

OPUNTIA 322

September 17 to 20, 2015

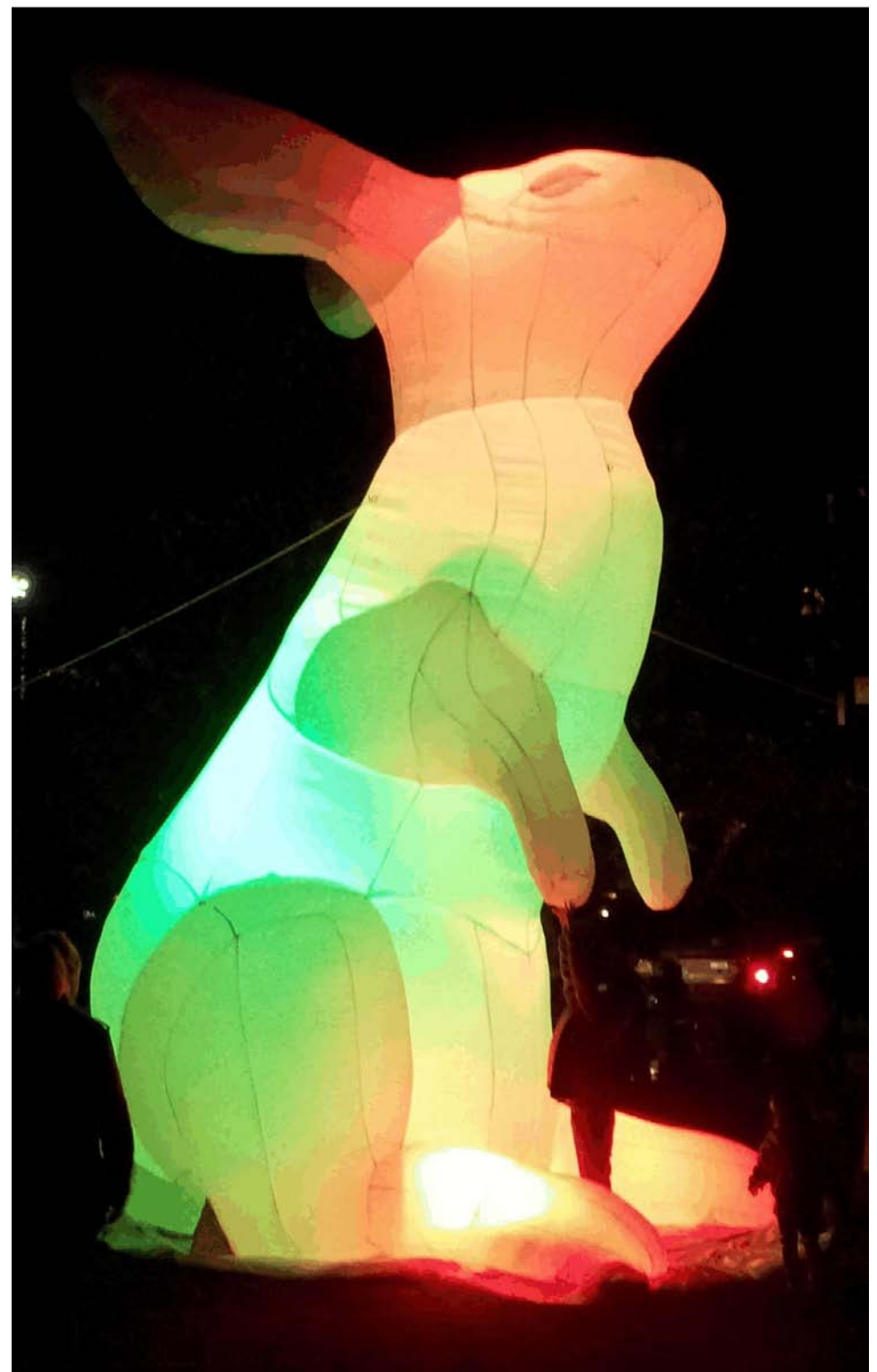
Opuntia is published by Dale Speirs, Calgary, Alberta. It is posted on www.efanzines.com and www.fanac.org. My e-mail address is: opuntia57@hotmail.com When sending me an emailed letter of comment, please include your name and town in the message.

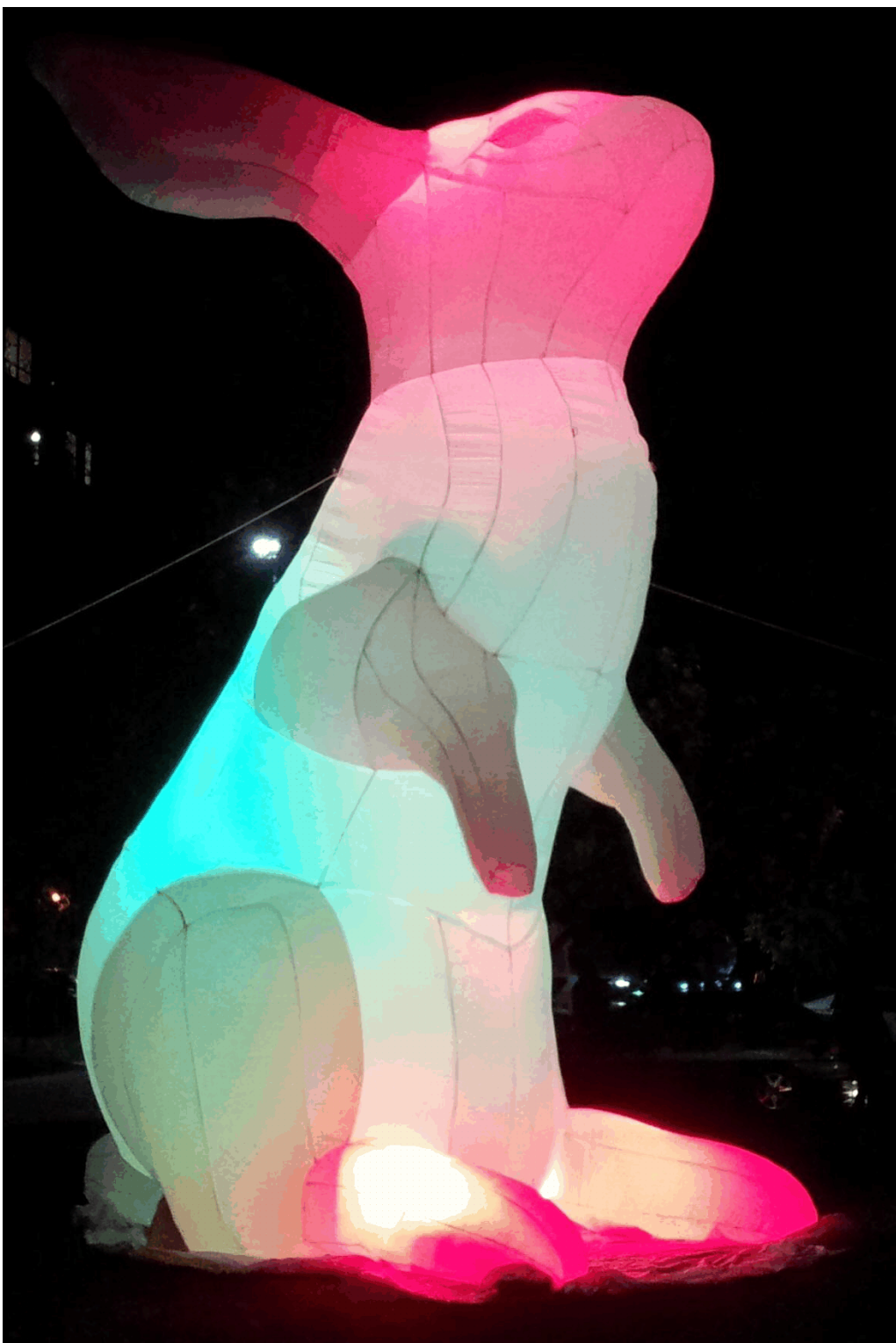
BEAKERHEAD

photos by Dale Speirs

In 2013, a new festival called Beakerhead began in Calgary, which aims at a fusion of technology and art. It gathered momentum and has built up into a major night festival with illuminations, street installations, and parties all over central Cowtown.

The night of Thursday, September 17, I moseyed on down (took the bus actually, since parking is scarce and expensive) to the Beltline district, adjacent to the downtown core. Two parks held my interest, one at Central Memorial Park with giant rabbits, and the other at Tomkins Park with motion-activated colour-changing blobs.







Steampunks roamed the park, hence the woman below in Victorian dress.



I took this photo in Tomkins Park just before sunset at about 20h00. The blobs were motion-activated. Once it got dark, they changed colour so fast that my camera kept going out of focus.



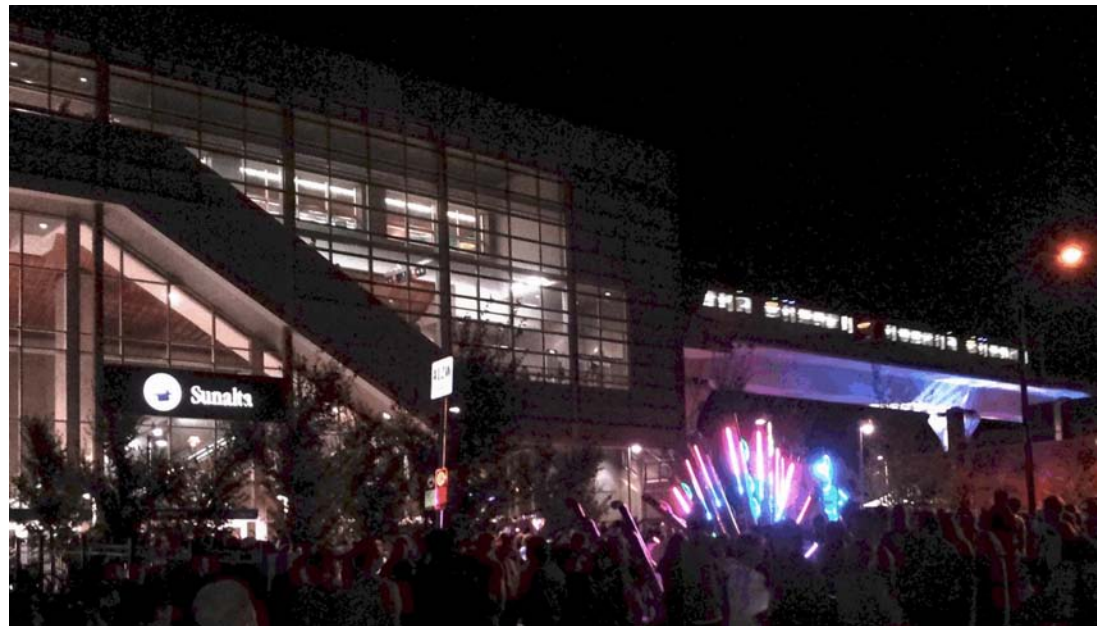
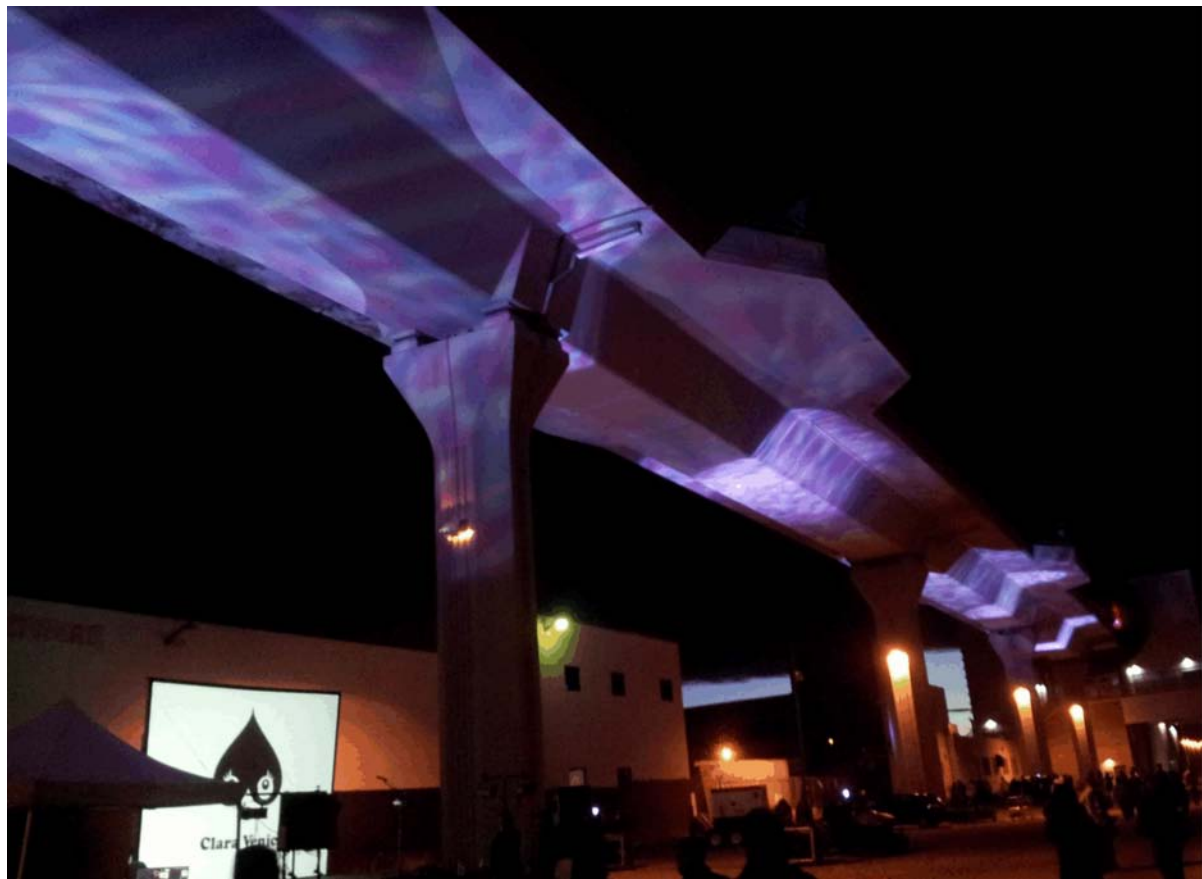
Below is some of the advertising Beakerhead did for the event, along a pedestrian underpass between Beltline and the downtown core.



Saturday afternoon, the local steampunk group held a promenade in Central Memorial Park. Not a brass goggle in sight, just perfectly proper Victorians.

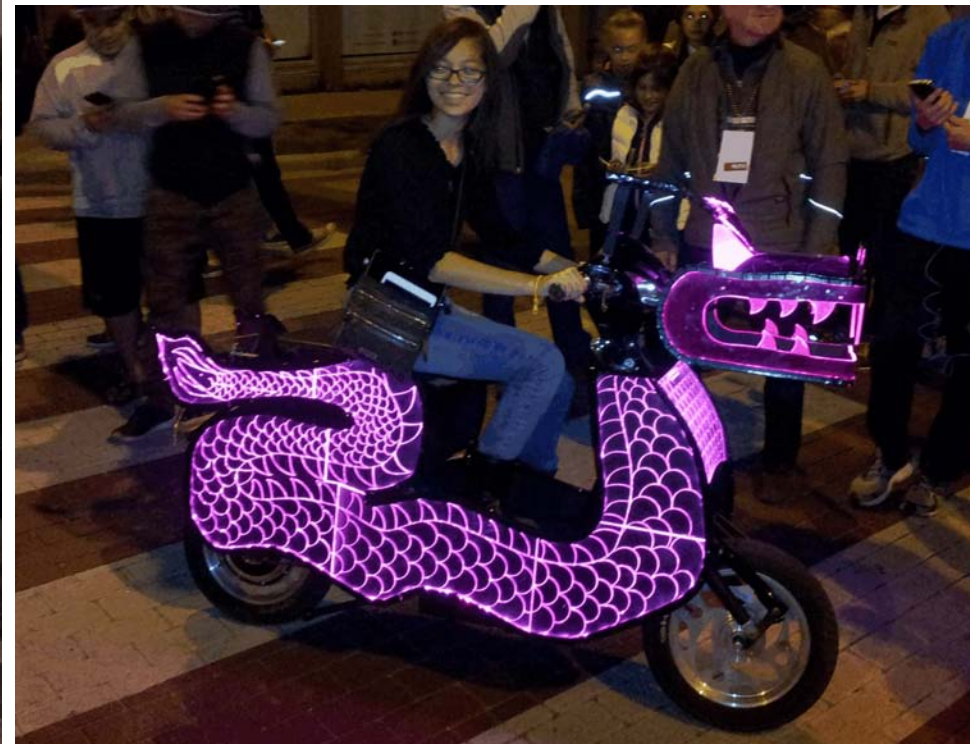


Saturday night in the Sunalta district, immediately west of Beltline, there was a street party on 10 Avenue SW between 14 and 18 Street. The next few pages are a selection of what was officially called Beakernight.



The Beakernight portion of 10 Avenue SW was adjacent to the elevated portion of the LRT system, and the 4-story-high Sunalta station was right in the heart of the street festival. Coloured lights were aimed at the underside of the LRT track.

I went into the Sunalta station to photograph a view of the street crowd from above, but the reflections from the glass made it impossible. However, I did stumble across this group. At the time, they were singing the theme from THE BIG BANG THEORY as if it were opera. It made sense.







A very popular event was a free ball toss game. Whenever a player hit a target, a large gout of flame burst out.

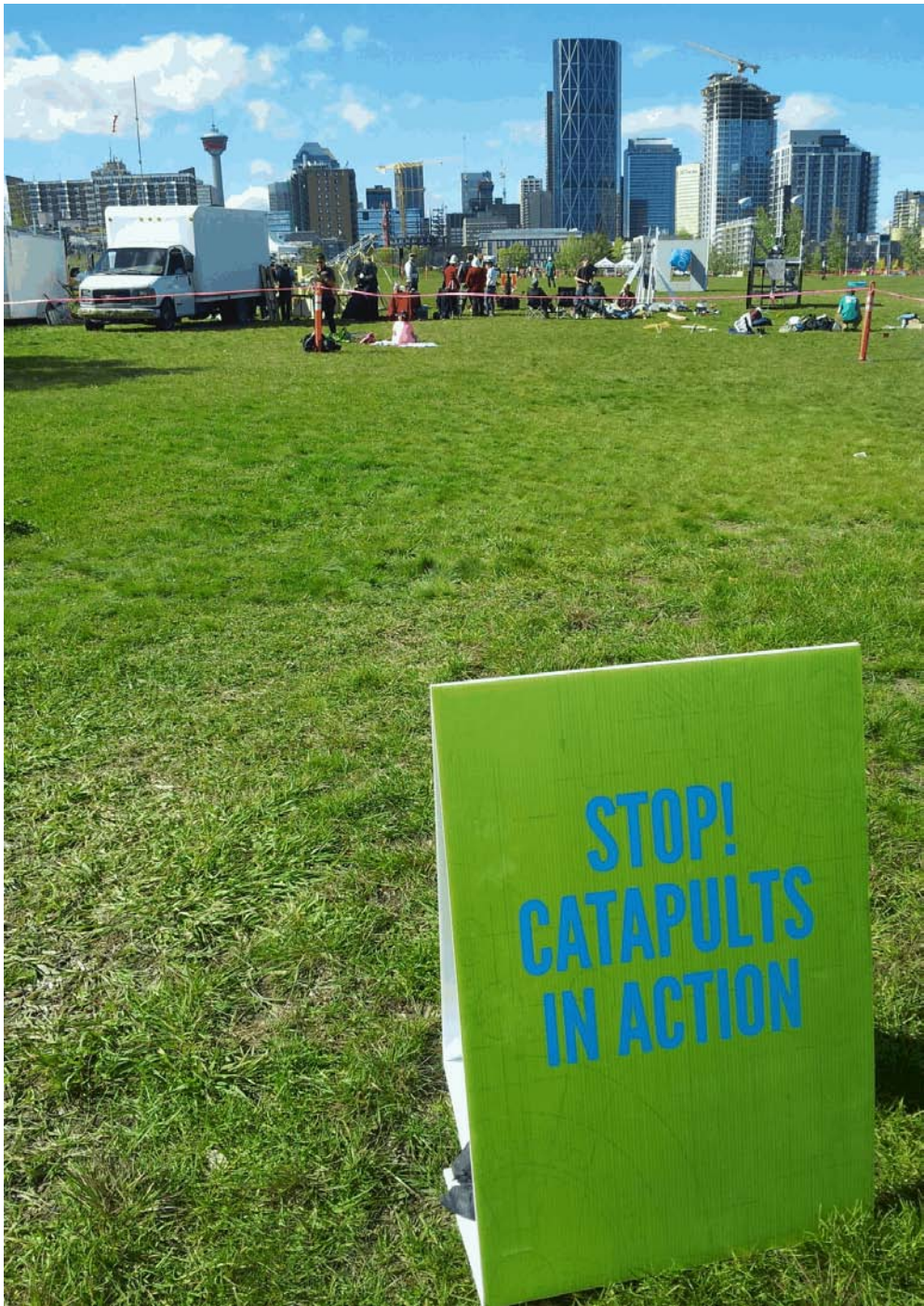


A peacock truck provided swing music for dancers.





Sunday afternoon, I went to Fort Calgary, at the east end of downtown, to watch the Beakerhead catapult contest.



A few of the designs.



The two men are conversing about how to hit the Bow Tower (the X-beamed skyscraper in the distance). *“Let’s see, it’s about a kilometre away, therefore the angle of elevation should be ...”*



A very model of a modern Major-General explains his steam-powered catapult. He was the only steampunk I saw at Beakerhead with brass goggles.



The catapults snapped up so fast that I only got a single photo of one in action.



There was also a mini-catapult section nearby for kids to try their luck at hoisting hackey sacks.



The catapults used small shot bags almost impossible to photograph in flight. The black speck in the upper left corner is the shot bag.

This was the only decent photo I got of a projectile in mid-air.



Across the Bow River from Fort Calgary is Saint Patrick Island, upon the summit of which Beakerhead placed this very large inflatable art.

Somehow, I found this rather disquieting. Bow down before your new god!

