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## 'Foodies' nourishes visual and visceral senses at WAC

Meg Barone Published 9:15 am, Saturday, September 15, 2012



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Artist Andrea Morganstern's fiberglass "Cornbird" is one of 70 pieces in Westport Arts Center's current exhibit "Foodies" through Nov. 4

If it's true that art feeds the soul then an estimated 600 people were satisfied Friday after "dining" on a sumptuous visual feast of paintings, photography, sculptures and mixed-media artwork on display at the [Westport Arts Center](#) for the opening reception of the new exhibit, "Foodies."

The exhibit, which runs through Nov. 4, showcases art with titles like "Symphony of Oranges," "Baking Day," "Earth's Bounty" and "Pomegranate Limelight."

"Foodface, Happy Meal" is a real Happy Meal encased in a polymer emulsion. Other works were "The Dagwood Sandwich," "Leftovers" and a humorous watercolor by [Hans](#)

**Wilhelm** called "Pigs and Peas."

And then there was dessert-themed works -- "Sweet Surprise," "Banana Split," "Strawberry Garden," "Rainier Cherries," "Red Grapes" and **Nancy Reinker's** mixed-media "Your Just Desserts."

"The show is very stimulating for all of your senses," said artist **Valerie Lynn O'Halpin** of Stamford, whose rapidograph pen-and-ink creation featured eggs, melon, lobster, strawberries, chocolate cake and grapes. It took her more than 100 hours over six months to complete the piece that she calls "Food for Thought."

WAC board member **Dan Levinson** said food for thought is what the arts center serves up every day. "The mission is to engage the community in meaningful conversation ... Art is the only thing that has a shot at changing the world," he said.

For Friday night's opening, the center doubled as an art and food gallery featuring local artists' works and local chefs' creations.

**Helen Klisser** During, WAC's director of visual arts, invited local artists to submit their interpretation of food in any medium, from painting and sculpture to photography and video. While appreciating the artists' conceptual displays of food, patrons savored real culinary artistry by well-known local chefs and purveyors.

The Foodies showcase includes the work of 70 artists from across the state and New York. The pieces were chosen by a panel of four jurors and food experts from more than 140 submissions. **Chef Michel Nischan**, owner of the Dressing Room; **Bill Taibe**, chef and owner of Le Farm and The Whelk; **Pat Callahan**, president of Pepperidge Farm, and **Stew Leonard Jr.** of Stew Leonard's supermarkets.

"What a great way to end the week by celebrating art and food," said Callaghan, pointing out that Pepperidge Farm started the week opening a new innovation center in Norwalk.

Taibe said he always wanted to paint and draw but didn't have artistic talent. "I wanted to get what was in my head down on a piece of paper. Food is my way of doing it. Food

can be artistic and creative," said Taibe, who especially enjoyed a large-scale oil painting of carrots still in the ground by [Dale Najarian](#) titled "Grounded."

Westport artist [Scott Glaser](#)'s acrylic and collage titled "181 Movies, 173,760 Calories" featured a large kernel of popcorn against a backdrop of ticket stubs from films he had seen.

[Sherry Adler](#) of Harrison, N.Y., said it was a real treat to be able to speak to the Glaser and have him explain his work to her.

[Elizabeth DeVall](#), who works at the [Westport Historical Society](#), was taken with Nancy Reinker's "Your Just Desserts." Reinker, of Weston, said she used pieces of paper cut from a newspaper article to create round balls that looked like ice cream scoops, which she placed into dessert cups. DeVall said it reminded her of the news of the day and the flavor of the day.

First Selectman Gordon Joseloff pointed out to the crowd that the WAC event coincided with the opening of a food festival in Westport, Ireland. He had everyone sing what they could remember of the lyrics to "Food Glorious Food," a song from the musical "Oliver."

Throughout the course of the Foodies exhibit, WAC will host a number of related events, including "Get WACky" with Food Art on Sept. 30, from 1 to 3 p.m., when children and families are invited to take part in a range of food-inspired art projects.

Admission is \$10 per child. Admission is free for adults and children age two and under. Pre-registration is requested by phone by calling 203-222-7070 or by purchasing tickets online at [www.westportartscenter.org](http://www.westportartscenter.org). Ticket sales at the door will be on a first-come first-served basis.

The Westport Arts Center gallery, 51 Riverside Ave., is open seven days a week, Monday-Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m.

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