

# Sugar Buzz

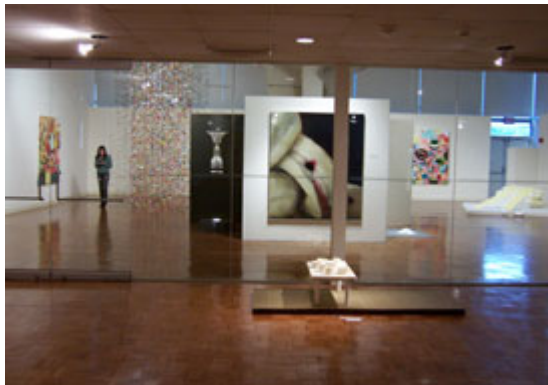
## Checklist with images from the exhibition

Sweets are the stuff of childhood memories and fantasies. Often associated with celebrations, they are inherently optimistic. Delicious and sensual, sweets are also a locus of desire, pleasure, excess, and guilt—all explored by the work in this exhibition. Sugar Buzz features twenty-eight artists whose work deals with sweets either in its imagery or as its medium. In this exhibition the artists have used a variety of strategies — all with an element of humor, irony or whimsy. The exhibition, curated by Susan Hoeltzel with Nina Sundell, includes photography, video, drawing, painting, sculpture, artists' books, textiles, and installations, completed since 2000.

Using frosting, Canadian artist Shelley Miller applies intricately detailed architectural elements to building exteriors. Her monumental embellishments, presented here as documentary photographs of installations in Canada and Brazil, wash away over time in the rain and snow. In Brazil richly detailed Portuguese tiles are added to a house. In one of the photographs children taste the sweets. In Montreal faux columns and cornices are combined with decorative patterns outlining the building's graffiti, subverting its intent.

Maggy Rozycki Hilter offers a moral tale of overindulgence in her hand-stitched textile with cute children, animals, cakes, and candies. Her thirteen-foot embroidery includes "found" textiles from old tablecloths and doilies as well as those stitched by the artist and her mother. It is a story told in multiple vignettes that suggest temptations and their consequences. Excess is also a theme in the work of Milton Rosa-Ortiz. His "Gula" (gluttony), an allegorical reference to one of the Seven Deadly Sins, hangs like a chimera. Its chalice-like form is created with hundreds of suspended sugar cubes.

Becca Albee humorously alludes to the history of art in her homage to Robert Smithson's "Spiral Jetty" made from fragrant cakes, as does Andy Yoder in his large-scale "Pipe" made of licorice that references René Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe." The seven-foot pipe is also connected for Yoder with memories of his father. Its surface is richly textured with patterns made by long Twizzlers and shorter licorice stubs. Albee's cakes are also connected to childhood memories of family and cooking. Her cakes for this installation were baked with the



help of her mother.

Dana K. Sherwood's book, "Konfektion: The Sweet Allure of Entrapment," is opened to a page with a compressed yellow cupcake surrounded by dead bees. On the opposite page the cupcake and bugs are described in a brief text and a whimsical drawing. Throughout the book, packaged confections from Twinkies to HoHos are paired with insects that include leopard flies, hornets, beetles, and ants. In terms of the Magritte, the cakes with bugs, the drawings, and the text are "the pipe and not the pipe." They offer deadpan humor and musings on seduction and death.

Language is pivotal to the work of several of the artists. Words are employed to convey the sense of taste in John Boone's four paintings from the "Taste Suite" series. Each canvas with a single word, "Sweet," "Sour," "Bitter," and "Salty," against a vivid red background, offers a conceptual construct for exploring flavor. Karen Shaw, an artist whose work frequently is language-based, offers a kitchen cabinet with a range of products. Their brands, all with celestial references, glow in the dark under a black light – among them Milky Way and Mars bars, Moon pies, and Starbursts.

It is the phrase "sweetening the bat," that is essential to understanding Freddy Rodriguez's "Our Man: Homage to Sammy Sosa." (The phrase alludes to tampering with a baseball bat to make a ball go farther.) Rodriguez's installation addresses the controversy over Sosa's altered bat. In the installation a crystal clear, glass bat suggests transparency and fragility. The bat hangs over a mound of sugar, a reference to the term "sweetening the bat" as well as to the major export of the Dominican Republic.

Larger than life and suggesting the human form, Emily Eveleth's sensuous jelly donuts depict one of America's most ubiquitous morning foods. For over ten years Eveleth has made donuts her subject. In "Repose" the donuts are cropped and dramatically lighted against a dark ground. Their fleshy forms slouch against one another with jelly oozing.

Julie Allen's soft sculptures, a wedding and a birthday cake, also suggest human flesh. Their sags, bulges, and protuberances are made from deflated balloons. Jenny Kanzler's traditionally rendered, oil on panel cakes — "Tonsillitis," "Infection," and "Growth" — are anthropomorphized in unexpected ways. Their diseases and abnormalities make them less than perfect icons of domesticity and give them human qualities.

Amy Miller's "I Do," a large-scale slice of wedding cake sitting on an eight-foot doily, is



convincingly rendered in foam and resin. The work offers multiple readings— a humorous double entendre and a coming together of equals. The decorative rosebuds on the cake are created with a very large, electrically powered pastry bag fabricated by the artist.

Yoshiko Kanai's process-based work "Sugar Table/Communication," includes a cast sugar table and sugar vessels placed on a tatami mat that suggest a Japanese tea ceremony. In performance the artist and audience members will pour green tea, representing the East, and Coke, representing the West, into the containers, transforming and eroding the table and vessels.

Iconic images of museums – the Louvre, the Met, the Whitney, and the Guggenheim — are burnt into a surface of cast sugar and Splenda in the work of Mark McLeod. Intended to evolve over time, the caramelized images display a soft, sfumato edge.

Sugar is also the medium of Rebecca Holland's site-specific, minimalist installation "Crush." First melted, then cast and crushed, the candy stretches for fourteen feet along a glass wall. Its jewel-like yellow/green color appears to glow from within. The work is created with approximately 50 lbs of candy.

Eight thousand candy wrappers – those from candy consumed by the artist and her friends or found on the street — create a monumental cascade of color and light in Luisa Caldwell's "Color Falls." Twenty-one feet high, it's excess is dazzling as the cellophane gently moves in drafts of air.

Twist ties, sponges, pantyhose, cotton balls, matchsticks, hair curlers – the stuff of daily life – are the materials used to produce a variety of tasty delights in Vadis Turner's large-scale installation and vitrine filled with sweets. In the former, chocolates made from pantyhose and fillings made of foam, spools of thread, buttons, and paper clips, spell out the work "yuck."

Tracy Miller, Sara Sill, and Lucy Fradkin offer tables laden with confections. Sara Sill's photo-based images show the excess of Parisian pastry and tableware shops with their prices displayed in euros. These paintings combine photography, collage, image transfer, and paint. Lucy Fradkin has placed her pies and cakes to best advantage on a tilted tabletop in front of an open window with migrating birds outside in "Heading South." Tracy Miller's exuberant displays seem to transmute from cakes, pastries, champagne and beer into colorful painterly marks. With tables filled to excess, it appears to be a party in progress with a good time being had by all.

Pamela's Hadfield's photographs are staged on an implied tabletop in which birthday celebrations take on a new meaning. In "Great Escape" and "Bang" her festive cakes double as battlefields with compete with explosive sparklers, combat troops, tanks and helicopters. Their intense saturated colors reinforce the meaning of both events.

The commercial aspect of Valentine's Day is layered with class signifiers in Jessica Edith Schwind's paired photographs "Love Peddler II." The effect of the packaged candy display, with hearts and teddy bears, provides a sobering contrast to the warmth and sentiment of the day.

Mary Magsamen & Stephan Hillerbrand's video "air-hunger" explores trust and boundaries as a couple blow and share bubble gum. Filmed in the lobby of the Woolworth Building in New York City, the majestic ceiling is almost cathedral-like. The sounds of breathing, bubbles being blown, and gum chewing fill the room. The title alludes to a medical condition associated with diabetic coma.

Matthew Neff's barely perceptible silk-screened images of a chandelier in "La morte equise" Sugar Chandelier' and of moths in "I wear black on the outside because black is how I feel on the inside," are created with sugar that glitters in these white on white compositions. The images are made with transparent varnish that is silk-screened to the paper. Sugar is added, like flocking, and adheres to the wet varnish.

Abstraction is also a means of alluding to sweets with form, materials or process suggesting confections. In Gina Occhiogrosso's acrylics on canvas, thick pastel-colored paints are applied as if by a cake decorator, a job she had once had. These lush surfaces make a connection between the physicality and seductive qualities of both frosting and paint. In a similar vein, Lynda Ray's chevrons of lush, translucent encaustics suggest layer cakes. She describes the process of heating the beeswax, resin, and pigments as similar to cooking, complete with fragrant aromas.