faux Tony Oursler,

minus the visual effects.

Esther M. Klein Gallery at the Science Center, 3600 Market St., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays. Through Dec. 30. 215-966-6188 or www.kleinartgallery.org.