

Artist inspired by Mistaken Point

By **GAY DECKER**

SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM

Kelly Bruton's artwork has a hypnotic effect. Layered, patterned, painted and stitched, they compel you to look longer and further, as though there is a great secret to discover.

And there may very well be.

Inspired by the fossil remains embedded in the rock outcroppings of Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve, Bruton's multimedia work is the product of her own ever-questioning mind and her effort to make sense of the world we live in.

Originally introduced to the world-famous fossils during an impromptu weekend camping trip in 1994, she was immediately fascinated by their beauty.

Then when she learned they had been created by a massive volcanic eruption that had destroyed all surrounding life forms, her appreciation for them as an artistic source grew.

"I was reading about why they were preserved that way and realized that it was a catastrophe," she says. "Everybody says they are so amazing, but really we are looking at something quite catastrophic."

This tension between tragedy and beauty had significance for Bruton, who by that time had already spent three years of her life teaching art in Botswana.

As a westerner, she had been confronted daily with more illness and the poverty than she was used to, but she was also touched by the "grace in the way people were connected, took care of one another and were so incredibly respectful of elders."

Knowing as well that the section of land at Mistaken Point had also once been part of Africa before the continents shifted, the location took on a very personal meaning for the artist and became the stepping off point for a series of small and large-scale works that took her several years to complete.

A self-described "thinker," Bruton says that the time spent on her work is as important as the final product.

"Living with them is part of the process. I have to let them be for a little bit so I can see what the next thing is," she says. "Sometimes, I might go off and work on another piece that may have something related in it and I may learn something that I can bring back to it. ... If I didn't stop and let them be then I wouldn't be able to layer them successfully."

Similarly, her choice of technique reinforces her themes of mishap, mystery and wonder. While the final works are a collage of elements — from purchased textiles to painted canvas — she also incorporates textiles that she has printed herself using dye techniques such as discharge and shibori, which produce images that look remarkably like fossils.

The results, however, are not always predictable.

"I don't know what I will get and that process is important to understand about my work," she says. "I want to have an element of the unknown, an element of it that you're not able to control, like what happened at Mistaken Point. ... These things are our reality but they're not within our control, and maybe that's part of what I would like people to think about."

The fossil images themselves are, of course, also important to her work. In many of her pieces, circular shapes that are based on the fossil *Aspidella* are prevalent. Over 560 million years ago, these ancient creatures were likely holdfasts to another part of the organism that broke off before fossilization happened and so are they are powerful symbols of



Kelly Bruton's Mistaken Point art will be on display starting Saturday at the Craft Council Gallery. — Submitted photo

connection and mystery.

The unknown and our inherent vulnerability are ideas that Bruton has considered carefully herself. As a teenager, her own unforeseen personal circumstances made her realize how fragile any human being can be so after she graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, she knew her heart lay in community work.

Her time spent teaching art in Botswana as a United Nations volunteer was followed by a decade-long commitment to Oxfam Canada, with whom she has been both the national board chair and a trustee for Oxfam International. She has also been an artist mentor at the Murphy Centre and was board chair for Choices for Youth for five years.

While many of these positions were more administrative, Bruton says that her work was driven by the same motivation she feels as an artist — her hope for a better world. In fact, she doesn't see any separation between her community work and her artwork.

"I see it as my work as an artist. I see it as part of my practice," she says. "When I worked with Oxfam as a young woman, I felt I was there because I have the ability to think laterally, to have good observational ability. I listen well and I can put things together in a way that other people might not think of."

Her out-of-the-box thinking has

also served her well in her burgeoning career as an art director. In the past 10 years, she has worked on the popular TV series "Republic of Doyle," and on a number of local films by directors such as Ruth Lawrence and Joel Hynes.

She also recently participated in the prestigious Women in the Director's Chair program at the Banff Centre for the Arts. While other female directors from the province have participated in the past, Bruton's attendance marked the first time for an art director.

Commenting on the connection between her textile-based artwork and set design, she notes that she uses a lot of fabric on her set and that she's not afraid to use colour.

When looking at her work, it's clear why. Despite the artist's original interest in the catastrophe that created the fossils at Mistaken Point, her final works are overwhelmingly festive, perhaps a testament to the artist's optimistic nature and her own conclusions on how to deal with uncertainty.

"There's a certain playfulness that I experience, too, when I am at Mistaken Point," she says. "It's so incredibly beautiful that it makes you feel joy. I want people to rejoice in it, celebrate it and find things that you don't see at first glance."

Entitled Mistaken Point, Bruton's art will be on display at the Craft Council Gallery starting Saturday.

MOVIE LISTINGS

EMPIRE STUDIO 12 Avalon Mall, St. John's All Studio 12 Listings are Digital Presentation

Won't Back Down [PG] 3:20, 6:00, 9:10	House at the End of the Street FS, V [14A] 1:30, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10	Looper V [14A] 1:05, 3:45, 6:40, 9:40	The Master CL, V [14A] 6:30, 9:35
--	---	--	--------------------------------------

Frankenweenie: An IMAX 3d Experience FS, NRYC [PG] 1:15, 3:40, 7:10, 9:30	Hotel Transylvania 2D [G] 1:00, 4:00	Hotel Transylvania 3D [G] 12:40, 3:30, 6:15, 8:45	Frankenweenie 2D FS, NRYC [PG] 12:50	Finding Nemo 3D [G] 1:10, 4:20
--	---	--	---	-----------------------------------

NO PASSES ACCEPTED

Frankenweenie 3D FS, NRYC [PG] 3:10, 6:45, 9:00	Taken 2 BV [14A] 1:20, 4:10, 6:35, 9:20	Pitch Perfect MT [PG] 12:45:50, 6:50, 9:50	MUN Film Series "Beasts of the Southern Wild" 7:00 pm
--	--	---	---

NO PASSES ACCEPTED

EMPIRE 6 CINEMA Mount Pearl Square, Mount Pearl

Taken 2 BV [14A] 7:00, 9:20	Pitch Perfect MT [PG] 6:30, 9:15	Hotel Transylvania [G] 6:50, 9:00	Looper CL, V [14A] 6:40, 9:10
--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	----------------------------------

The Campaign CL, CC [14A] 7:10	Resident Evil: Retribution FS, BV [18A] 9:30	Dredd BV, GS [18A] 6:45	Lawless BV, DC, GS [14A] 8:50
-----------------------------------	---	----------------------------	----------------------------------

BV.....Brutal Violence
CL.....Course Language
CC.....Crude Content
DC.....Disturbing Content
ESC.....Explicit Sexual Content
FS.....Frightening Scenes
GS.....Gory Scenes
GV.....Gory Violence
LMO.....Language May Offend
LW.....Language Warning
MT.....Mature Theme
NRC.....Not Recommended for Children
NFYC.....Not Recommended for Young Children
N.....Nudity
OL.....Offensive Language
SC.....Sexual Content
SV.....Sexual Violence
SA.....Substance Abuse
V.....Violence
VS.....Violent Scenes

5846555

www.winterholme.com

Spend the night at **Winterholme** and RELAX with our:

★★★★ **NIGHT AWAY** Suite & Spa PACKAGE

Starting at \$289 in October

Enjoy a Fireplace Jacuzzi Suite with Breakfast in the morning and a 60 minute Relaxation Massage each.

Winterholme Suites & Spa - 709-739-7979 - info@winterholme.com

Experience the Met:

Live in HD at Empire Theatres

The Metropolitan Opera HD LIVE

L'ELISIR D'AMORE
Donizetti

Live:
Saturday, October 13th - 2:25PM

Encore:
Saturday, November 17th - 12:00PM

On Screen at:
Empire Theatres Avalon Mall

UP NEXT:
OTELLO
Verdi
Oct. 27th 2:25PM
THE TEMPEST
Adès
Nov. 10th 2:25PM

Tickets and complete 2012/13 Schedule available in-theatre or online at WWW.EMPIRETHEATRES.COM/MET

EMPIRE THEATRES

St. John's Public Libraries

Free books and more.

A. C. Hunter • Marjorie Mevs • Michael Donovan

www.NLPL.ca 709-737-2133

IRELAND IS CALLING

Ireland is calling your name so why not "Join Us in the Pub" Sears Travel, in conjunction with Trafalgar Tours & Insight Vacations will be Hosting a seminar on Ireland Coach Tours with Special Offers.

Every trip has its rewards.™

KELLY'S PUB ON GEORGE
TUES OCT 16TH • 6:30 PM
\$5 PER PERSON

RSVP TO SEARS TRAVEL 364-7966
BY OCT 15TH, 2012

TRAFALGAR see the world from the inside INSIGHT VACATIONS The Art of Touring in Style

Sears travel.ca
In-store | 1.866.359.7327

©2012 Thomas Cook Canada Inc. d.b.a. Sears Travel Service. B.C. Reg. No. 35997. Ont. Reg. #50010226. Quebec Permit Holder - OPC #702734

whink

art • jewelry • things

118 DUCKWORTH STREET WWW.WHINKINC.COM 754.7676