

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.



Contemporary artist Rachel Lee Hovnanian explores modern America's obsession with sweet breakfast food in a box. Seemingly wholesome and convenient, sugar cereals have been an important staple in every household for decades. This mixed media installation demonstrates their seductive qualities with colorful and cheerful packaging oozing a glittery white substance throughout, but with a deeper message.

"The image of Tony the Tiger, Trix Rabbit and Lucky the Leprechaun entertained generations of children on Saturday mornings," explains Hovnanian. In addition to enticing kids to want the products, mothers were persuaded to believe that the dyed, genetically modified corn product we call cereal was a "'grrrreat!' way to feed their families."

The artist is influenced by her mother, who ran a cooking school and was a gourmet chef. Never allowed to eat fake or synthetic food, Hovnanian then envied her friends whose mothers were less strict. Now she wants people to see that mass produced products weren't necessarily ever the healthiest of choices. In today's world, the result of succumbing to these temptations is the rise of childhood obesity and other maladies.

Another commentary Hovnanian presents in her art is the connection between the instant gratification of quick-to-eat food and the similar sensation we get when using social media rather than personal one-on-one communication. Imagine the unreal experience of virtual reality that we face on our screens every day, complete with faux friends and a false sense of human interaction. [Then, compare it to the addiction to the crunchy, child-friendly, candy-like features of commercial breakfast cereal, such as Rice Krispies, that we could eat every morning.](#) The relevant question is: Who can resist either addiction, whether it is the ultimate sugar rush or the instantaneous flow of entertainment and information of the internet? Rachel Lee Hovnanian believes she has the answer in that neither sugar cereal nor cyberspace are objectively bad, but are an undeniable part of present-day life.





Claes Oldenburg's "Flying Pizza," a 1964 lithograph, is in the show at the Nassau County Museum of Art.

MUSEUM OF ART

an appetite for art

'Feast for the Eyes' serves visual treats in Nassau show

BY STEVE PARKS
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Never go to the supermarket on an empty stomach. And the same advice may apply to the sumptuous "Feast for the Eyes" exhibit at the Nassau County Museum of Art. If you haven't already had lunch, stop by the museum cafe for a bite before you take in the lush visual treats arrayed, upstairs and down, in eight galleries and two hallways.

Franklin Hill Perrell, who curated "Feast," celebrated its opening reception party by donning a pair of brightly hued pop art socks he bought in the museum shop. They



ON THE COVER "Fruit Salad," an oil on linen by Tjalf Sparmaay, a Dutch artist who specializes in realistic paintings, is part of the exhibit.

drew admiring remarks from reception guests as he sat cross-legged on a bench in the lobby while being interviewed.

"I wanted to have a bit of fun to fit the spirit of the show," Perrell said of his hosiery. "We have some food for thought in one gallery and examples of traditional still-life paintings of food in another. But mostly the show is great fun and great art. Beach food. Party food. Picnics. Pizza. Ice cream and pastries. What's not to like?"

SOUP, SUSHI AND STILL LIFE

Some of the choices are obvious. No exhibition of food art would be complete, we suppose, without one of the million or so (well, thousands)

Andy Warhol Campbell's Soup cans, here displayed with a box of Campbell's onion soup mix. Add hot water and stir.

Still lifes range from painterly realism, such as the late Water Mill artist Jane Freilicher's "Lace Tablecloth," her friend and neighbor Jane Wilson's "Seven Green Apples" and St. James painter Christian White's "Still Life With Leek and Papaya" to Bruce Lieberman's intensely bright and super-real "Bud, Crayfish and Angel Head," painted at his Water Mill studio.

One upstairs gallery is devoted exclusively to Long Island artists. But their work is scattered throughout the show, depending on the theme of each room. Lieberman's paint-

plus

coming up

TOMORROW

"Dance to the Movies"
preview

WEDNESDAY

Retro gaming expo
preview

THURSDAY

Olympic sports on LI

FRIDAY

Happy hours at wineries

newsday.com/exploreLI



Now this is old school — video game lovers can play all their old favorites using retro equipment



"Family Picnic," a work from 1948-49 by Philip Pearlstein worked on two panels, is part of the show at the Nassau County Museum of Art.

ings are in the Party Food gallery, along with Philip Pearlstein's bucolic "Family Picnic" and Peter Anton's sculpted "Pizza," a slice measuring 7 feet long, and his mixed media "Sushi," raw fish that Jules Verne might have encountered writing "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea."

A stack of coffee cups accents "Artists Studio," where Roy Lichtenstein painted the signature dot-patterned piece in Southampton. Westbury artist Richard Gachot, who creates found-object sculptures and constructions, imagines a world in which the food chain is turned upside down in "Chickens Lament," in which a hen takes her revenge on Colonel Sanders. It stands next to Dana Sherwood's "Crossing the Wild Line," a meat wagon installation that serves as centerpiece to her conceptual project that includes film clips of wild animals' reaction to human-style food left for them to discover — a fox's first taste of apple pie, for instance.

FROM REALITY TO WHIMSY

Among the few 19th century pieces are some Toulouse-Lautrec posters. Al Hirschfeld celebrity drawings — my favorite is "Comedians at Lunch" (W.C. Fields, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Groucho Marx) — line one side of the hallway leading to the Party Food gallery. Photographs include Berenice Abbott's "Automat" and Cindy Sherman's shot of herself as a harried mom in the kitchen. But no woman could be as harried as "Nadya Suleman (Octomom) Feeding Her Children" in Gillian Laub's photo of Suleman and her eight babies. And you'd swear Ralph Goings' "Amsterdam Diner" is a photograph. But it was painted in oil with tiny brushes for a hyper-real effect.

Whimsy is served throughout "Feast," none more droll than Claes Oldenburg's collaboration with his then-wife, Coosje van Bruggen. Their "Gazebo" depicts a man lounging in the shade of a potato chip supported by pretzels. Oldenburg's "Flying Pizza" is fun, too. In Larry Rivers' three-dimensional "Jell-O," Dad feeds his daughter the colorful dessert. Then there's Judith Leiber's bejeweled clutch purses, one resembling a glittery bunch of grapes, another an eggplant.

Other pieces look good enough to eat. That's why we warned you to dine before you see the show. Gina Beavers' "Yummm," an acrylic-on-canvas burger, appears juicy enough to be a six-napkin heart attack on a bun. What a way to go.

'Feast for the Eyes'

WHEN | WHERE 11 a.m.-4:45 p.m.
Tuesdays-Sundays through Nov. 6
at Nassau County Museum of Art,
1 Museum Dr., Roslyn Harbor.

INFO 516-484-9337,

nassaumuseum.org

ADMISSION \$10 (\$4 students and
ages 4-12); \$2 weekend parking