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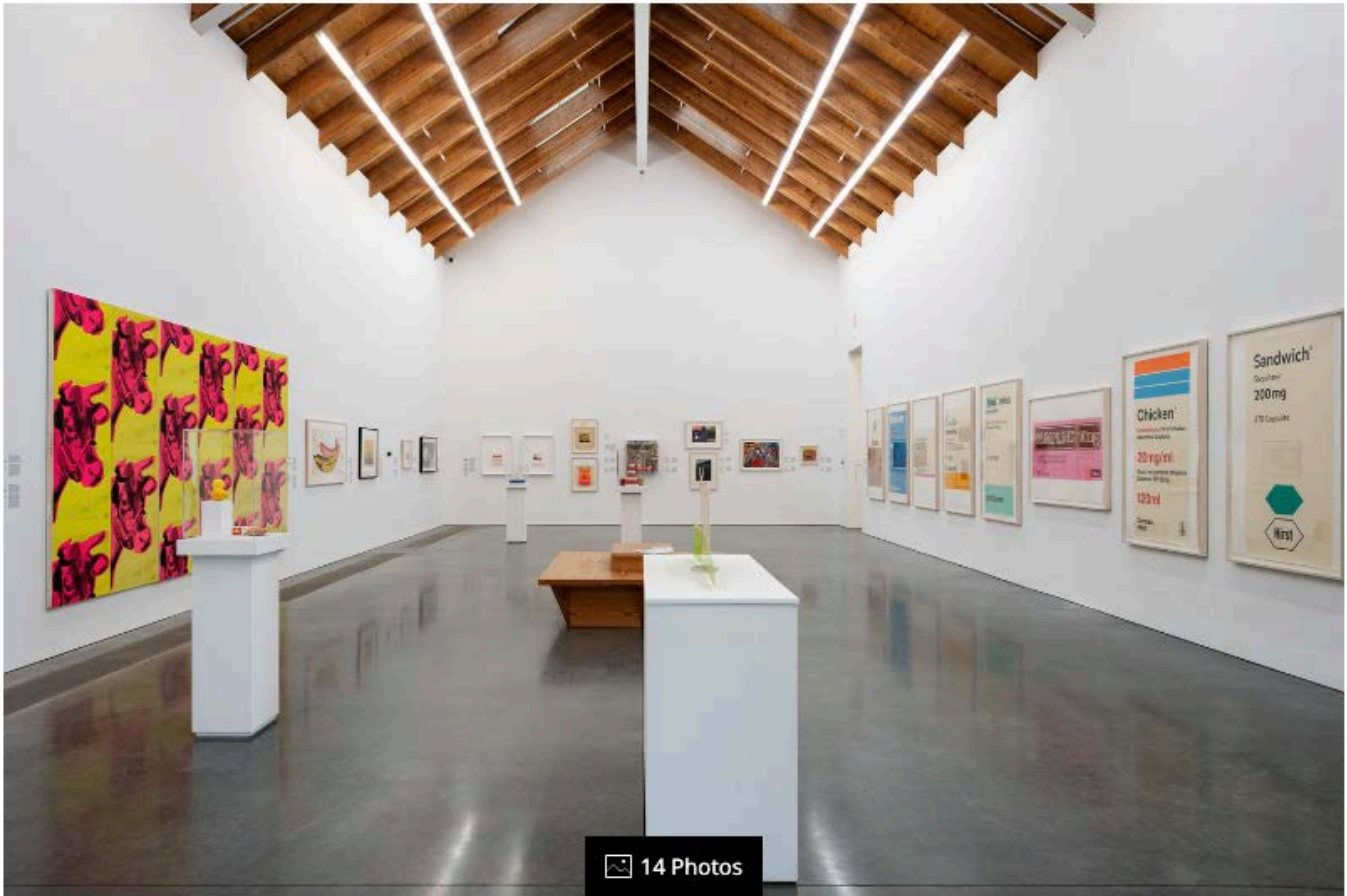
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An Exhibition Provides Food for Thought at Parrish Art Museum



Kelly Ann Smith on Apr 30, 2024



The Parrish Art Museum's current exhibition, "The Art of Food: From the Collections of Jordan D. Schnitzer and His Family Foundation," opened April 21, and is up until the end of June. Have a bite to eat before you go, otherwise, you will be ravenous when you leave.

Jordan Schnitzer grew up an only child in Portland, Oregon. His father made his fortune in real estate and his mother started the Fountain Gallery of Art, giving contemporary artists of the Pacific Northwest their own shot at fame and fortune.

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As a young boy, Schnitzer was enthralled by the gallery. He often tells the story of how he purchased his first work of art, a small painting called “Sanctuary” by Portland artist Louis Bunce that his mother put on lay-away for him, taking \$5 from his weekly allowance until it was paid off.

But he tells another story less often. Even earlier, in 1963, as the gallery space was being prepped to open near Skidmore Fountain in Portland’s Old Town, he noticed “a funny little chest in the corner” and wondered how a shirt or sweater could fit in such narrow drawers, so he opened one to find “a really pretty fuchsia image, sort of like finger painting.”

“What is it?” he asked his mother.

“Well it’s a print,” she told her 12-year old son. “If you like it you can have it.”

That was the beginning of his love affair with works on paper. Schnitzer now has nearly 20,000 prints in his collection. His family name is on several museums on the West Coast and the foundation is consistently giving university and regional museums an opportunity to showcase the work.

Oliva Miller, Director and Curator of Exhibitions at the University of Arizona Museum of Art, selected the works for “The Art of Food,” given that Tucson, where the university is located, is a UNESCO City of Gastronomy. She designated the artwork as seven categories: Community, Dissociation, Control, Food for Thought, Eye Candy, Still Life and Elixirs and Libations. The artwork fit perfectly to the environment, as it does here on the East End, thanks to the area’s long fishing and agricultural roots. It doesn’t hurt that many of the artists, such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Donald Sultan, had homes here. Others just hung out here, eating and drinking.

Artists have always fed off one another, in one way or another but still, it’s almost disconcerting



that Lichtenstein and Warhol have nearly identical pieces in the exhibit. Two paper grocery bags are shown side by side. Lichtenstein used an image of a turkey on a serving platter to illustrate the bag in 1964, while Warhol depicted his now iconic Campbell's tomato soup can in 1966.

Also in the "Dissociation" category, or grocery bag department, is Analia Saban's 2016 plastic bag proclaiming "Gracias" and "Thank You" three times each. Little did the artist know that those single-use bags would be banned in many towns and cities years later, including in Southampton and East Hampton.

By the way, Schnitzer insisted the entire exhibit and all materials involved are in Spanish as well as English.

Influenced by Picasso's bulls, six Lichtenstein lithographs from 1973 demonstrate how the artist went from one black and white bull on a plain white background to adding a bit of blue to the bull and the background. He simplified the form with each iteration. He straightened lines and flattened the plane until the animal was no longer seen, similar to what Picasso did in 1945.

Along with Lichtenstein's "Bull Profile," Alex Katz's 2004 "Cow" falls under the category "Food for Thought," but honestly, I think it's just a pretty picture, and that's okay.

"Whatever any of you see," Schnitzer said, gesturing at the artwork around him, in the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, at the University of Oregon, nine years ago. "You are right and none of us can tell anyone else that what you see is not a valid interpretation of what the work is."

The sentiment has become his mantra of sorts. You are never wrong when interpreting artwork.

John Baldessari forces you to think. Phrases placed under images of fruits and vegetables are so random, it's anyone's game. A single lemon paired with the slogan, "Sixteen Saltines," is titled "And One Sardine." If nothing else, it did make me hungry.



Fruits are everywhere in “The Art of Food” but the Ellsworth Kelly sketches of pears, lemons and tangerines, from the mid-1960s, are the epitome of simplicity, something that everyone can love.

Donald Sultan’s “Four Lemons” are reminiscent of Lichtenstein’s bulls but here, the artist plays with color beginning with a yellow lemon on a black background and ending with a black lemon on a gray background, rendering the lemon almost unrecognizable.

Fruit is often eroticized. Here, sex is found under the category “Eye Candy.” Sherrie Wolf’s 2002 series, “Artemisia Suite,” features cherries, plums and pears. The etchings allude to the famous 17th century artist Artemisia Gentileschi, who was raped by another painter in 1612, when she was a teen.

There was a court case at the time — not because a woman was raped, but because the Gentileschi family name had been tarnished. During the trial, the young girl was again tortured with thumbscrews to see if she was telling the truth.

Now that’s food for thought.

Oddly enough, it wasn’t the beautifully flashy David Hockney “Caribbean Tea Time,” 1987, a four-part folding screen or “Covet,” 2013, the delicate, orgy-inspired porcelain sculpture by Chris Antemann that struck my fancy the most.

It was Abraham Cruzvillegas “Ichárhuta,” 2017, that spoke to me on the deepest level. The work depicts two 50-peso bills on a sheet of handmade paper. The bill on top is flat, with an illustration of fishermen using a native fishing net called a “purepecha” in Lake Pátzcuaro, in Michoacán State, Mexico. The other bill, below, is folded into the shape of a small skiff.

As I write this, I can see that a couple of baymen in a similar skiff are assembling a fishing trap in Gardiner’s Bay. This way of fishing was probably passed down from Native Americans. Nets hang from wooden poles in the water. A funnel steers the fish into a trap, which is then lifted out



of the water to expose the catch.

In connection with this exhibition, Long Island's food history will be discussed by a distinguished panel on Friday, May 10, at 6 p.m. Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation will moderate panelists Marin Brennan, a winemaker at Bedell Cellars, Geoffrey Drummond, Executive Director of East End Food Lab, Mila McKey, Shinnecock Tribal Member and oyster farmer and Amber Mellow, co-founder of Amber Waves Farm in Amagansett.

Chief curator Corinne Erni will give members a tour of the exhibition before the panel discussion, as well as on other dates so check the Parrish's website for tickets and details.

The Parrish continues celebrating the "Art of Food" with a four-course benefit dinner "Canvas & Cuisine: Connecting Culinary and Visual Arts" curated by Chef Angie Mar of Le B and co-chaired by cookbook author Aliya LeeKong and Wölffer Estate Vineyard's Joey Wölffer on Sunday, May 26, at 6:30 p.m.