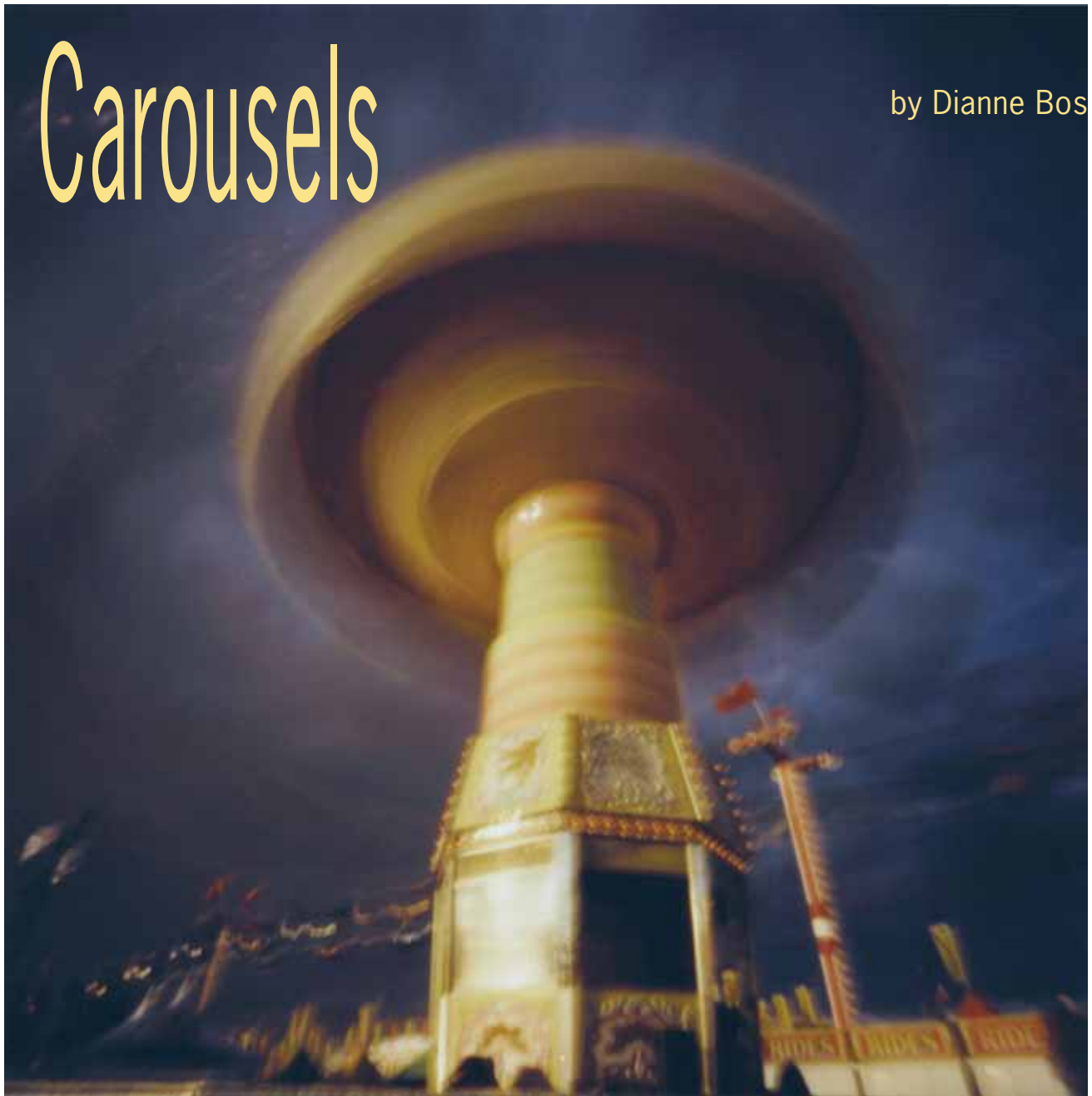


Carousels

by Dianne Bos



In 1979 I made my first pinhole photograph. I had just graduated from Mount Alison University with a Fine Arts degree majoring in painting and sculpture. My sculptural work had become focused on creating worlds within boxes. A chance encounter with another student

who was fashioning a pinhole camera out of a box opened my eyes to a whole new world of objects and image making. I was immediately hooked and my fascination with making pinhole cameras and images has continued for over 30 years.

The long exposures - capturing a still image of a passage of time, reducing scenes to their essence, like simmering a wonderful broth - appealed to my creative inclinations. You could sense that something had happened inside the still image. With a musical background, to me the images felt like songs. Watching a passage of time being compressed or layered into a still image is like seeing inside time. The beginning, middle and end all exist at once. You realize that things that move become invisible in an image exposed over a long passage of time. We are ghosts. I became fascinated with how things that move at different velocities register on a photo sensitive surface.

I photographed my first carousels in Paris in the late 1990s. I had picked up the strange little pinhole camera kit called the PinZip in New York City. It was a simple cardboard housing for a 126 Kodak Film cartridge. This film was already on its way out of production, so I managed to score boxes of expired film for nothing. Up until this time, I had made all my exposures on B&W photo paper. I had never made pinhole images on film or coloured pinhole photographs before, so I wasn't sure what I was going to get.



Carousel Stampede Ride *(page 6)*

I have to thank my friend Janet for convincing me to bring my pinhole camera to the Calgary stampede midway the day this was taken. The combination of the sun low in the sky and the dark storm clouds overhead created a perfect lighting combination for photographing this ride on the midway. The centrifugal force propels bodies clinging to swings outward and beyond - barely visible in this exposure but for glints of light: like stars spiraling out from the centre of a galaxy.



Carousel Collioure *(above)*

This carousel wrapped in its sleeping tarp reminds me of a big top circus tent. The carousel is still but the movement of a person walking by has created a ghostly, smoky trail of action. I don't know why the combination of palm trees, tarp and carousel elements create such nostalgia.



Carousel Narbonne

This is one of my favourite carousel images. It has perhaps the most “other worldly feel.” The crazy colour palette: pink tarmac. The people seated in the mundane plastic chairs appear to be transfixed, paralyzed by the thing in front of them.

They were wonderful, and this was the start of multiple series in amusement parks that I’ve continued since, featuring carousels in France, Italy and Canada. Glitter and songs spin, spiral and spill out. Everything but the patient guardians (both stone and flesh) is in motion: it twirls, whirls and transforms into elegant solid forms like clay on a potter’s wheel. For a moment, the world we see ceases to exist and another world that flows in tandem appears.

In the September 2002 edition of ‘Discover’ magazine an article entitled ‘Our Galactic Carousel’ by astronomer Bob Berman caught my eye. He used the carousel as a metaphor for how the earth revolves within the Milky Way Galaxy. The concept of ‘riding a horse that moves at 137 miles per second’ verified some conceptual juxtapositions I had been pondering. I had been photographing carousels for a couple of years by then, fascinated by



Stampede Midway

I couldn't find a place to sit my camera down so I hand-held it for this exposure. The movement adds to the chaos of the midway, creating a very apocalyptic image; more like a nuclear bomb blast than a midway ride.



Carousel Carcassonne

This image, from my *Son et Lumiere* exhibition at the Kamloops Art Gallery, 2002, was shown with the sound recorded during the 2 minute exposure of a carousel in Carcassonne, France. The sound track captures the sounds of life whirling within its orbit during the exposure time of the photo. The children and the painted menagerie have become compressed into a featureless orb but the music and laughter ring out in the audio recording of this same passage of time. The sound and image create a strangely spooky juxtaposition. Where have the children gone?

how they visually translated using long exposures of the pinhole camera. The resulting photographic effect was something you did not see while standing there.

The carousels become spiraling galaxies of lights and life forms blurred into surreal shapes with the occasional transfixed observer.

The idea of photographing things I can't see fascinates me, as it contradicts most commonly held beliefs about the honesty of a still image. This is no 'decisive moment'.

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