



"The Land of Cockaigne" by Mimi Oka and Doug Fitch

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Provocative DBCC exhibit
piques the mind, but won't
whet the appetite

food for thought

"Taken for Looks" can be seen through Sept. 1 at the Southeast Museum of Photography at Daytona Beach Community College. Summer hours are 1-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Admission is free. (The museum will be closed for summer recess July 31-Aug. 13.) A "Meet the Curator" program is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. on Aug. 30. Sarah Tanguy will speak at 7:00 p.m.



Sarah Tanguy

By Susan L. Wright

It may not be immediately obvious that this summer's exhibit at the Southeast Museum of Photography, "Taken For Looks," is about food.

The photos have also been selected as a commentary on the current trend to blur the boundaries between categories of photography and art that were once rigidly defined, according to the exhibit's guest curator, Sarah Tanguy.

Tanguy is an independent curator and art critic who, among other distinctions, is the consulting curator for the Embassies in Art program in Washington, D.C. In an unusually high profile career, she's put together hundreds of exhibits ranging from "Tools As Art" for a hardware store chain to "Sweet Tooth" for the American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts in Napa, California.

She's married to Pulitzer prize-winning Washington Post photographer Lucian Perkins and the couple give the kind of parties that rate a photo spread in

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Washington Life Magazine, which chronicles social doings in the nation's capital.

Tanguy allows that "Taken for Looks" is a very different kind of exhibit than those she puts together for the Art in Embassies program, which puts American art in U.S. embassies around the world. The exhibits she creates for the embassies are designed to present a positive view of America to other nations. As the daughter of a foreign service professional herself, she says she feels that kind of informal diplomacy has real value. Art, she thinks, is a great way to create a positive image of American dynamism and creativity.

An exhibit such as "Taken for Looks" is another matter entirely. "I wouldn't do an exhibit like that for the

Art in Embassies program," she allows frankly. "For that we need positive things as opposed to things with critical social commentary. I think the basic mission in that case is to make these exhibits represent America. Art can be a form of informal diplomacy."

Food is a factor in all the works in the exhibit, but Tanguy has more than food in mind for her fourth project for the DBCC museum and the photos are provocative, disturbing, intriguing but definitely not aimed at whetting the appetite.

It's the kind of exhibit she knows she's lucky to be able to put together. Unlike most art graduates, she's been able to work independently.

"I feel fortunate that I could go freelance and pursue projects that I feel



"Cake Triptych" by Zeva Oelbaum



"Maple Ave. (Pokemon)" by Meredith Allen



passionate about," she says. "I'm doing the kind of work I really love."

"Taken For Looks" is her fourth project for the Southeast Museum of Photography. Three years ago, when she was here mounting her previous exhibit, she says director Kevin Miller asked her if she'd like to put together another project for the museum. He left the subject up to her – a creative opportunity she welcomed. "I think he did know I'd done another one on food," she says. This isn't her first project centered around food. A previous project was titled "Food Matters."

"I love it there. It's a great museum, I love the community, I love the fact that you have diversity, there's room for several exhibits. It's a great institution. I love Daytona Beach. I've been there several times," she says.

"Taken for Looks" explores the various types of photography and how photographers today are in

the process of crossing boundaries, says Tanguy. "It pre-eminently evolved around the idea that there's a real blurring of categories. In the sense of cross-fertilization, we might have a commercial photographer might be influenced by a photojournalist, or an art photographer might be borrowing aspects of documentary photography or commercial photography and vice versa," Tanguy says.

It's a phenomenon she's been observing for a while and, she says, "It's time to put it under the microscope and see what happens."

She says she's also very interested in the public's reaction. "My fantasy – and it's not going to happen – would be to have no labels at all on the walls and take a survey and ask people, 'What do you think?'" she says.

She wants the viewer to react to each work without the preconceptions that come with knowing the type of photography or art or even the photogra-



"Bride Diptych" by Zeva Oelbaum

pher's intentions.

While food is an element in every piece in the exhibit, it's not always obvious. In one picture, with a distinctly '50s style ad look, a boy who looks like the caricature of a fat bully in a striped T-shirt, leans out of a window aiming a slingshot loaded with a hard roll. Another roll sits on the window sill beside him.

The rolls look appetizing enough, but the other side of this diptych shows an apparently older woman lying prone on the sidewalk. All you see is the back of her housedress and her knee-high stocking clad legs, with hard rolls scattered around. The implication is

obvious – the thinking behind the photograph less so.

Tanguy explains that this shot, which looks a bit like a retro advertisement from the '40s or '50s, is, in fact, an ad for a bakery. The untitled photo was originally part of an advertising campaign for a French bakery called Dangerously Good Bread and Pastries.

The exhibit as a whole is designed to create a fresh perspective from images rooted in the ordinary, says the curator. Nothing could be more ordinary, more a part of the everyday than food – however, these images show the everyday can sometimes become strange, confounding our expectations.



Untitled diptych by Lyndon Wade (from a French ad series for a French Bakery, "Dangerously Good Bread and Pastries.")