



## Press Release

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[smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/about/press](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/about/press)

### **Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art**

February 16 – June 10, 2012

*New exhibition digs into intersections between art and eating*



Mella Jaarsma, /Eat You Eat Me, 2002. Photo documenting performance. Courtesy of the artist.

From the 1930 “Manifesto of Futurist Cooking” to a new food truck serving Iraqi cuisine on the streets of Chicago, the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art surveys the history of the artist-orchestrated meal in the exhibition *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art*. Through a presentation within the Smart and new commissions in public spaces, the exhibition serves

up the work of more than thirty artists and artists groups who have transformed the simple act of sharing food and drink with others into a radical form of hospitality that punctures everyday experience.

“Eating together is a basic element of human culture,” said Stephanie Smith, the exhibition’s organizer and Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Smart Museum of Art. “But it wasn’t until the last few decades that artists began to experiment with the aesthetic potential of the shared meal itself and craft provocative, meal-based projects that foster critical engagement with the world around us.”

*Feast*, the first exhibition of its kind, surveys the emergence of the artist-orchestrated meal, assessing its roots in early-twentieth century European avant-garde art, its development over the past decades within Western art, and its current global ubiquity. The exhibition will introduce new artists and contextualize their work in relation to some of the most influential artists of recent history—from the Italian Futurists and Gordon Matta-Clark to Marina Abramovic and Rirkrit Tiravanija. It also will present new and restaged projects that will allow the public to experience first hand the ways in which artists are using the meal as a catalyst for artistic expression.

*Feast* opens with a public reception on Wednesday, February 15, from 7:30–9 pm. The evening features beer and conversation with conceptual artist Tom Marioni, a performance by Theaster Gates and the Black Monks of Mississippi, and the debut of Michael Rakowitz’s *Enemy Kitchen (Food Truck)*, which will be parked outside the Smart Museum serving regional Iraqi cuisine on limited edition paper replicas of Saddam Hussein’s china.

## Artists

*Feast* includes art, documentary materials, and new public projects by a multigenerational roster of artists: Marina Abramovic and Ulay, Sonja Alhäuser, Mary Ellen Carroll, Fallen Fruit, Theaster Gates, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, InCUBATE, the Italian Futurists, Mella Jaarsma, Alison Knowles, Suzanne Lacy, Lee Mingwei, Laura Letinsky, Tom Marioni, Gordon Matta-Clark, Mildred's Lane, Julio César Morales and Max La Rivère-Hedrick, motiroti, National Bitter Melon Council, Ana Prvacki, Sudsiri Pui-Ock, Michael Rakowitz, Ayman Ramadan, Red76, David Robbins, Allen Ruppertsberg, Bonnie Sherk, Barbara T. Smith, Daniel Spoerri, Rirkrit Tiravanija, and others.

## Gallery presentation

For high-resolution images of works and projects in the exhibition, please contact C.J. Lind at 773.702.0176, [cjind@uchicago.edu](mailto:cjind@uchicago.edu), or visit [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/about/press](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/about/press).

The exhibition is anchored by a presentation of objects and documentary material at the Smart Museum of Art that reveals the many different ways artists have employed meals to advance individual aesthetic goals. The gallery presentation chronicles one-time performances and decades-old participatory pieces through displays that mix food, photography, video, printed material, installation work, paintings, drawings, and archival material. Several pieces have not been seen by the public in decades, and the exhibition is designed in part with an eye toward their long-term preservation.

The earliest material is associated with the Italian Futurists and their founder F.T. Marinetti, who broke open the possibility that food and meals could be used not only as subject matters for art—in traditional still life paintings, or depictions of the Last Supper—but also as the art itself. In the 1960s and 1970s, many artists set aside conventional object-making in favor of idea- and performance-based work, including seminal pieces that involved eating and drinking. By the 1990s, the artist-orchestrated meal became a foundational element of the relational and interactive modes of contemporary art-making. These later examples of social and critical feasts reveal that meal-based projects are no longer limited to the West, but rather have become a truly global practice in art.

## New commissions and other highlights

In addition to the gallery presentation, *Feast* invites the active participation of the public and others through a series of meals, salons, and other projects. These take place within the Smart and across Chicago. Lotteries will be held to choose at random the guests for select projects, some are by invitation only, and still others are ongoing or drop-in events open to all. For more information and to enter, visit [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/join-the-feast](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/join-the-feast).

The artist Mary Ellen Carroll brought her **Itinerant Gastronomy** project to town with *Open Outcry*, a commodities-inspired lunch, discussion, and temporary installation at Chicago's

Board of Trade. The meal took place within a unique sculptural seating arrangement designed in collaboration with architect Simon Dance. The intimate setting and focused conversation—with five questions, one for each course—created a lasting exchange among the small group of invited guests.

**Theaster Gates** is collaborating with chef Michael Kornick and soul-food expert Erika Dudley to host a series of ritualized dinners at Dorchester Projects, a group of once-vacant homes in the Grand Crossing neighborhood on Chicago's South Side. A diverse mix of curated guests and members of the public will join Gates for five dinners that will combine meals served on specially commissioned ceramics created in collaboration with Japanese master potter Kouichi Ohara, performance, and discussions around a variety of themes: *The Geography of Soul* (February 19), *The Art of Soul* (March 11), *The History of Soul* (April 15), *The Politics of Soul* (May 6), and *The Community of Soul* (June 3).

In collaboration with chefs from Chicago's Iraqi community, **Michael Rakowitz** will launch a new mobile iteration of his ongoing *Enemy Kitchen* project. On Sundays and Mondays, *Enemy Kitchen (Food Truck)* will travel around the city serving a rotating menu of regional Iraqi dishes, with American veterans of the Iraq War acting as servers and sous-chefs. The food will be served on limited edition, paper reproductions of china found in Saddam Hussein's palaces. The truck's Twitter address is [@EnemyKitchen](https://twitter.com/EnemyKitchen).

**Laura Letinsky** will be creating a new photograph from the aftermath of a meal she will prepare for her fellow *Feast* artists. The work will be on view within the exhibition at the Smart. In spring 2012, in her role as professor in the University of Chicago's Department of Visual Art, Letinsky will teach a related course about the intersections between food and contemporary art. (In 2011, Letinsky and curator Stephanie Smith taught a similar course.)

Bay Area-based artist Tom Marioni's long-running salon **The Act of Drinking Beer With Friends is the Highest Form of Art** will be staged in the Smart's galleries on a series of evenings over the course of the exhibition (February 15, March 1, April 5, May 3, and June 7). Guest bartenders—including Museum of Contemporary Art Director Madeleine Grynsztejn, hip-hop group BBU, theater collective the Neo-Futurists, and other Chicago notables—will serve the free beer.

Five guests, chosen by lottery, will have the opportunity to dine one-on-one with artist Lee Mingwei in the Smart's galleries, after hours, within an elegant sculptural installation. The artist will prepare the simple meals himself. First presented in 1997, **The Dining Project** has been staged at museums around the world.

On the March 14 anniversary of **Suzanne Lacy's** landmark participatory performance *International Dinner Party* (1979), the artist and the Smart Museum invite people to host a

dinner party that honors a woman in their own region. For the original performance, thousands of participants around the world sent Lacy telegrams, letters, ephemera, and photographs to document their dinners and share their stories. This time, participants are invited to share your stories and photos online.

The collective Red76 will be presenting **Occupy Yr. Home**, a series of gatherings at tables across the country, where participants will eat, drink, and discuss what it means to Occupy their own home now that “the Occupations have gone fallow” for winter.

A highlight of the symposium on May 4–5 will be the world premiere presentation of artist Alison Knowles’s **Identical Lunch Symphony**. Building on her classic 1960s Fluxus scores, Knowles will conduct performers who will use blenders to mix the components of her habitual lunch—a tuna fish sandwich with butter and lettuce, no mayo, and a cup of soup or glass of buttermilk—which then will be served to the audience.

### **Related programs**

*Unless noted, all programs are free and open to the public and take place at the Smart Museum of Art. For more information, visit [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar) or call 773.702.0200.*

Wednesday, February 15, 7:30–9 p.m.

### **Opening Reception**

Celebrate the public opening of *Feast*. The evening features beer and conversation with conceptual artist Tom Marioni, a performance by Theaster Gates and the Black Monks of Mississippi, and the debut of Michael Rakowitz’s *Enemy Kitchen (Food Truck)*.

Thursday, February 16, 6 pm

### **Marina Abramovic: A Lecture on Performance and its Future**

*First United Methodist Church at the Unity Temple, 77 West Washington Street*

Marina Abramovic gives a lecture on performance, reflecting on this provocative art form and her own influential work, including *Communist Body/Fascist Body* on view in *Feast*.

*Presented in collaboration with the Chicago Humanities Festival. \$15 / \$10 Smart and CHF members.*

*Tickets available at [chicagohumanities.org](http://chicagohumanities.org).*

Sunday, February 26, 2 pm

### **Concert: A Feast of Songs**

Listen to songs about food, drink, and feasting by classical composers from J.S. Bach to George Gershwin and Lee Hoiby.

*Presented in collaboration with the University of Chicago Department of Music.*

Thursday, March 1, 5:30–7:30 pm

### **The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art**

Drink free beer with Anthony Hirschel, Dana Feitler Director of the Smart Museum of Art, and Madeleine Grynsztejn, Pritzker Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.  
*Must be 21 or older.*

Saturday, March 3, 1–4 pm

**Family Day: Sharing is Caring**

Share your creative talent during an afternoon of collaborative art activities inspired by *Feast*.  
*All materials provided. Best for children 4–12, accompanied by an adult.*

Thursday, April 5, 5:30–7:30 pm

**The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art**

Drink free beer with Chicago hip-hop group BBU.

*Must be 21 or older.*

Friday, April 13, 12–3 pm

**Teacher Workshop: Lessons Learned Around the Table**

A potluck-style workshop for teachers interested in introducing themes of hospitality into the classroom. Featuring a talk by artist Laura Letinsky.

*CPDUs available. Open to teachers of all disciplines. Space is limited. Teachers should register in advance at [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register).*

Thursday, May 3, 5:30–7:30 pm

**The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art**

Drink free beer with a guest bartender.

*Must be 21 or older.*

Friday and Saturday, May 4–5

**Symposium: Of Hospitality**

Looking back to the ancient Greek origins of “symposium,” this event brings the life of the mind together with the life of the body. The weekend includes talks, performances, discussion, food, and drink, with *Feast* and philosopher Jacques Derrida’s classic text “Of Hospitality” as the key points of departure. Full schedule and participants to be announced.

*Space is limited. The public should register in advance at [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register).*

Thursday, May 10, 5:30–7:30 pm

**Sketching at the Smart**

Sketch from a banquet of food that you later get to eat. University of Chicago MFA student Anna Elise Johnson leads the drawing exercises.

*All materials provided. All skill levels welcome.*

Friday, May 25, 12 pm

**Lunch-hour Talk: “Feasts in the Ancient World”**

Archaeologist Geoff Emberling discusses feasting traditions in ancient Mesopotamia and explores connections to the culture of the Middle East today.

*Space is limited. The public should register in advance at [smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register](http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register).*

Sunday, June 3, 2 pm

**Curator Tour**

Curator Stephanie Smith leads a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibition.

Thursday, June 7, 5:30–7:30 pm

**The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art**

Drink free beer with Chicago theater collective The Neo-Futurists.

*Must be 21 or older.*

Sunday, June 10, 2–4 pm

**Ice Cream Social**

A closing-day party featuring special ice cream cakes designed by artist David Robbins that update and celebrate the American tradition of the ice cream social.

**Related Publication**

The exhibition is accompanied by a book that offers a stimulating introduction to and exploration of the intersections between food and art. The publication is part exhibition catalogue, part critical reader, and includes entries on all of the *Feast* artists, critical essays, and excerpts from classic texts. It is edited by *Feast* curator Stephanie Smith and includes essays by Charles Esche, Jan Verwoert, Irina Aristarkhova, Carolyn Korsmeyer, Geoff Emberling, and David Teh. Published by The New Press, it will be available in spring 2012.

**Tour**

*Exact tour dates and possible additional venues to be announced.*

Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, Texas

Fall 2013

SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Winter 2014

**Curator**

*Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* is curated by Stephanie Smith, Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Smart Museum of Art.

## **Support**

*Feast* is made possible by an Emily Hall Tremaine Exhibition Award. Generous major support has also been provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Chicago Community Trust, Helen Zell, the Chauncey and Marion Deering McCormick Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional support is provided by the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, the Richard and Mary L. Gray Foundation, the University of Chicago's Arts Council, and Janis Kanter and Tom McCormick.



**Tremaine Foundation**



## **About the Smart Museum of Art**

As the art museum of the University of Chicago, the Smart Museum of Art is home to acclaimed special exhibitions and a permanent collection that spans five thousand years of artistic creation. Working in close collaboration with scholars from the University of Chicago, the Smart has established itself as a leading academic art museum and an engine of adventurous thinking about the visual arts and their place in society.

### **Smart Museum of Art**

**The University of Chicago**  
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### **Hours**

Tuesday–Friday	10 am–4 pm
Thursday	10 am–8 pm
Saturday and Sunday	11 am–5 pm

Galleries closed Mondays and holidays  
Thursday evening hours will return in the fall.

**Admission is always free**