

One banana: \$2,500

OLIVER MOORE

From Thursday's Globe and Mail
July 2, 2008 at 7:19 PM EDT

HALIFAX — Is a banana art?

A passerby walking along Granville Street in Halifax might now have reason to think so. Because in the window at Gallery Page and Strange sits a humble banana.

At first glance, it appears to be a forgotten part of someone's lunch. Perhaps set aside because it's still a bit green and not really ready to eat. But on closer look the passerby will notice a tag alongside the piece of fruit. The artist is identified as Michael Fernandes. The work is called *Banana*. The price is \$2,500.

And there's a blue sticker, indicating that a buyer has put a hold on this work.



People walk past a banana installation exhibit by Michael Fernandes at the Gallery Page And Strange on Granville St. in

Halifax, NS on Wednesday, July 2nd. (Sandor Fizli for The Globe and Mail)



It's a gutsy move, even for a recognized experimental artist, one that has sparked public bemusement, a guerrilla raid by the so-called Patrick Swayze Collective and the anger of some local students who claim the project has trivialized art.

"Collectors are contacting us, they've seen the picture on our website and they're asking us what medium he's using," gallery co-owner Victoria Page said. "And I say, 'It's a banana, you understand that it's a banana.'" The window sill was chosen as a place where the public and private spheres meet and, since the middle of June, Fernandes has been exchanging the banana almost daily. Each time he uses a slightly greener banana to gradually reverse the ripening process.

"I'm taking it back to green, before green it doesn't exist," said the 64-year-old native of Trinidad, who lived near banana trees before immigrating to Canada in his teens. "The banana is temporal. We are also temporal, but we live as if we are not."

But the work is not actually the banana, Fernandes explained in an interview. The process is what's important. He's hoping to mount a similar project for the Beijing Olympics, using a blood orange.

The buyer should not be expecting a superlative piece of fruit in return for \$2,500. The bananas Fernandes is using for the display are ordinary, purchased from local supermarkets. Indeed, most days the artist eats the banana he has replaced. Instead, the buyer will be paying for the concept and will receive photos documenting the project. The buyer may also get press clippings or credit as patron if the project is staged again.

No tangible piece of art will trade hands.

"It's not the banana. Yes, anybody could give you a banana," said Fernandes, who is staging the exhibition without public funding.

"One of the [potential] clients wanted to know if I could come to her condominium and install the 21 days of bananas. I said 'No, no, there is not

a banana for sale,' " he added, acknowledging: "Her friends think she's crazy."

The most he can offer a buyer is the final banana, which will be installed at the gallery Friday and will be put on display in the completely unripe state the industry describes as "uniform green."

"Maybe you could shellac it," ventured Page, who said that the artist initially wanted to make a statement by offering the piece at \$15,000. Gallery staff believed it would actually sell if priced more reasonably, though, so they settled on \$2,500 to keep it in line with other work for sale at the gallery.

Two people have put a hold on the piece, Page said. There has also been a surge of public attention, she added, not all of it positive.

"Some people are really angry about the banana. Especially some [art] students who feel it's poking fun at art, [and say] 'How can anyone take this seriously?' " They're not the only ones uncertain how to react. The gallery's insurer refused to cover the piece, Fernandes and Page said, and one of the bananas was stolen not long after the exhibition started.

Last month, shortly before closing time, Page's business partner Victoria Strange was distracted while a mysterious group swapped the banana for an apple. The thieves left a note scrawled on a napkin, calling bananas "the most radioactive fruit on earth."

The thieves identified themselves as "The Patrick Swayze Collective" and claimed, "We exist. We definitely exist."

Gallery Page and Strange
Granville Square
1869 Granville St.
Halifax, NS B3J 1Y1
t 902 422 8995
f 902 423 0059
www.pageandstrange.com



But is it art?

Michael Fernandez's \$2,500 fruit experiment
GLOBE REVIEW

Where's my wedding?
The young dude's guide to nuptials season is a single man's survival plan
GLOBE LIFE

GREATER TORONTO EDITION | THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2008 | CLOUDY, HIGH 23 LOW 12

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

CANADA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER

ORDER OF CANADA

Panel divided on crusader's nomination, vote suggests

Morgentaler defends his appointment, surprised at lack of approval over honours

BY GAIL HARRIS
THE HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF CANADA (OC) have been divided on whether to name abortion rights activist Henry Morgentaler to the Order of Canada, an indication that the government's decision to name him to the Order of Canada is not as straightforward as it seems. The 11-member panel, which is the highest honour in Canada, is expected to meet on July 10 to decide whether to name Morgentaler to the Order of Canada.

The names with Chief Justice McLachlin drive the nomination, which was proposed by the two government ministers on the five-member committee. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Justice Minister Rob Nicholson have been nominated for appointment to the order since 1984, but not yet inducted.

THE ABORTION DEBATE

It should be safe and fair, but it should also be rare



MARGARET WENTE
margaretwente@toronto.com

It's right to honour Henry Morgentaler with the Order of Canada. He fought to make this country a better place for women, and for our world. But those who oppose his nomination are also right. Morgentaler's actions were not just in the name of women, but in the name of a nation. The Order of Canada is not just a list of names, it is a reflection of the values we hold dear.

COLOMBIAN RESCUE | I NEVER EXPECTED TO GET OUT OF THERE ALIVE



Hostages freed in 'impeccable' rescue

Politician Ingrid Betancourt among the 15 released by military disguised as rebels

BY JENNIFER HARRIS
COLOMBIAN RESCUE: I NEVER EXPECTED TO GET OUT OF THERE ALIVE. The Colombian politician, Ingrid Betancourt, was freed in a rescue mission that was described as "impeccable" by the U.S. military. The rescue was the result of a complex operation involving U.S. Special Forces and Colombian military. Betancourt was held captive for 15 months by the FARC, a Marxist-Leninist group. She was released along with 14 other hostages.

CONSERVATIVE HOST'S \$400-MILLION CONTRACT

Every last Republican should be listening to Rush Limbaugh

JOHN BRITTON AMERICA
johnbr@toronto.com

There may be signs of life in the Republican camp, but America's big right-wing talk show host, Rush Limbaugh, is the only one who is truly alive. Limbaugh's conservative views have made him a household name, and his radio program is one of the most popular in the country.

STOCKS

TSE takes a tumble

Investors left the porch yesterday when Canada's benchmark stock index plunged nearly 400 points, or 3 per cent, its biggest drop in three months. Even insurance stocks were hit by the widespread sell-off.

REPORT ON BUSINESS
The TSE 300 index closed at 10,100.14, down 395.14 points from its previous close of 10,495.28. The index fell for the 11th straight day.



CLONING CONTEST | A ONE-IN-A-MILLION PET

Canine hero wins a chance at immortality

BY JENNIFER HARRIS
A one-in-a-million pet, a dog named Toby has won a chance at immortality. Toby is a 10-year-old dog who saved his owner's life during a fire. He is now being cloned by a company called Progenex.

The company will clone Toby's DNA to create a genetically identical copy of the dog. The cloned dog will be named Toby 2.0. The cloning process is expected to take several months.

The most smartphones on Canada's largest High Speed network:



TELUS

© 2008 Telus Communications (Canada) Inc. All rights reserved. Telus is a registered trademark of Telus Communications (Canada) Inc. The other trademarks and service marks appearing herein are the property of their respective owners. TELUS is a registered trademark of Telus Communications (Canada) Inc. TELUS is a registered trademark of Telus Communications (Canada) Inc. TELUS is a registered trademark of Telus Communications (Canada) Inc.

Stratford, Fringe together at last!

New theatre blog Globe theatre critic J. Kelly Nestruck knows no boundaries as he launches a new blog today at globeandmail.com/arts



SECTION R THURSDAY, JULY 3, 2008

Review & Sports

VISUAL ARTS

One banana: \$2,500

Michael Fernandes's installation piece in Halifax is one expensive piece of fruit. But if it sells, no tangible artwork will actually change hands. As the experimental artist explains, it's the process, and not the banana, that is important here

BY OLIVER MOORE HALIFAX

Is a banana art? A passerby walking along Granville Street in Halifax might now have reason to think so. Because in the window at Gallery Page and Strange sits a humble banana. At first glance, it appears to be a forgotten part of someone's lunch. Perhaps art aside because it's still a bit green and not really ready to eat. But on closer look the passerby will notice a tag alongside the piece of fruit. The artist is identified as Michael Fernandes. The work is called *Banana*. The price is \$2,500.

And there's a blue sticker, indicating that a buyer has put a bid on this work.

It's a gutsy move, even for a recognized experimental artist, one that has sparked public bemusement, a guerrilla said by the so-called Patrick Swayze Collective and the anger of some local students who claim the project has trivialized art.

"Collectors are contacting us, they've seen the picture on our website and they're asking us what medium he's using," gallery co-owner Victoria Page said. "And I say, 'It's a banana, you understand that it's a banana.'"

The window sill was chosen as a place where the public and private spheres meet and, since the middle of June, Fernandes has been exchanging the banana almost daily. Each time he uses a slightly greener banana to gradually reverse the ripening process.

"I'm taking it back to green, before green it doesn't exist," said the 64-year-old native of Trinidad, who lived near banana trees before immigrating to Canada in his teens. "The banana is temporal. We are also temporal, but we live as if we are not."

But the work is not actually the banana, Fernandes explained in an interview. The process is what's important. He's hoping to mount a similar project for the Beijing Olympics, using a blood orange.

SEE 'BANANA' PAGE 2



Michael Fernandes initially wanted to price his art - a series of bananas on a windowsill - at \$15,000. SHOOT FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL

LANGUAGE JARGON

Going forward, rise up against crapspeak



RUSSELL SMITH
rsmith@globeandmail.com

More evidence that the worm turns: A positive rebellion is under way in Britain against the worst excesses of crapspeak, that cleverly metaphorical slang that corporate types and bureaucrats like to speak. (You know the guy who must always say "challenges" instead of "problems," or "stakeholders" instead of "customers; he's proficient in crapspeak.)

Recently, a decree went around to local authorities in England and Wales - town and county councils, mostly - for the body that governs them, forbidding use of a long list of popular crapspeak terms. The Local Government Association sent out a list last week of 100 "non-words" for councils to avoid.

According to The Associated Press, the list exhorted government officials to replace "reverse streams" with "income" and to avoid cryptic code words such as "intermissibility," meaning an overlap of administrations.

SEE 'TMTV' PAGE 2

INSIDE



R2 Review The Globe and Mail, Thursday, July 3, 2008

FROM PAGE 1 | BANANA

'No, no, there is not a banana for sale'

» The buyer should not be expecting a superlative piece of fruit in return for \$2,500. The bananas Fernandes is using for the display are ordinary, purchased from local supermarkets. Indeed, most days the artist eats the banana he has replaced. Instead, the buyer will be paying for the concept and will receive photos documenting the project. The buyer may also get press clippings or credit as patron if the project is staged again.

No tangible piece of art will trade hands.

"It's not the banana. Yes, anybody could give you a banana," said Fernandes, who is staging the exhibition without public handling.

"One of the [potential] clients wanted to know if I could come to her condominium and install the 20 days of bananas. I said 'No, no, there is not a banana for sale,'" he added, acknowledging. "Her friends think she's crazy."

The most he can offer a buyer is the final banana, which will be installed at the gallery Friday and will be put on display in the completely swipe state the industry describes as "uniform green."

"Maybe you could shellac it," ventured Page, who said that the artist initially wanted to make a statement by offering the piece at \$25,000. Gallery staff believed it would actually sell if priced more reasonably, though, so they settled on \$2,500 to keep it in line with other work for sale at the gallery.

Two people have put a hold on the piece, Page said. There has also been a surge of public attention, she added, not all of it positive.

"Some people are really angry about the banana. Especially some [art] students who feel it's poking fun at art, [and say] 'How can anyone take this seriously?'"

They're not the only ones uncertain how to react. The gallery's lawyer refused to cover the piece, Fernandes and Page said, and one of the bananas was stolen not long after the exhibition started.

Last month, shortly before closing time, Page's business partner Victoria Strange was distracted while a mysterious group swapped the banana for an apple. The thieves left a note scrawled on a napkin, calling bananas "the most radioactive fruit on earth."

The thieves identified themselves as "The Patrick Swayze Collective" and claimed, "We exist. We definitely exist."

Michael Fernandes's Banana exhibit has attracted public attention, not all of it positive: A group calling itself the Patrick Swayze Collective took one of the bananas and replaced it with an apple. LONDON FILE FOR THE GLOBE AND MAIL.



FROM PAGE 1 | SMITH

Let's touch base offline and share our vision on jargon

» "Stakeholder engagement" can easily be replaced by "talking to people," the chairman of the association said.

Almost simultaneously, a writer for the BBC's online magazine posted a rant about the mindless cheeriness of the most popular catchphrases in business. Lucy Kallaway is on a campaign against "going forward" in particular, which, as we have noted, is used by every inarticulate person who wants to make some reference to the future. She accuses business folk, with their optimistic blue-skying and reaching out, and leveraging, all their synergies and passionate commitments to visions, of being brainlessly upbeat. "All the celebrating, the reaching out, the sharing, and the championing, in fact, grind one down," she writes. "The reality is that business in the most brutal it has been for half a century."

The response to her column stretches on for several pages, and it continues here next week.