

Contact



FOR ALUMNI & FRIENDS OF FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE / SPRING 2008

Food for Art's Sake

Jeff 'Jeffu' Warmouth creates art both funny and tasty looking *by Karen Mann*



When Jeffu is looking to cast his next production, he goes to the produce aisle of the grocery store.

"It's easier to work with vegetables, they don't talk back," said artist Jeff "Jeffu" Warmouth with a smile on his face.

The local artist recently had an exhibit, "Spudnik," on display at the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln.

While Jeffu, whose pen name comes from the Japanese pronunciation of Jeff, said he couldn't pigeon-hole himself into one genre, his work is usually humorous and based in food.

"I wanted to make work that was accessible, that people could understand," said Jeffu, who teaches in the interactive multimedia track at Fitchburg State College.

"In graduate school, things are very abstract and heavy. You need a PhD just to understand," said Ellen Wetmore, Warmouth's wife. The two attended the school of the Museum of Fine Arts together to obtain their Master's degrees.

Jeffu started by using common household objects in his work.

One of his creations was a photo of his bunny chewing on a blue broomstick. Jeffu then switched the bunny and the broom to opposite sides, took another picture, and then put the two together.

"It looked like a Q-tip," said Jeffu.

The switch to using food in his art came from his love for cooking.

"I was so comfortable working with food for a medium. It is like putting a recipe together," said Jeffu.

After he had been working with food for a while, he moved from photography to film narratives. "Day of the

Cabbage" is a Godzilla-style monster movie, while "Il Spaghetti Occidentali" is a western.

When Jeffu created the cookbook, "Strictly Kosher Style," he really learned to mix food and humor.

Jeffu was asked by the professor of a History of Jewish Humor course to be involved in a show the professor was putting together.

"I was a non-Jew, I was invited for that reason. I was the non-Jew looking at Jewish humor," said Jeffu.

He said he did a lot of research on kosher laws so he wasn't poking fun from the outside. He said that he always does research on a topic before using it in a humorous way.

"In Jewish humor, there is a tradition of jokes that play with kosher laws," said Jeffu. The cookbook features items like "Bagel Belly," "Menorah Dogs," and "Legalized Ham."

He describes his Spudnik endeavor with food and humor as a "sci-fry history of potato space exploration."

A sketch of a potato doing a spacewalk is what inspired him. Once he came up with the name, "Spudnik," he said everything else fell into place.

The exhibit, which ran through summer 2007, featured photos, videos, and some installation work.

"Press this button to hear the actual sound of Spudnik X-1," says audio at one of the stations.

Reprinted with permission from the Fitchburg Pride.

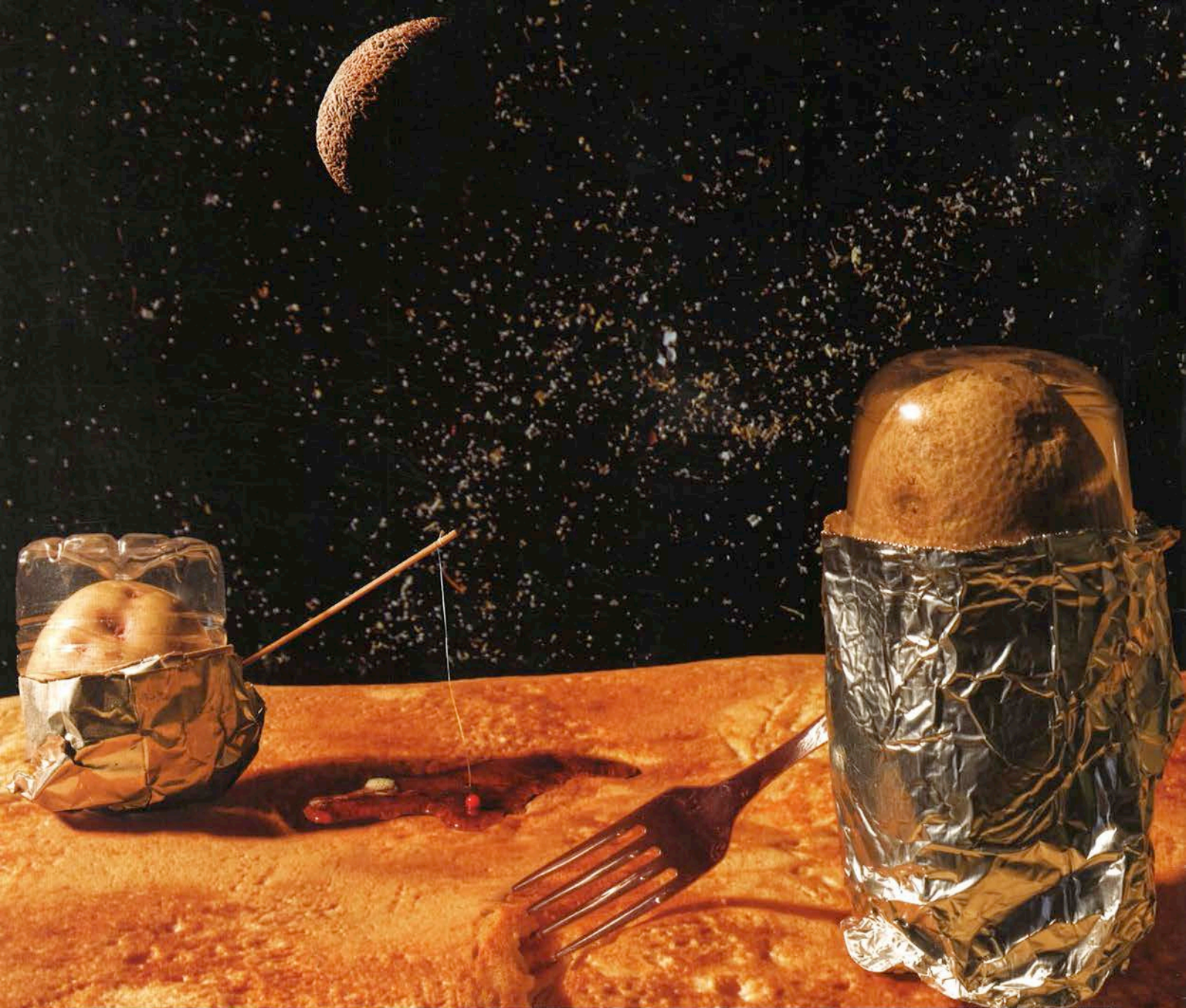


* EDITOR'S NOTE

In January, the Center for Teaching and Learning at Fitchburg State College initiated the Artists' Presentation Series, which highlights the artistic work of Fitchburg State faculty. The series was established as a complement to faculty book signings and talks at the Center. In addition to Professor Warmouth, other faculty presenters this spring have included Susan Wadsworth and Suzanne Owens.

To view sample artwork from the presentations, or to listen to podcasts of the talks, go to www.fsc.edu/ctl/programs.cfm.

The Center for Teaching and Learning, housed on the first floor of the Amelia V. Gallucci-Cirio Library, is dedicated to enhancing the teaching and learning environment at Fitchburg State through interdisciplinary collaboration. CTL staff offer a wide variety of professional development opportunities to full-time, tenure-track and adjunct faculty and librarians, including faculty talks on the scholarship of teaching and learning and instructional technology workshops.



FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE

Alumni Association
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420

Change Service Requested

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Fitchburg, MA
Permit No. 87