In most cases, when a work of art is put to fire, that's that: There are ashes and a scar to clear, but the piece is gone.

The Cascadia Serapeum, though, is designed to live two lives: before and after the flames.

The project re-creates the famed Library of Alexandria, which perished in a conflagration centuries ago along with untold volumes of ancient learning.

That history will be recreated in a single week on Playa.

For several days, the Serapeum will be an open-air library, filled with books to read, write in, play with, and take away. In a secret chamber will sit the Community Book, a ledger of the Serapeum’s history inscribed by visitors.

On Thursday, the structure will burn – save for the books, which will be donated to a local library, and some concrete elements, which are designed to survive. Afterward, the Serapeum will stand, like its classical ancestor, as an evocative ruin with only a few parts – including the Community Book – to suggest what it once was.

According to Deb Beaudreau, one of its presiding geniuses, the project arose as something of a lark: “A bunch of friends just start getting silly and throwing out wild and random ideas. Some are ridiculous, but in between there are some gems. From that point, eureka moments of creativity spring up until you have something you love.”

Many elements of the Serapeum suggest Greek influences: columns and friezes and statues and a flaming chandelier. But the project comes, as its name reveals, from Cascadia, the Pacific Northwest, where teams in Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver, B.C., created pieces independently.

The initial plan was for folks to bounce from town to town to collaborate. “It turns out,” Beaudreau says, “we all have lives, so other than very rare instances, we kept working in our own cities. I can’t wait to see everything come together for the first time on Playa!”

And then, of course, to see it all go up in flames and live a new life as skeletal ruins.

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**Midnight Poutine**

**BY BICLLE**

I'm not sure I should share this, because the line is already epic, but you'll likely hear about it sooner or later, so what the hell.

It’s late, you need a job of energy, maybe some entertainment, and maybe, if you’re really lucky, something hot and freshly cooked to eat.

Voila, Midnight Poutine, a delicious dish from Quebec, Canada, where it’s a drinking-night staple and something of a secular religion.

What, you ask, is poutine?

Ah, mon frere et soeur, it is ambrosia. A heap of freshly fried potatoes is tossed with cheese curds, then doused in brown gravy. The heat of the fries and the gravy melts the cheese into stringy strands of yum. American cheese fries, even chili cheese fries, simply don’t compare.

Midnight Poutine has been available on Playa intermittently since 2008, the brainstrust of a single intrepid Quebecois chef with a camp stove and a yen to share his native cuisine. Now it boasts a full kitchen and a staff of 25, none of whom are food professionals, all of whom, says crew member Antoine Couture, “are a bunch of passionate weirdos.”

The excellent poutine – it would be among the best even in many Canadian cities – has made Midnight Poutine an extremely popular spot. The line at the counter can take three hours to snake through, leading the camp to offer live entertainment, including an open mic, for those waiting to be fed.

As for sheer numbers: in a single week, Midnight Poutine will serve approximately 500 pounds of potatoes, 200 pounds of cheese curds, and 30 gallons of gravy.

Midnight Poutine is part of a village dedicated to sharing Quebecois culture on Playa, with music and other delights. But poutine is the main dish, and it’s a real point of honor. As Couture says, “for once we have something greasier and more bad for your health – but even more delicious – than what you Americans cook. We’re proud of it”.

And where can you find it?

Ah, dear Burner, therein lies the adventure.
FIRST EUROPEAN BURN BURNS!

BY DURGY

Durga has been a member of the DPW in BRC and at international burn for the last few years. Last year, he told us about Midburn, in Israel. This year he tells us about Sariñena, Spain.

Nowhere, established in 2006, was the first official international regional Burn. In 2006, Nowhere drew a crowd of over 2,000 participants, up from about 1,500 in 2005. For the first time in its history, Nowhere, was also able this year to build and run an effigy: a 4-meter (13-foot) tall lightburn.

The Mongeres region near Sarriñena Spain bans open fires from May until October (Nowhere: 2016: from July 5 to 10 ). The Nowhere site is desert-like, with small bars or brush and a hillside. An uncontrolled fire there could potentially spread from camp to camp with devastating andbumming-out effect.

Nowhere organizers have been negotiating with local officials since the event's inception to get a variance to the fire ban. These discussions led to stipulations for the event: the structure built by Werkhaus (Nowhere's DPW analog). The event was required to provide fire extinguishers at all the barrios (theme camps) and free camping areas.

What the street names mean

Esplanade: Sounds like it might be Italian, but it's really Spanish. A cognate, however, of the Italian esplanata, which means to make level.

Arno: The river in Tuscany. It probably forms the backdrop of the Mona Lisa, and for not nothing, Da Vinci worked up a plan to divert the waterway away from Pisa for the benefit of rival Florence. A failed project. An uncontrolled fire there could potentially spread from camp to camp with devastating and bumming-out effect.

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