

HYPERALLERGIC

EVENTS

15 Artists Address the Politics of Food in Whimsical and Weighty Ways

Current:LA Food will focus not only on the ways that food can define and expand our world, but also on global issues of food justice, accessibility, and equity.

Matt Stromberg October 2, 2019



Emily Marchand (image courtesy the artist)

New York may be the nation's fine dining capital, while San Francisco is the birthplace of the farm-to-table movement, but Los Angeles is home to an incomparably diverse bounty of cheap eats and street food. From Korean barbecue and Persian ice cream to Oaxacan tlayudas, Vietnamese pho, and everyday delicacies from Thailand, Ethiopia, India, China, the Philippines, and beyond — not to

mention popular fusions of two or more culinary traditions — LA's edible landscape reflects its complex ethnic and cultural makeup.



Ry Rocklen (image courtesy the artist)

It makes perfect sense, then, that *Current:LA* — the triennial that sites art projects and installations in public venues around the city — would choose the topic of food for its second iteration. In conjunction with the Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (ICA LA), the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs commissioned 15 artists to

present gastronomically inspired projects alongside public programming from community partners. Curated by Asuka Hisa and Jamillah James of the ICA LA, [Current:LA Food](#) will focus not only on the ways that food can define and expand our world, but also on global issues of food justice, accessibility, and equity.

Below are five highlights from the triennial, which opens this weekend and runs through November 3.

[Jazmin Urrea](#) will install eight-foot-tall monoliths of Flamin' Hot Cheetos® in South LA's Martin Luther King Jr. Park, turning popular junk food into a monument to food insecurity. [Ry Rocklen](#) will transform Palms Park into a giant digestive system with bronze sculptures based on his *Food Group* characters dressed as popcorn, tacos, pizza, hot dogs, and other hand-held foods. In Reseda Recreation Center, [Eva Aguila's](#) [Comida A Mano](#) will also examine eating with our hands, featuring a Mexican *comal* over an earthen oven with demonstrations by a local tortillero artist, accompanied by experimental videos "[honoring utensil-less cuisines around the world.](#)"



Cooking Sections (image courtesy the artist)

[Michael Rakowitz](#) tackles international politics with [Beneath the Date Palms](#) in Pan Pacific Park, a recreation of Room F from the Northwest Palace of Nimrud in Iraq. Meals laden with dates are meant to inspire participants to discuss the historical relationship between the US and Iraq. And at Roger Jessup Park in Pacoima, [Emily Marchand](#) will organize volunteers to pack [A Thousand Lunches](#) to benefit local homeless services. From the

whimsical to the weighty, *LA:Current Food* will address the broad spectrum of meanings and associations that food plays in our lives.

When: Saturday, October 5–Sunday, November 3

Where: Venues all over Los Angeles

More info at [Current LA](#)

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