**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([00:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=miQBKIk6S73yChngSNaaiUhqDuh8BKo4KQIh4loC0DiFhOV1PQM_QjB7BQvxFwWfUh97eg4nwFFyRvQzQP64YetxX9g&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=12.61)): Today, I'm speaking with Rose McAdooof Whisk Me Away Cakes. And yes, I said cakes. Rose is a visual artist who uses cakes to raise awareness about global issues, including environmental protection. Her work has received attention on national public radio, Forbes Magazine, and New York Magazine.

Welcome, Rose. Let me start by asking about where you grew up and whether you come from a family of artists or bakers.

**Rose McAdoo** ([00:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vveYiJVXsCFiag3EV7E8Q6z4Gjcklg8Ets0C9vQgKAld9suaVDbmjmJ680U9CclIdKHt9d_cMm8l3lVQP68nBRfS9G4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=42.54)): I didn't grow up in a family of artists or bakers in the sense that that was part of our every day. My grandma was a great painter, but I didn't know her super well. My mom's a photographer. My sister kind of got, what I thought she got, the art genes, and I was a bit more social, but it's been fun to discover art through the form of cake. It's been a really nice transition.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([01:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=55q_hMQ5KkbDmEgetR1Pw7lgAkghvjwlyjGWCkQNwYU1nAI2o4-EuyKH6snhqJXDtTPcQIEKc-D-6E1XaaB2aOe6EJg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=69.27)): So Rose, what is your formal training and how did you come to transform cakes into political statements?

**Rose McAdoo** ([01:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=TRB735wpd_FQvDbJTDoAEIX6ZwFCldCuAYGed3R0awzNtcu4K7NqfAomODYeJ00k8Zj6Wg0Ei_7N2ymYNmof_XYMxrQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=76.29)): I love school. I love college. It's just never been something in my financial wheelhouse. I've been financially independent for all of my adult life and that intermediate period until I became an adult, and so I have no formal training whatsoever. I got a lot of on-the-job training, which was awesome. It's such a great alternative to going to school, although I'm trying to go back to school now. But on-the-job training is such a powerful way of learning. You gain so many connections. You're learning in real-world time and real-world skills, and you're making money instead of paying money, so it all ended up working out. I landed an awesome group of mentors, specifically when I was working at Nine Cakes, which is a phenomenal cake shop that's located in Brooklyn, New York. Betsy Thorleifson is the owner of that company. She was my end-all, be-all person that I wanted to work for, and I got to be her right hand for four years, which was amazing. And she's still a huge mentor of mine and really showed me how to sculpt cakes, how to build whatever you want, and just really inspired me. And she has a really diverse career background as well. And so as I was feeling less fulfilled by the more traditional wedding route, she was really a huge encourager as I wanted to use cakes to start telling stories of migration and the refugee plight. And she was wonderful in donating her kitchen space to my creative baking endeavors and just a huge support as I left her company to work in Antarctica, and all of these things. I feel really lucky that I landed that.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([03:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mGr6UyYaFP_9r8WI8OXmTkarWqXeGTCgkWmx4Tzazz4k0XZUc3BbjstvGZbkiIqqoU0zpDYiPOyDLoJZsBofz-c8Jy4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=191.99)): Oh my goodness, you told me so many things. I want to ask you a million questions, but let's focus... You went to work in a bakery and you ended up in Antarctica.

**Rose McAdoo** ([03:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Sle0q7mFg-XGTe_PAjoPuqVWJIJC7Dmo18gnxTe0XH5wYVYQY-LOgmzMOFWX0E-qZLSklnf2Fh7WRqLaYhRYcm1N9dk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=204.64)): I did.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([03:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uEYoMgY7_N0ZcoTACOO0FuVYwsq93rjK1D0_EVl1UtFHQUu49CgB6pTGbocTm1gwyHAyWQCkioiVLiWqMj7H0sj3weQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=205.15)): How did that happen?

**Rose McAdoo** ([03:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CnIqTsX6X0ZFQl0YX25-GG5eiQkAUTILNOJVvVRxUJXVHWrVNhjhEVFNArUmVIQ-rt4R7KZRvcHeWL-gm-DFW02tvaE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=206.54)): Yeah, it was a long career path of working in patisseries. I was the head chef and catering director of a restaurant at 23, which I had no business doing, but was an awesome learning experience. And then ran a chocolate factory in Brooklyn and then got the job at the cake shop, and it was just food production and kitchen management in every capacity. I was like, "I'm not going to leave New York for something unless it's a larger adventure," which is I think pretty hard to find. And so when I got the opportunity to be one of the sous chefs down at Antarctica's McMurdo Station, obviously, you have to take an opportunity like that. So I headed down to Antarctica. For the first time in 2019, and I've since done three full seasons there, two summers, and then I just finished a long winter season, which was amazing.

Yeah, so there was no positions open on the bakery side in Antarctica, and so I was running the savory kitchen. I was the sous chef, or one of a team of four sous chefs for McMurdo Station's savory kitchen, producing breakfast, lunch, dinner, and midnight meals for up to 1100 scientists and support staff at that research station. That was my first season.

And then when I returned the second time, I got to be in a sous chef for LDB, which is NASA's Long Duration Balloon atmospheric research camp. So I still lived on the main station for that camp. It's kind of a best of both worlds. You get the social aspects of being on the main station, but I still got to commute out to camp every day where we had a secondary facility and I was doing savory and sweet there. Was a sous chef and then I had my supervisor, but it was just the two of us running camp food production.

And so then when I spent the winter down in Antarctica, I stayed and extended. There were no kitchen positions available and I made a bizarre transition into hazardous waste management, and so spent the winter just learning an entirely different career path. It was an amazing learning experience as far as how we manage and transfer our waste, because all the waste tests leave the continent by ship. And so I was forklifting around old fuel and oil, and processing chemicals from the Crary Science Lab as well.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([06:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7XgDD7uALoO2z1tBJKy1-9DBbIuJpPRiPqR5c7YKheaT-PlVnuAladABx8skITsf0Fr_52QNXbG_GSI-7Uy-sbnwuzc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=369.34)): All right, so let's rope you back in a little bit and ask how it came to be that you decided to transform cakes to make environmental statements.

**Rose McAdoo** ([06:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Cq7nmq0VIpymyFZqDUFWP1zQ68hhRvnpqanNESlzQxY4kz0tCr4pqD26Z-zCD8_kax55G2Abs2KY1sDrBta3RxF-FeQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=381.36)): My first season in the Antarctica I was heading to a lot of the science lectures there and my brain just formats anything that I learned about into cake. And so I was seeing data sets as tiered cakes and seeing the ice sheets as big cracks of fondant. And so when I left the ice, I wanted to design a balanced collection of Antarctic cakes. Started balancing the collection as far as different colors and stories and shapes, and put together seven cakes that I'm really proud of that spanned everything from biology to space sciences to logistics of how we get materials. But a big part of that process is just investing firsthand into learning and being in different places, and meeting different people and caring about what they care about.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([07:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=nr87d_2XIOYKGLbVZxlSUxQYg_HmYZWg2IeyOjXuLUgPLekJsBEm3K2wlVm5GcXGEh7428Gl1BZyjNUljxfTScAcB2s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=439.87)): What is your process for choosing a cause, designing the cake and then actually creating the cake?

**Rose McAdoo** ([07:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pB8hp3vHAWm4qvTBjOm0-qttCGF7TSGcG6ho0z6As_l1rIMecw00riN__uyyharfYL7U8j3bHl3894Gdp5Q9NEaw4As&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=446.32)): My process, I mean, whatever I fall in love with the most is what I want to share with people, and so it's very, very firsthand-experience based. And it's really important for me to be invested in the places and the people and the stories that I want to be sharing about. And so while it would be much easier for me to just have a cake studio and make cakes there, it's important to me to try and make these cakes in different locations and with the help of different people when that's possible. I take a lot of notes, I do a lot of research and ask a lot of questions to the scientists, for example, that I want to share the work of. And I've done a lot of cross-collaborative research on data science and how to visually share information. There are so many people who are really good at that, and so I'm able to kind of use their techniques to figure out how to do that in an edible form with cake. And so once I have the design setup, then it's just baking and covering in fondant. Yeah, sculpting and painting.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([08:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FD5JvDoSoKXUgMyWds0mAYm4Q42qk64xzwLP2DfrfyXf2ordYaklN7yfmELXb9C6xiy7pz1TzbCJN9pxRb_r5Dniv00&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=522.01)): Okay. Can you discuss one of your ocean-inspired cakes and describe it for those who are listening to an audio-only version of this podcast?

**Rose McAdoo** ([08:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=x4EELs95LxMvpkONmY0AwFgcOFyu4nQ5m61FxZXgbTwKKDCSwayIvDCPZBV1K7542cRHXtwp0Y3r5kVjiB51oaxjdcI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=531.68)): Absolutely. My favorite ocean-inspired cake is the Icebreaker Cake. It's kind of my pièce de résistance. It's very Antarctic looking. And it's a four... Actually, it's a five-tier cake. The bottom tier is completely white, the top tier is dark, dark blue, and the tiers in between are gradual breaking a part of that ice shelf. And so you move away from that stark white at the bottom. All the pieces start to crack and you get this really fractured-appearing transition up to that top tier. And then I created a little red boat, and it's super tiny on the cake. I think it's still disproportionately large, but it was necessary to make it about an inch and a half long. And that is the Polar Star, which is our icebreaker vessel that comes in so that we're able to use the ocean for logistics and transportation to support a science research station.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([09:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mXzSh0fZKSVzP7XypI_wWlyAPD6gjDlyx9lG9zLrCjLbO3dBF-vxZWFzvtivRVN47yYQ_MokII5IH28TH4olXjqdLyo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=593.98)): How are your cakes in expression of who you are as a person and your view of the world?

**Rose McAdoo** ([09:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Lavr9qRhbbGov8ohw7WD1i8GNPGKfXu4UhHTXVycr-aeRF0GH3eZdaGxNbh0nxmfIQoc4e4036IFTMwXurj5TYVsRlw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=599.56)):

My cakes are curious, as am I, and they run a really broad scope of subjects. I think there's a humility to them and that's not me saying, "Oh, look, I'm so humble." But a humility of knowledge I think is really important and a humility of how much you understand about the world. I'm a pastry chef. I don't know the first thing about space sciences or ocean systems, or what else, a seal colony is. I know nothing about that. And so being able to bring my art with the sense of humility, where I can ask the stupid questions that actually make sense and start to make these things relatable. I really believe that people only care about what they know about and that a lot of the world's discrepancies can be shifted with a one-on-one connection. And so if I'm able to live my life in this maybe bizarre way where I'm moving around a lot and making cakes in Antarctica or making cakes in prison or wherever, I think that that will connect more and more people. "Oh, I know someone who went to Antarctica. Now I'm more interested in Antarctic climate or seal research that's happening, or scientific practices as a whole." I think you have to share those stories and you have to hit on different things that maybe confuse people a little bit, and I think that that's where you end up grabbing people's attention.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([11:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=DpahsRuIqlFQcASKlNRuFHr2Zs0-NWY94riTNSnWdJ4Ro_VOEdZaSnpLYomebXw6Paq-B5K7BU21fg94yy_NULCm5HE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=707.8)): What's next for you?

**Rose McAdoo** ([11:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6Cww32VHjAuV6KJG3AhTxefQ5yH7qVaGEak13IgnMdV4gzMrRo5Ps4zXvvUDlCCpAbXN1FoJK1-iryEx1kJIclVeacU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=710.51)): I'm waiting on a couple artist-in-residency applications that I submitted. COVID's been really great for staying at home and applying to things, which is just a blessing in disguise. And I'm putting together a collection of, for lack of a better name, just really weird cakes. And so showing kind of the discrepancy in disproportionate data sets, where you maybe have a huge bottom tier and then a little tiny tier on top that shows temperature variables or biological diversity loss. Cakes that really make no sense size wise. And I think that that'll be a really fun visual for people, so I'm working on putting together a collection of weird data cakes.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([12:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UgxsLnFfQRGQE2dcMpscqjpKgONzL4HrbdnOmuxbpkItT9BXlwaKFCFSUStS5sRGoaNvU--s7Gs8umb4xrpUVU3D7Pk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=759.39)): Thank you, Rose, for sharing. This has been a lot of fun.

**Rose McAdoo** ([12:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=W0zl07Yauq4RCBvvwhjAh-b6BP5lvqaKVrNr4KJV3oXNb6zdyCW8AwbOcMZsILuG59LUHMVIlvdpj0J_g6PbtGz4b_U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=762.73)): Thank you so much, Pam. I'm really happy to be here.

**Pam Ferris-Olson** ([12:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cSLwn_en22m-S_cibG3jlbuTd-Y18yk4kfXy2jPmzs-G6DOvkhMXy0UGu4dRAbjtJnnfSK9jJ-Z676Ttx7qCd_mCgXk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=765.85)): I have been speaking with Rose McAdooof Whisk Me Awake Cakes in Brooklyn, New York for the Women Mind the Water Podcast Series. The series can be viewed on womenmindthewater.com. An audio version of this podcast is available on the Woman Mind the Water website and on iTunes, the name Women Mind the Water and the associated logo along with Pam Ferris-Olson. This is Pam Ferris-Olson. Thank you for listening.