

CAKE ART

13 October 2012

The Ho_se
Brooklyn, NY

CAKE ART explores how cake, as an idea and as dessert, has shaped and been shaped by notions of female domesticity and late-capitalist excess in 20th and 21st century America. The exhibition features original works that incorporate cakes thematically or as mediums themselves, considering cake from an art historical position, and within a historical context. The performance *Cake Joy*, an homage to Carolee Schneemann's seminal 1964 work *Meat Joy*, will also take place as part of the exhibition.

Since antiquity, cake has served as a channel for ritual and festivity. Across socio-economic boundaries, cake has been a small but significant symbol of communal celebration within daily life. However, during the modern era's widespread industrialization and ongoing globalization, cake is no longer considered solely a centerpiece for special occasion but an everyday treat. With the standardization of ritual and democratization of leisure beginning in the 20th century, cake could become something mass-produced, processed, even banal. "I guarantee a perfect cake, every time you bake—cake after cake after cake": the advent of the Betty Crocker brand in the 1950s represented the crystallization of the ideal American housewife, though Betty Crocker was not an actual woman but an amalgam of highly rigorous test kitchens and paid spokesmodels. The Betty Crocker profile personifies the ways in which cake and cake-making are associated with the legacy of female domesticity in Western culture.

The standardizing tendencies of industrial America were reflected in the pop art of the 1960s: repetition and mechanization, attention to everyday objects and foods—not least, cake (Claes Oldenburg's giant foam slices and life-size dessert sculptures in display cases; Wayne Thiebaud's painted grids of cakes and pies). After Pop, a range of cake-related works emerged which engage with post-industrial capitalism and the dichotomy of desire it produces: cake, as a symbol of decadence and pure pleasure, is desired and simultaneously, as that which ruins the ideal body of the image economy, negates that desire, becomes repulsive. The complex relationship between excess, desire, and disgust is explored in the works exhibited in CAKE ART.

WORKS LIST

Cake: Stella Achenbach, *Primordial Thanksgiving*

Graham Hamilton, *cake*

Antonio Santini, *I'm proud of you, son.* from *Imagined Cakes* series

Alison Sirico, *A Congestive Butterfield, Celebratory Funerary Cake to the Great Liz Taylor*

Will Staton, *Ceci n'est pas un gateau*

Art: Maggie Cepis, *Hey it's Great; There's a New Girl in Town; Craig Time Heals it; Joan, All the Best* and *Sorry Mike* from *Salutations* series, 2010, archival pigment prints

Peter Fankhauser, *This Woman's Work*, 2012, twelve-page book, edition of 30

Signe Pierce, *Slime Cake*, 2010, inkjet digital print

Elsbeth Walker, *I can't give it to you so I guess I'll eat it (Pain Show)*, 2011, video installation

Other Travel, *Delivery*, 2012, gelatin, rice, marble, reflective material, dye

Performance, *Cake Joy*