

Deborah Oropallo



**'Nourish' explores meeting ground of art and hospitality at Napa Valley Museum**  
September 16, 2015

**SF**

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"Nourish," a new show opening Friday at the Napa Valley Museum, examines the intersection of dining, hospitality and art from Napa Valley to the global community.

**NY**

313 W 14th Street 2F  
New York, NY  
By appointment only

Artist Nancy Willis is guest curator for the multifaceted exhibition that "spans centuries of thinkers and makers who address food, dining and service in their creative output," according to a news release, which describes the show as a way "to think about the way we relate to food and dining through the lens of art history and visual culture."

**WEB**

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An opening reception for "Nourish" takes place from 6-7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 18, with general admission tickets for \$5. A museum members-only preview is from 5-6 p.m.

"As an artist living in the Napa Valley I have had a dual professional life," Willis said. "In addition to a committed studio practice, I have worked nearly every position in restaurants, as a prep chef for an iconic catering company to my current position as a design instructor at the Culinary Institute of America. These experiences have afforded me a unique perspective that has illuminated the perpetuating influence between the two industries and on my own work. With 'Nourish,' I want to offer a new perspective about where I live and celebrate the beauty, strength and relativity of the arts as a vital source of daily nourishment."

Presenting an artist's view of the sensations, activities, details and conditions that set the stage for a memorable dining moment, the show includes works by more than 25 artists including Kathy Aoki, Gale Antokal, Nikki Ballere Callnan, Sue Bradford, Will Callnan III, Heather Capen, Zoe Crosher, Richard Diebenkorn, Kim Dingle, Caitlin Williams Freeman, Liz Hickok, Paul Kirchner, Catherine Maize, Robb McDonough, Debbie Miller, Deborah Oropallo, Lucy Puls, Gideon Rubin, Meg Smith, Mark Stock, Wayne Thiebaud, Chris Thorson, Michael Tompkins, Katherine Vetne, Nancy Willis and Bijan Yashar.

"Nourish" will present also monotypes created by Napa Valley chefs, and drawings by Chicago chef Grant Achatz of the three Michelin star restaurant, Alinea.

“There is an historical tie between art and gastronomy that ranges from the symbolic representations of Dutch Still Life painting to current artist practices around consumerism and the environment,” the press release notes. “Artists and chefs continue to satiate, expand, and ignite our imaginations by defying the limits of material restrictions. With molecular gastronomy, chefs like Grant Achatz transform dinner into a conceptually driven experience while artists like Liz Hickok and **Deborah Oropallo** use food sustenance and the conventions of dining as materials and metaphors in their work.”

Originally from Cincinnati, Willis has lived in Napa Valley for 25 years. She received a master’s degree in fine arts from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2005 and, in addition to a committed studio practice, is an active exhibition curator, educator and advocate. Her work in the food and hospitality industries has influenced the themes of her work, including the series on the dinner table. In 2007, she successfully launched an annual Path of the Artist painting tour to France, leading artists through Paris, Bordeaux, Bergerac and the Mediterranean.

Recently, Willis has extended the annual workshop to include Sundance. Willis teaches painting and printmaking at the Napa Valley College and Nimbus Arts, and the principals of design at the Culinary Institute of America/Greystone and San Antonio.