



photo: Karl Schlatter

Erika Nelson holding the World's Smallest Version of the World's Largest Collection of the World's Smallest Versions of the World's Largest Things Traveling Roadside Attraction and Museum.

Lucas Kansas Artist Receives Fellowship

March 1, 2006

Artists around the state compete annually for Kansas Arts Commission Fellowships in various disciplines including Visual Art, Poetry, Fiction, Crafts, Film/Video, Choreography, Performance Art, Music Composition, and Playwriting. This year, Lucas resident Erika Nelson is the recipient of the 2006 Fellowship in 3-Dimensional Art, an award that recognizes artistic merit, sustained achievement and excellence. Winners are chosen through juried slides - that is, artists submit 20 slides of recent work to be reviewed by a panel of art professionals in each of the eligible categories.

Erika is an independent artist and educator who adopted Lucas as her home in 2003. Living next to S.P. Dinsmoor's Outsider Art environment, the Garden of Eden, her art evolved from gallery-based installations and assembled sculpture into its current form, a traveling roadside attraction and museum housing the World's Largest Collection of the World's Smallest Versions of the World's Largest Things. She travels the country exploring Outsider Art environments and Iconic Vernacular Architecture, promoting rural America through community-based art projects. She drives an Art Car every single day.

She earned her MFA from the University of Kansas with a thesis exhibition "Domesticated", an expansive interactive installation environment exploring concepts of the American Dream. With participation in juried, museum, and solo shows nationwide Nelson has maintained an active art record while traveling with her interactive art environment.

Through her travels, she has written a Graduate thesis titled "Driving Around Looking at Big Things While Thinking About Spam", prepared a full meal utilizing foil and her automobile's heat manifold, stood on a sideshow performer lying on a bed of nails with a genuine Kansas Cowboy at the last functioning "10-in-1" sideshow in Coney Island, found out what "The Thing" is in southern Arizona, drunk free ice water at Wall Drug, eaten Rocky Mountain Oysters, seen Rock City, and been stuck in a traffic jam in Branson in front of Yakov Smirnoff.

The Kansas Arts Commission will host a reception to honor the 2006 Artist Fellowship award winners on Wednesday, March 8, 2006 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. The reception will be hosted at the office of John Peterson at Capitol Strategies, 212 S.W. 8th, Suite 200, Topeka Kansas, with Senators and Representatives from each artists' district on-hand to present the awards. Meetings of the Commission are open to the public in accessible locations. For more information, call 785-296-3335 or e-mail KAC@arts.state.us.

For more about Erika's work, explore www.WorldsLargestThings.com.