

Arc is a magnetic sculpture which was installed on the tundra at approximately 7 degrees from the North Geomagnetic Pole during a twelve year peak period of intense solar flare activity. Predictably it responded by hunting and seeking the concentrated magnetic field lines. Unpredictably, it responded with electronic sounds, which I later found to be similar to those transmitted back by Voyager in its orbit around Mars. This Arctic installation was dismantled Canada Day, July 1, 1989.

The sound from the magnetic bow was taped on site by J. Vistig of Kaarvonen Films, and later filtered, mixed and re-recorded by Robert McNevin.

The artist wishes to thank the Canada Council Arctic Awareness Program, The Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, and the people at the Polar Continental Shelf Project.

Cover photographs: (front, left) Simplified isogonic chart of the north pole regions for 1955.

Inside photograph: June 15, 1989 Resolute Bay, N.W.T. Lat.: 74.41 N Long.: 94.54 W



OR GALLERY

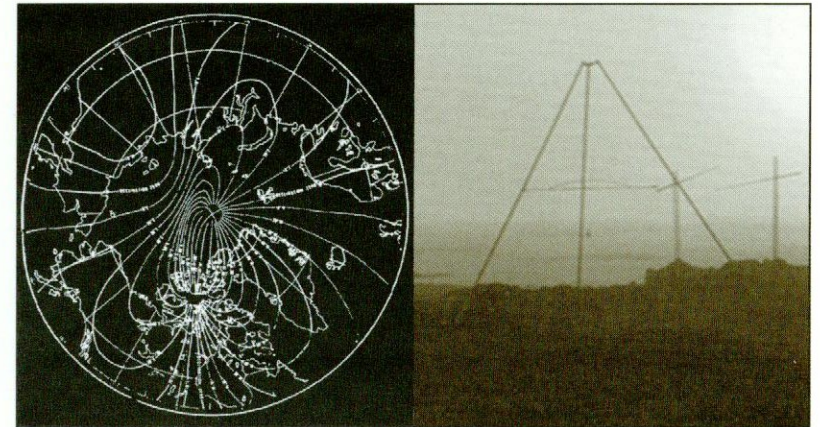
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Gallery Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 12 to 5 p.m.

Federal, Provincial and Municipal funding are greatly appreciated.

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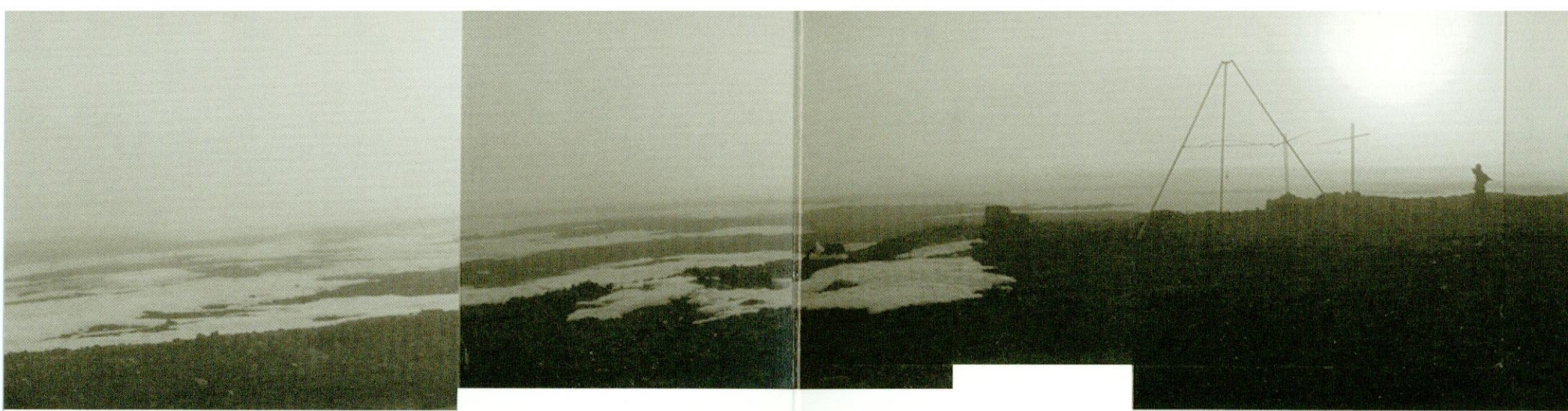
A Sculptural Installation



GWEN BOYLE

July 2 – 30, 1994

OR GALLERY



What stands out during a sojourn in the Arctic and seems always part of travel in a wild landscape, is the long struggle of the mind for concordance with that mysterious entity, the earth.

BARRY LOPEZ, *Arctic Dreams*

Where the influences to make one's art come from and why they take the forms they do are often the first questions to ask an artist and the last things to define. In the sculpture and installation of Gwen Boyle structure is closely linked to content, and content to her relationship to people and things. Her practice of art involves observation and an enquiry into natural phenomena; she attempts to make visible and tangible those elements which permeate our lives but which we rarely stop to question or wonder at. ¶ Boyle's sculpture is public, site-specific and communicates to the viewer through play and interaction her curiosity about and relation to forces below and above the crust of the earth. She has for many years used the materials of bronze, steel, wood, glass and sound to bring into human terms the wind, sun, earth's gravity, magnetism, wobble and rotation. Boyle's sculptures are built to track or suggest the presence of these ephemeral forces and their resultant compositions strike a balance between formal abstraction and technical engineering. ¶ Although Boyle admits she is not a scientist her interests do take her into the realm of science, and the opportunities she finds for consultation and collaboration with others outside the arts field form a significant part of her working process. The current exhibition "Arc" reflects one such opportunity – to work in the High Arctic – and presents, within an urban, art context, the richness of that experience.

MELANIE BOYLE

June 1994

EXCERPTS FROM AN ARCTIC JOURNAL:

June 15/89: It's 2 a.m. air is still, in the silence my boots crunch rocks and ice as I install a sculpture on an exposed cracked mezoic rock ... Holding the magnetic steel bar my hair starts to crackle with electricity. A faint electronic sound sings out from this magnetized steel bow. What's happening ... it's responding to the ... what? Out here on this seemingly empty tundra I was alone, excited, mystified and spooked. ... Installation complete and harmonics continue to resonate along the shore as if it were "tuning" the shimmering sea ice. Can't sleep ... the sun is already high.

June 16: Announcement: "Art Opening Down by the Big Rock on the Beach, artist in attendance." Scientists from the camp came by, checked it out and toasted the invisible force with invisible drinks. The harmonics remain a mystery.

June 19: We land within seven degrees of the geomagnetic pole, and we have a couple of hours before the ice becomes unsafe. Out of this sea ice, the light is even more intense and pure, everything is sharp edged, even the ice crystals in the air. I've lost my sense of perspective, what is far seems so near. The silence is silencing. I sit listening. In this light I see the Arctic's long unbroken bow of time.

June 21: Summer solstice, I'm as close to the north pole ever I'll be. Lying on my back, I watch the day turn completely on its inclined axis toward the sun before I turn southward.

To bring ARC into a parallel gallery has given me the venue to explore and express other aspects of my arctic experience, and to experiment with the magnetic sound in a different context.

GWEN BOYLE