

Come to **FUN ISLAND** a fantastic get-away destination. You'll find everything for everyone. Follow the beltway to the districts of finance, industry, construction, monuments, royal and sacred sites.

Don't miss the major attractions:

THE PRINCE

The earliest construction on the island, he is pure white bread, baked in a fabric cone and dressed in a luxurious organza undergarment with outer petals of blue and gold satin brocade. Admire him on his regal purple pillow throne resting securely on a cake plate.

BUBBLE

A pink cluster of bread bubbles bonded with modeling paste and corn starch, each with the handwritten names of the artist's favorite places - Barrow, Leiden, Pangandaran . . . Mounted on castors, it travels easily. If you like this, you'll also enjoy a visit to the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York to see **Nature Study** by Louise Bourgeois.

POET

The tallest structure on the island, the Poet spews a cloud of polyester smoke through a recycled funnel and a hand knit sleeve. He dominates the industrial zone where you may notice cargo deliveries of sewing thread, coal and incense around the loading docks of the Styrofoam packing base.

POD

You'll find many of the construction boys parked in the vicinity of Pearls and Pod. A straight-forward building of shag rug cut and sewn into a large triangular seed head. Pod is mounted simply on a gold plate.

SNAKE

For a taste of the exotic, visit Snake, a sinuous, sensual form rising from a funnel wrapped in imported Québécois deerskin. A flaming tongue of human hair darts out of the flexible spout-neck bound in Atlantic cod skin. He hoards collected candle stumps in a wooden bowl turned on a lathe by the artist herself.

BUDDHA

Serene, the beeswax Buddha encrusted with chocolate kisses is poised on a lovingly built wood scaffold atop an easily accessible round platform of immaculately laminated wood from Vietnam via Ikea. Don't miss other sacred sites near by: Mosque, Ear and Little Drop.

QUEEN

The post-Martha Stewart aesthetic of the design is impressive. Frozen whole wheat buns rose through five brass rings to produce an incredible number of breasts. Spearheaded through the heart with bamboo skewers, the Queen has the quality of a St. Sebastiana.

FUN ISLAND is a stop-over in a larger universe. You can see a netherworld in its shadow, a satellite in its orbit, and offshore, a lighthouse tower of colourful, Belgian cakes.



This is a Stride Gallery brochure written by Katherine Ylitalo who has been chosen by the artist because of her particular interest in the project. These publications provide regular opportunities for diverse writers to publish work that furthers critical discourse about contemporary art. A version of this text is available with translation into French by Karine Raynor.

Director: Anthea Black

Publication design: M.N. Hutchinson

all images courtesy of the artist



Stride Gallery is funded in part by the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, the Canada Council for the Arts program and operations assistance for Artist-Run Centres, the Calgary Region Arts Foundation and the generous support of the Calgary community.

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gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 5

exhibition dates: January 9 – February 7, 2004

ISBN: 0-921132-47-6



the Stride Gallery

FUN ISLAND

RÉBECCA BOURGAULT

January 9 - February 7, 2004
Reception: Friday, January 9 at 8

FUN ISLAND

Rébecca Bourgault is from the third generation in a proud family legacy of woodcarvers living in St-Jean-Port-Joli, Québec. As a girl, she was excluded from the woodshop, but now she extracts materials from the kitchen, the sewing room, the junk pile, the parts department, the shop, the studio and stores, with the enquiring mind of a scientist and a poet's instinct for metaphor. In preparation for *Fun Island*, she bakes bread and deftly assembles her materials, sometimes playfully, until each sculpture takes on an enchanted character.

In the fall of 2001, she made the first stupa, and now there are more than twenty. The idea for their form was inspired by Buddhist stupas, the original mountain-like architecture of funerary repositories, the later structures that were built not to enter, but to circumambulate in prayer, and the more modern intimate, domestic shrines of Tibet. In the way that poets find a form that best suits their voice, Bourgault has found a form in the stupas that can give shape to biography, emotion and her fascination with faith.

Bourgault has an abiding interest in the juxtaposition of traditional religious rituals, especially the Catholicism of her childhood, with contemporary beliefs and aspirations. *Credo*, 1993, is made of three candle altars each dedicated to a typical Canadian relationship with the natural environment: "recreation," "extraction" and "planification." *Offerratorio*, 1993, offers a collection of small boxes, each with one of Alberta's natural resources such as tar sands, sulphur, grains, and coal. *We Had a Vision* is a 1994 reworking of the 14 Stations of the Cross and *There is Nothing Outside*, 2000, inspired by Timothy Findlay's character, Mrs. Noah, is a stain glass painting with a gold-leafed, skeletal boat.

She follows her curiosity with enthusiasm, and a spark of interest in Buddhism led to meditation, T'ai Chi, a survey course on Eastern

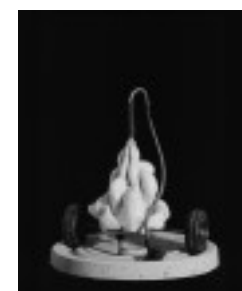
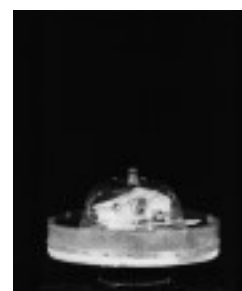
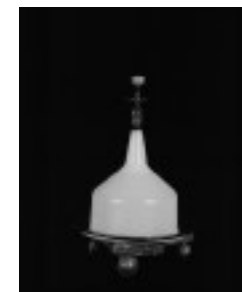
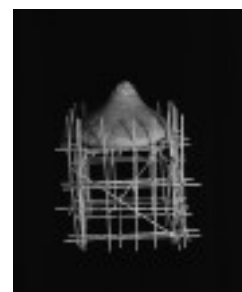
religions, and research about Calgary artist and monk, Ron (Gyo-Zo) Spickett. In the process, she found visual inspiration in a beautiful book of photographs of Buddhas in Thailand, and she discovered the Persian mystic, Rumi (1207-73). One of his poems, translated by the American writer, Coleman Barks, is written on her wall:

*Outside, the freezing desert night.
This other night inside grows warm, kindling.
Let the landscape be covered with thorny crust.
We have a soft garden here.
The continents blasted,
Cities and little towns, everything
Becomes a scorched blackened ball.
The news we hear is full of grief for that future,
But the real news inside here
Is there's no news at all.*

Rumi's teachings led to an understanding of the spinning nature of the world, and the dance of the whirling dervishes. Bourgault folds her identification with his ideas and her own experience as a traveler into this piece. In the last eight years, she has driven over 300,000 kilometers as a travel guide reporter. Although that job seems very different than that of making art, Bourgault brings the spirit of a traveler and a cultural interpreter to both. *Edge City Tours*, 2003, a collaborative work with Gregg Casselman, documents the spread of Calgary's new communities and provides a guide book to the city's perimeter. *Fun City* invites you to another realm.

The stupas are assembled on a slowly turning, round table. More than 300 mini-vehicles circumnavigate the crowded, Disneyesque city and park around the temples, monuments and shrines. Stand-ins for people, they are overwhelming in numbers, neutral in colour, and come in every kind of car and truck you can imagine. Traffic is at a standstill, but the island keeps spinning, and when you visit, there will be room.

Katherine Ylitalo, 2003



Karine Raynor completed her B.A. in Art History and Visual Arts at the Université de Montréal in 1997 and received her M.A. in Museum Studies from the Université de Montréal and the UQAM in 2003. An artist and a cultural worker, she was a curatorial intern at the Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff, has worked for Le Mois de la Photo, Montréal and more recently has collaborated to projects for the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Katherine Ylitalo received her M.A. from Stanford University in 1973. She has thirty years experience as a museum professional, educator, artist, writer and most recently, horticulturalist. As a free-lance curator, she has worked on projects for the MacKenzie and Rosemont Galleries in Regina, the Walter Phillips Gallery in Banff, and the Art Gallery of Peterborough. Her most recent magazine contributions have been to *Canadian Interior* and *Alberta Gardener*.

Rébecca Bourgault received a B.F.A. from Concordia University in 1990 and completed her M.F.A. at the University of Calgary in 1994. She currently teaches at the Alberta College of Art and Design as well as Mount Royal College in Calgary. Rébecca also works as a part-time tourism editor for the American and Canadian Automobile Association.

