

Lagniappe

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Taplin taps into life force with bronze sculptures

By **CHRIS WADDINGTON**

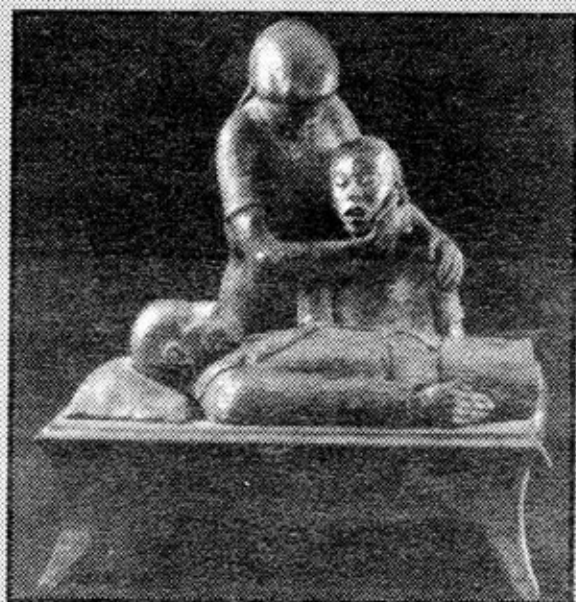
Art critic

Robert Taplin's figurative sculptures are about the size of action toys — but you needn't be a child to bring them to life. The sculptor himself has supplied that mysterious quality through careful attention to pose and by focusing on those decisive moments when character is revealed. As a consequence, his exhibit of 10 small bronzes at Arthur Roger Gallery, 432 Julia St., is one of the bigger events of the season.

Taplin's range is especially remarkable. In "Deranged Father (The Child was Saved)," he frames a tabloid moment as handily as any photojournalist, capturing the animal rage of a man thrusting halfway out a window with a knife in one hand, a dangling child in the other.

An intimate, but decidedly gothic mood pervades "Punch and Susan." Here a monstrous puppet seems to grow from a woman's back, — lover, parasite or the beast within — pressing his cheek against that of his partner.

The highlight of the exhibit is "Burn" a three figure com-



Robert Taplin's 'Burn,' appears in a show of his table top bronzes at Arthur Roger Gallery, 432 Julia St.

position that captures the agony of two mourners as they wait with a corpse layed out for a wake.

Taplin has all the details right in this piece — from the comforting embrace offered by one mourner, to the truncated form of the corpse, lopped off at mid-thigh and squeezed into the sculpture's framing vessel.

That double amputation is not simply one last indignity for the deceased, but a potent emblem of the shock felt by survivors when a loved one is cut down in mid-course. (Through Saturday.)