

Left: Paul Arensmeyer, *Nevada*, 2004. Mixed media, 12 x 7 x 4 in. Below: Daniel Corbeil, *Landscape under the Greenhouse Effect*, 2004. Mixed media, installation view.

but also in their titles and his written statements. His constructions, he notes, come from what he feels and how that relates to what he sees in the world around him. In his words, they are "about buildings and food and other things," which accounts for the show's title, "More Songs About Buildings and Food," also the title of a 1978 Talking Heads' album. "The tunes are a little different as are the lyrics," he writes, "but they're basically sung in the same voice."

—Lois Allan

Montreal, Canada

Daniel Corbeil

CIRCA

Daniel Corbeil's installation *Landscape under the Greenhouse Effect* looked like a lab experiment in progress. Its main feature resembled an incubation device, similar to what one might find in a hospital. The patient inside the tent, which had a kettle underneath to create humidity, was none other than a miniature landscape. During the course of the show, the ice cream that covered the upper peaks of the somewhat mountain-

ous landscape melted, simulating the effects of global warming in miniature.

For all the inherent irony and comical farce that accompanied this show, Corbeil communicated the ridiculous character of consumer capitalism's vision of nature. Is the landscape merely a construct? Will our future descendants be suffering as a result of our excess? Postmodernists would do well to examine their own constructs when the physical limits of nature are pressed upon by transformation and exploitation.

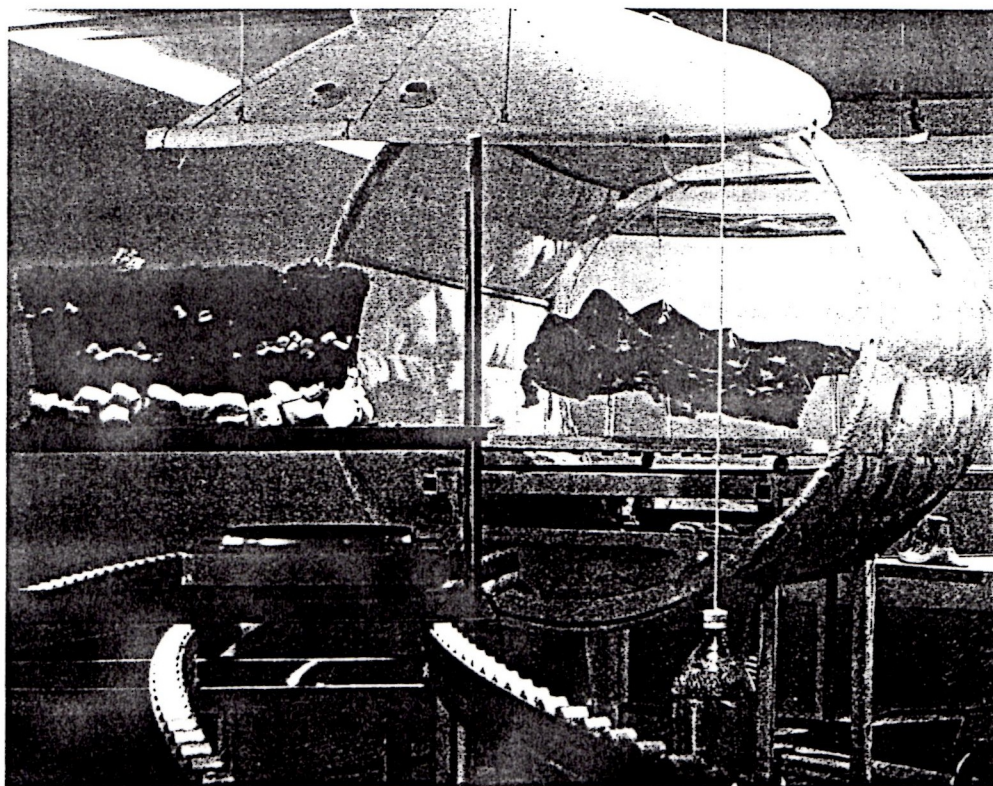
Corbeil was at his exhibition almost every day, wearing a lab coat and tinkering with his display elements like some mad professor or technician. The incompleteness of his sculpture-cum-installation was, in fact, its main attraction, since it did not arrive

at a conclusion. This quasi-scientific set-up made viewers curious, for there was no decisive statement even though global warming was a touchstone for the show. In the Arctic, where permafrost meltdown has affected housing, water tables, highways, and airports, global warming is not a concept, it is a reality of daily life.

In another part of the exhibition, Corbeil transported various sketches, notes, and envelopes from his disorderly atelier and placed them on a wall, next to a series of didactic chalk sketches vaguely reminiscent of Joseph Beuys. In one place, viewers could sit and look through a camera lens to see another synthetic, wholly artificial landscape whose blue sky was just a colored backdrop. The clouds had been made of whipped cream. Like some of Corbeil's earlier narrative projects, notably a low-tech virtual landscape that viewers experienced while wearing head-gear designed with a simple mirror and eyeglasses and works that investigated abandoned technologies like dirigibles, this show

drew an audience that asked questions about the various bits and pieces of gear, the set-up scenarios, and the data traces. What was the ultimate purpose of this brand of unbranded art? There is nothing at all objective about Corbeil's scenario. His quasi-scientism directs us to consider the irrational nature of our need to measure and quantify all aspects of daily life, the deteriorating global environment and ourselves included.

"Landscape under the Greenhouse Effect" suggested that while we take little direct action in our personal lives to improve the causes of this pollution, it will nevertheless change how we must deal with reality. Corbeil uses the logic of display but removes any way for us to label or quantify his incomplete, informal brand of art. His enactment is the very opposite of Guillaume Bijl's shopfront scenarios and window displays, which were formal, promotional, and absent of any personal content. Corbeil's didactic informality is refreshing. It makes you think



BOTTOM: MARIE-CLAUDE VALLÉFRANÇOIS

that his work may not be art as we may have labeled it in the past, which makes it all the more an art of our era.

—John K. Grande

North Bay, Ontario, Canada
"Ice Follies"

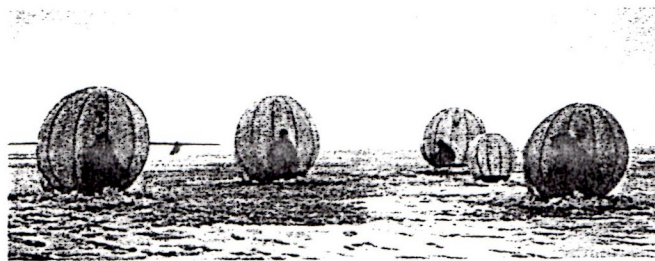
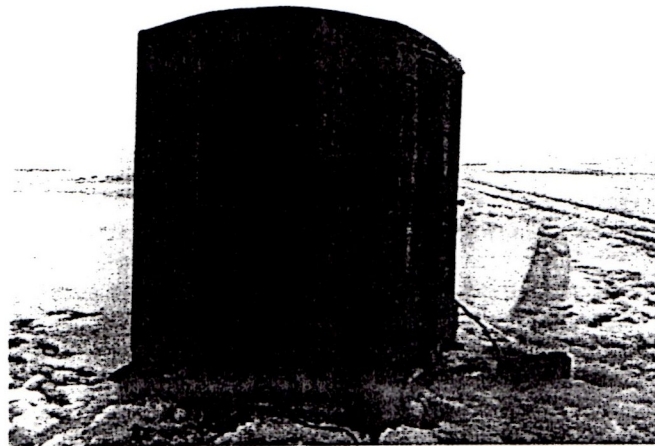
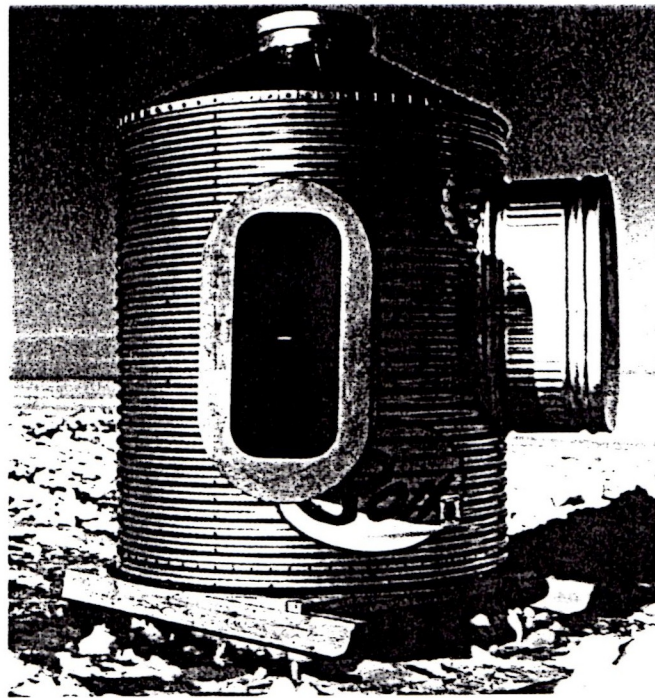
W.K.P. Kennedy Gallery

If you live near a lake that freezes over in the winter, you will undoubtedly have seen or even experienced the ice shack, that wooden, one-room shed intended to afford some protection from the elements while one spends the day fishing through a hole in the ice. They vary in size and degree of interior amenities (the ice shacks, I mean), but the basic principle behind this portable little bit of homespun architecture has remained essentially unchanged over the course of generations.

It's no wonder, then, that someone would eventually recognize the ubiquitous ice shack and the subculture of which it is a part as fertile ground for cultural and aesthetic inquiry. Two hundred miles north of Toronto out on the frozen expanse of a large lake in northern Ontario, it was just so. "Ice Follies: Seven Sculptural Works on a Frozen Lake" brought together seven artists from across Ontario whose work engaged the idea of such ice-bound architecture.

The best known of the group is Toronto-based Kim Adams. *Minnow Lure* (2004) was well in keeping with his trademark use of commercially available components, such as pre-manufactured metal sheds, as key sculptural elements. Adams reworked a small metal farm silo—essentially a corrugated steel tube with peaked roof—by adding a couple of windows, a door (and even a screen door), and two built-in plastic seats for added comfort during the long hours waiting for the fish to bite. And for an added dash of urban paranoia, he even included peep holes to help keep an eye on whatever might be coming for you across the ice.

In his *Fishing for Meaning*, North Bay sculptor Dan Elzinga trans-



formed a working ice shack—a rustic old thing of decaying wood and tar paper—into a kind of oversized Joseph Cornell box, filling its interior with objects ranging from wooden fish to wall maps detailing the lake, to the miscellaneous accouterments of this winter lifestyle. Viewable (in a theatrical sort of way) only from the outside through a window, Elzinga's diorama-like arrangement of things made for a cogent argument in

favor of recognizing the ice fishing subculture and its artifacts as part and parcel of the folk art genre.

Seen from a distance, Swiss-born artist Ernest Daetwyler's *Ice Bubbles* resembled just that: a series of five transparent spheres resting lightly on the ice, seemingly impervious to the winds constantly sweeping across the wide expanse of lake. Close inspection revealed them to be composed of nothing more than sheets of ordi-

Top to bottom: Kim Adams, *Minnow Lure*, 2004. Corrugated steel and mixed media, 10 x 6 ft. diameter. Dan Elzinga, *Fishing for Meaning*, 2004. Vintage ice fishing hut, glass and wood sculptures, found objects, electronics, and sound, 6 x 8 x 7 ft. Ernest Daetwyler, *Ice Bubbles*, 2004. Bubble wrap and mixed media, 5 spheres, 3–7 ft. diameter.

nary bubble wrap given spherical shape courtesy of stiff wire ribs. The bubbles ranged in size from ones that might accommodate a small child to others large enough for an adult to enter and sit on the interior wooden platforms that anchored the works firmly into the ice. Hung within each work was a small mobile that constituted Daetwyler's quirky take on a dream-catcher, an aboriginal artifact of feathers, beads, and lacing woven onto a ring and meant to hang in a window and trap a child's bad dreams. These versions, however, were made from—what else?—fishing lures, plastic worms, and hooks, hanging here, perhaps, to ensnare the nightmare of the big one that got away or, better yet, simply to hold us here and dream different dreams of ice and snow.

—Gil McElroy

Toronto, Canada

Michel Goulet

Christopher Cutts Gallery

In "A Round, a World," celebrated Montreal sculptor Michel Goulet exhibited work that captures the simultaneity and spirit of the information age. Playful and inventive, this show featured a circular sculpture installation titled *Circus* and several large-scale digital prints. Commonplace objects are juxtaposed and manipulated in Goulet's work and then modified in an effort to subvert their original function and initiate a new sequence of events. The objects are deconstructed and reconstructed vis-à-vis the imagination to emphasize the process of seeing. Paradoxical and anomalous, these hybrid constructions are conun-