

An image of frustration

MAWRY Baden's sculpture, *Chickenfeed*, sits on the sidewalk outside the Or Gallery on Franklin Street, just across from the Hallmark poultry packing plant ("Best Dressed Birds in Town").

The sculpture is a combination exercise machine and piece of farm equipment: a Tunturi treadmill for stationary jogging; and an auger, used for transferring feed from trucks to silos.

Step on the jogging machine and your leg power turns the seeder attached to the inside of the hopper, releasing chickenfeed. Or push the button beneath the half-horsepower motor and the auger goes into action, creating a stream of chickenfeed out of the hopper, up a pipe, through a Dante olive oil tin and a seed bag and back into the hopper.



Art Seen
Eve Johnson

Since 1965, Baden, an associate professor in visual arts at the University of Victoria, has been making "sculptures for a moving participant."

Chickenfeed is one of a series of pieces that deals with the inefficiencies of the world food system and the separation between people and the food they eat.

In April, Baden set up exercise bicycles on Hudson Street in New York. Passersby who cycled could, by their exertions, sprinkle water on a basket of watercress, circulate air for a tomato plant in a plastic bag greenhouse, or generate electrical current to warm the pot for some beet plants.

Now, delighted to show in an art gallery located in a meat-packing district, Baden talks about *Chickenfeed* on levels ranging from the treadmill's "marvellous image of frustration," to the misplaced energy of "bizarre fitness classes" and the connection between the Dante olive oil can and the plant across the street "which must surely be one of the seven circles" [of hell in Dante's *Divine Comedy*].

"Put this in your piece," he says. "Multinationals are buying up farmland in India and Sri Lanka, importing feed so they can grow beef to sell in developed countries. That's why a billion people in the world are starving."

Baden has the hands of a welder and is wearing a striped trainman's shirt and suspenders. He likes watching people



MAWRY BADEN on his sculpture, *Chickenfeed*

try out the sculpture. It pleases him when a passerby asks if it's an exercise for the stomach muscles.

"Isn't it great the way the chickenfeed spills over?" Baden says. "Those chickens across the street would really like this."

We run our hands through the feed, a pleasant sensation, like trailing your hand through water.

"You wouldn't do that to a dead chicken," he says. "Take care, now."

Chickenfeed and its creator will be on the sidewalk outside the Or Gallery, 1729 Franklin Street, Tuesday through Saturday June 16, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

• The Extra-Ordinary Craft Show at the Cartwright Street Gallery consists of works by 25 Lower Mainland artists and craftsmen from I, Braineater, (represented by a New Wave coffeetable), to fabric artist Joanna Staniszkis.

Aside from bringing together many of Vancouver's most accomplished craftsmen, the show is wildly successful at treading the line between art and craft,

from Gerald Formosa's ceramic models of sacred structures to Jamie Evrard's flowing constructions that are more sculpture than basketry.

Prices range from \$12 for Cheri Markiewicz's Mug to \$9,800 for Barbara Shelly's tapestry. The Inner Side of Night. The show continues to July 4, Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

• Trouble in Bedrock, a collection of paintings by Seattle artist Tony Horn, at the Unit Pitt to June 12, might just as well be called Trouble in Artland.

The most interesting works are the nine updates on Fred, Barney, Wilma and the rest of the Bedrock crew. Back to the Stone Age is representative of the general tone: a dazed Fred in the foreground, a mushroom cloud and a city of rubble behind him.

Things really go wrong when Horn forsakes the form he borrowed from Hanna-Barbera and strikes out on his own. The result is far too many muddy-colored apocalyptic paintings of the "bad art" school.