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## Karine Giboulo's insatiable groundhogs

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From China, by way of Montreal, comes Karine Giboulo's take on factory life, globalization, and a most bloated consumer culture. Collected under the title "All You Can Eat" are stories told through media ranging from paintings, drawings, and sculpture. The title, referring to the prevalent over consumption found in the western world, brings to mind the mantra of buffets and wing nights. Humorous and cynical, her work underscores

the industrialization of both food and humanity.

At centre stage of this exhibition is Giboulo's ingenious work in piecing together a miniature, three-dimensional factory. Standing like an industrial dollhouse, the six-foot tall structure is modeled after a factory in Shenzhen, China (where Giboulo herself visited). While Artcite's gallery houses Giboulo's replica, the replica itself houses an assortment of peculiarities.

The miniature complex contains all the essentials of a working factory: warehouses, conveyor belts, assembly lines, and staff cafeterias. Meticulously placed details, such as telephones and fire extinguishers, dot the walls and breathe life into the backgrounds of each miniature room. It is Giboulo's dedication to such

particulars that make the scenes come alive. However, talk of meticulousness should begin with the carefully sculpted clay figures that populate the factory.

A variety of windows throughout the factory offer unique views of its inner workings. Participating in an act of voyeurism, the audience is encouraged to peer into each scene where intimate moments of the workers' lives are juxtaposed with the unpleasant realities of industrialized labour. Down to their identical uniforms, these workers are formed with the utmost attention to detail. Seen in a variety of states, (at work or play), each character tells a story through expressive eyes and tired limbs.

Another prevalent feature of the factory is the Miracle Grow-injected baby pigs. With this synthetic boost, the pigs suddenly grow large enough to be shipped off, slaughtered, and turned into ribs for a sports bar. In fact, the final products roll across a sky bridge that's connected to the venue for a competitive eating contest. Representing the human competitors are two obese groundhogs. Fittingly, the next room shows one such groundhog fighting for its life in a hospital, on a gurney and under defibrillators.

Besides the obvious statement regarding over consumption, Giboulo alludes to a more subtle phenomenon that's found with our returning to the factory.

Inside, she has created a scene of one worker spraying another with the aforementioned Miracle Grow. The target of the attack immediately sprouts pig ears and a tail, strengthening the symbolic link between worker and product.

Like human capital, the workers are harvested from the small, antiquated villages that surround the factory. Within the complex, they find themselves herded between the cafeteria, production line, and sleeping quarters. Every action is observed by militant-looking police officers while every free minute is absorbed by the omnipotent punch clock.

Further strengthening the connection between the human workers and the animal products is the factory's inner "cycle of life." Directly below the female sleeping quarters, which gives home to a visibly pregnant worker, is a nursery which grows a curious mix of cabbage and children (who seem to be born wearing factory uniforms). Thus, inside the womb of a worker, or in the soil of the on-site nursery, future workers are in constant production at the factory.

"All You Can Eat" explores the regimental living conditions of Chinese laborers as well as the thoughtless over consumption of what they produce. The factory model, along with other fascinating sculptures and paintings, can be seen until Oct. 4 at Arcite, 109 University St. W.