Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art

Since the 1930s, many artists have used the simple act of sharing food and drink to advance aesthetic goals and to foster critical engagement with the culture of their moment. These artist-orchestrated meals can offer a radical form of hospitality that punctures everyday experience, using the meal as a means to shift perceptions and spark encounters that aren’t always possible in a fast-moving and segmented society.

Organized by the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art, Feast surveys these practices for the first time through a presentation within the Museum and a series of new commissions in public spaces. The exhibition introduces new artists and contextualizes their work in relation to other influential artists, from the Italian Futurists and Gordon Matta-Clark to Marina Abramović and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

JOIN THE FEAST

Discover first hand the ways in which artists use shared experiences with food and drink to spur new ways of thinking about our world. As part of Feast, the Smart will present an array of participatory projects, meals, and salons that take place within the Smart Museum and across Chicago. Highlights include five ritual soul food dinners and performances with Theaster Gates at Dorchester Projects, Michael Rakowitz’s roving Enemy Kitchen (Food Truck), and a series of one-on-one dinners with artist Lee Mingwei, held after hours within a sculptural installation at the Smart.

For certain events, guests will be chosen in advance via lottery. To enter the drawing and to learn more about these and other participatory projects, visit smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/join-the-feast.

ARTISTS


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 or call 773.702.0200.

Wednesday, February 15, 6–7:30 p.m.
Exclusive Preview
Smart supporters are invited to an exclusive preview of Feast featuring a cabaret performance by Sonja Alhäuser and the chance to drink beer with artist Tom Marioni. The exclusive preview is by invitation only. To RSVP, please contact smarthsvp@uchicago.edu or call 773.702.2368 by February 1.

Wednesday, February 15, 7:30–9 p.m.
Opening Reception
Celebrate the public opening of Feast. The evening features 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 p.m.
Marina Abramović: A Lecture on Performance and its Future
First Unitarian Methodist Church at the Unity Temple
77 West Washington Street
Marina Abramović 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.

Sunday, February 26, 2 p.m.
Concert: A Feast of Songs
Listen to songs about food, drink, and feasting by classical composers from J. S. Bach to George Frideric Handel and Lee Hoiby. Presented in collaboration with the University of Chicago Department of Music.

Thursday, March 1, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art
As part of artist Tom Marioni’s famed salon, drink free beer with guest bartenders 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 p.m.
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 p.m.
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, noon–3 p.m.
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.
Preliminary registration is required. Must be 21 or older.

Saturday, May 5, 1–4 p.m.
Family Day: Sharing is Caring
Family Day is dedicated to the spirit of sharing and caring. All materials provided. Best for children 4–12, accompanied by an adult.

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. Space is limited. Please register in advance.

Thursday, May 10, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
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, noon
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.
Preliminary registration is required. Must be 21 or older.

Sunday, June 3, 2 p.m.
Curator Tour
Curator Stephanie Smith leads a behind-the-scenes tour of the exhibition.

Thursday, June 7, 5:30–7:30 p.m.
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 p.m.
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.

*Register for lectures, workshops, and the symposium at smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/calendar/register.

EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Feast will be accompanied by a publication that is part exhibition catalogue, part critical reader. Published by The New Press, it will be available in summer 2012.

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

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