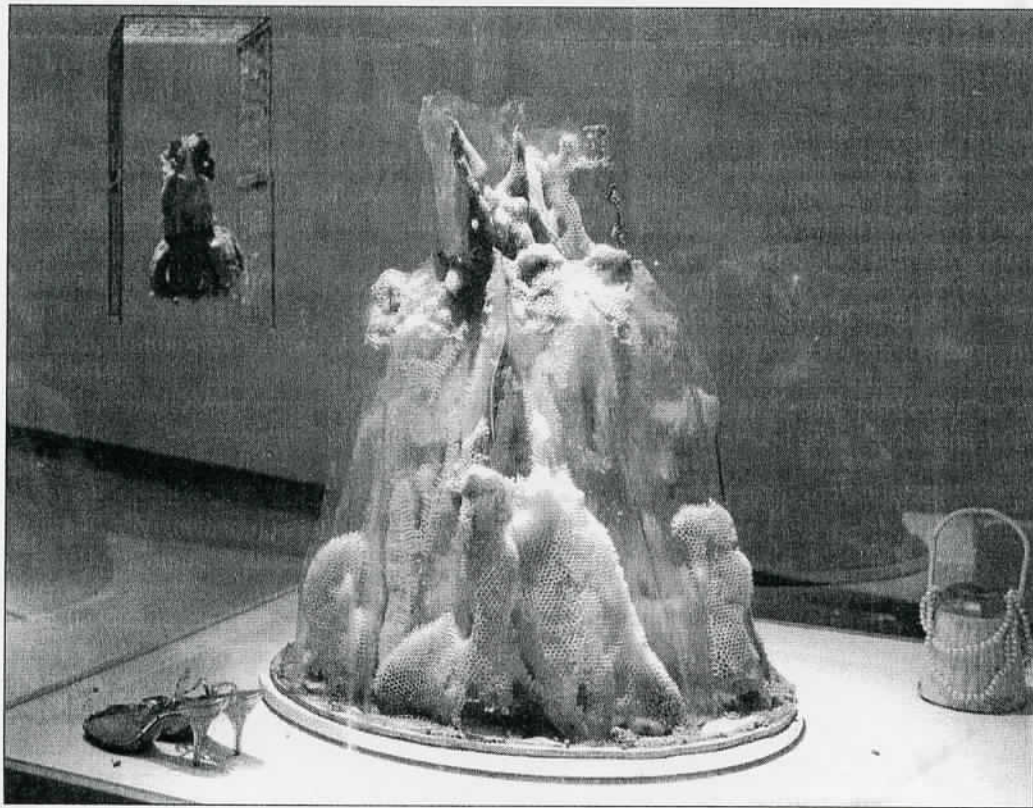


Entertainment



One of Aganetha Dyck's past works, *The Glass Dress*, which was a bee collaboration created in 1995.

Photo: E. Meyer

Busy as a bee Prairie Gallery this summer

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The Prairie Art Gallery will literally be abuzz with activity for the summer when one of the most unique art exhibits in the nation opens next week.

In collaboration with two hives of live bees and apiary specialists from Agriculture Canada's Beaverlodge Research Farm, Winnipeg artist Aganetha Dyck will create a work of art out of beeswax over the course of the summer.

Gallery curator John Kerl is very excited about Dyck's exhibition and the fact that the gallery was able to include a live bee component in the show.

"We couldn't do this show without the honey industry and the important input from the beekeepers and specialists at the Beaverlodge Research Farm," he said.

Dyck is a widely-exhibited Canadian artist who first began working with bees in 1991. With the co-operation of an apiary and professional beekeepers, she invites honeybees to amend objects she places in their hives.

"She has an extraordinary way of thinking," said Kerl.

"She is fascinated by the bees to the point that she allows them to do a lot of the work."

For the Grande Prairie exhibit, Dyck will place a glass sculpture in the shape of a wedding train inside the plexiglass-enclosed hive. The bees will have access to the outdoors through a special tube installed in the gallery wall.

"There will not be any live bees flying around inside the gallery," noted Kerl. "They will be safely contained from the public."

If all goes as planned, the worker bees will build their honeycomb on the glass sculpture as the public watches throughout the summer.

"There are no guarantees, so what we get will be a surprise," he said. In speaking with Dyck about similar projects she has done in the past, Kerl said the Grande Prairie exhibit "could happen very quickly or, depending on the environment, could take the better part of the summer. It's difficult to know what the bees will do."

In addition to the live bee component, there will also be a number of Dyck's other works on display throughout the summer.

"We will have a series of her shrunken clothing works, canned buttons and works from a Sports Night in Canada series which bees created," said Kerl.

Dyck will also be exhibiting a piece entitled "Inter Species Communication Attempt," which is another bee collaboration.

"What is unique to Aganetha is that she has adopted a practice which has been referred to as 'women's domestic work' into an art practice that has been widely endorsed," said Kerl.

"She has found a way of connecting domestic work with the practice of fine art."

Kerl is hoping the viewing public will be as excited about the exhibit as he has become over the past year.

"I'm hoping that people will come in and become excited by art. I guess the idea is that they will draw a connection to contemporary art which they otherwise may not have been able to discover in a stationary exhibition.

And, to realize that artists like Dyck are as inspired by what nature creates as by what they are able to create."

The Aganetha Dyck exhibit will officially open with a reception at the Prairie Art Gallery on June 26 at 7:30 p.m.

The exhibit will be on display throughout the summer to Sept. 7.