

Charlie Callahan at the wheel of the "A La Carte" cart.



& DAY

NIGHT

Merrily We Roll Along

So many lovely things come rolling toward you on a cart: dim sum, dessert, cheese, and now — thanks to a freaky little Mission District gallery project — art.

Should you be doing a lot of walking around the city this month, you may want to keep an eye out for wheeled conveyances clattering along the sidewalks. Such wagons may not be filled with Eskimo Pies and Nutty Buddies; instead, they'll likely be part of the Pond gallery's ephemeral exhibit "A La Carte," which curators call "a roving exhibition of art for popsicle prices."

I recently caught the "A La Carte" dolly as it trundled through the Mission en route to Dolores Park, under the power of artist/musician David Rudolph. White, square, and solid, the only thing that distinguished it from an ice cream cart was the painted logo on its front. Oh, and what was inside.

"Lemme just crank this out here," said Rudolph, hauling the cart to a quiet spot in the park. He opened the top doors, turned a wheel on the side, and up came a number of wooden shelves loaded with collages, knitted goods, and fabric and paper art, all for sale at prices under \$5 to random passers-by. "I particularly like this one," he said, holding out a sleeve-like object in retail-ready plastic. Made of pinkish vinyl and faux fur (which uncomfortably resembled skin and pubic hair) and sporting an ominous electrical cord, the mysterious object struck an uneasy balance between marital aid and kid's toy.

"Yeah, people pick that one up and

then they put it down right away," cracked Rudolph. A group of girls approached the cart tentatively and "oohed" and "aahed" over ev Funes' "Public Confessions" series, printed bits of fabric bearing disclosures that the artist coaxed from her acquaintances ("I had a 'private time' in the public dressing room," said one), priced at a mere 50 cents apiece.

Fifty cents?! That's no way to keep a gallery afloat. But that's not the point of "A La Carte," says Pond Co-Director Marisa Jahn: "We're not really trying to make money." Jahn notes that proceeds from the rolling exhibit are sunk back into the cart. The goal is more about connecting regular folks with artists. "We wanted to reach audiences who normally wouldn't come into a gallery, which can be a very intimidating space, and bring art into everyday contexts."

Jahn and company vow to take "A La Carte" everywhere from openings at other galleries to live concerts to the streets of San Francisco (even the hilly ones!) in search of citizens and tourists who crave a slightly surreal brush with the art world. They've even applied for a grant to fund a cross-country drive with the cart in a van.

"The coolest thing is how people react to it," says Jahn. "They're out doing errands, boring stuff, and suddenly this weird thing rolls by. They may not even approach it — but already we've affected their day." — **Joyce Slaton**

"A La Carte" roams through town until June 20; those with questions or artwork to contribute should call 437-9151 or write pondpeople@muckety-muck.org. A schedule of planned appearances can be found at www.muckety-muck.org.