MK Guth: Menu
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September 13–October 26, 2019
MK Guth’s new exhibition features a selection of ink drawings, prints, and bound books called “menus.” All are conceptually linked through the medium of performance. Some menus offer instructions for various actions; others are accompanied by objects meant to be activated in performances. Related ink drawings on paper are sprinkled throughout the show.

Although informative, none of the menus function as ostensibly intended. Some directions in the menus are abstract, while others are impossible to carry out as written. All require the participant’s imagination, whether filling in blanks or considering other ways that Guth’s prompts could be applied. Depending on each viewer’s perspective, a variety of interpretations is possible for every work.
Dinner to Tell a Joke is designed around the need for humor as a form of release, a form of political statement, criticism, to laugh at ourselves, a response to horrific events or to societal change, and to laugh.

Host: Invite 6 people to a location for dinner.

The food should not be complicated and drinks are encouraged.

The six red cups that come with this dinner must be used for the drinks that are served.

Ask each guest to bring at least one joke but it is better for the guests to bring more.
previous spread:
Performance of Dinner to Tell a Joke, September 2019.
Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.
Joke Series (Banana Peel, Clown Mouth, How Many Lightbulbs Does It Take), 2019, ink on paper, each: 10 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches (27.3 x 19.7 cm).
Clown, 2019. Ink on paper. 14 x 10 inches (35.6 x 25.4 cm).
Dinner for Getting Over It Or At Least Through It is designed for guests to share in the process of working through a situation, memory, event, person, a place, or any issue they are trying to deal with that is causing pain or frustration. Every guest invited to the dinner must bring a concern that they wish to better navigate in their life.

The host should invite guests who they feel would benefit from a shared process in working through some issues. The host is responsible for the dinner and creating a menu that supports all of the guests’ dietary needs.

Let everyone choose from the selection of burn papers that come with this dinner. Have them write the focus of their concern on the paper where it is indicated. The paper will ask them to hold on to an intention for healing, forgiveness, or whatever it is they are desiring to feel. At the end of the meal, everyone should light their piece of paper in a symbolic act of release.

*Dinner for Getting Over It Or At Least Through It*, 2019. perfect bound book, ceramic bowl, bound burn pages, matches. book: 14 1/2 x 9 1/4 inches (36.8 x 23.5 cm). shelf: 10 x 27 x 8 inches (25.4 x 68.6 x 20.3 cm).
Dinner for Getting Over It Or At Least Through It
Blue Fire, 2019. ink on paper. 8 x 6 inches (20.3 x 15.2 cm).
Menu for the Table, 2018. bound book cover, lithograph. 20 3/4 x 14 3/4 inches (52.7 x 37.5 cm).
Menu for the Table (interior)
Instructions for Engaging with Clouds, 2018, bound book cover, lithograph. 24 3/4 x 19 3/4 inches (62.9 x 50.2 cm).
Instructions for Engaging with Clouds

Boil a pot of water.
Watch the steam rise.

Make a fire.
Blow into the smoke to shift the direction of the cloud.

Add some cream to a cup of tea.
Study the cloud formation.

Spend a night near a lake.
Wake up early.
Watch the fog rise up from the water.

Shake out a rug.
Watch the dust float in the air.

Read Aristophanes The Clouds.
“I haven’t been everywhere, but it’s on my list.”
- Susan Sontag

7 3/4 x 10 3/4 inches (19.7 x 27.3 cm).
"A serious and good philosophical work could be written entirely of jokes."
- Ludwig Wittgenstein

16 x 6 1/2 inches (40.6 x 16.5 cm).
Menu for Getting What You Want, 2018-19. bound book cover, insert, ink drawing. 11 1/2 x 8 1/4 inches (29.2 x 21 cm).
Menu for Getting What You Want

Starters
Choose the correct bait
Bait the hook
Watch the water for signs of fish
Choose your location
Make sure you are not treading on someone else's territory

Small Plates
Cast your line
Keep your eye on the line
Be patient
Be willing to wait
Wait some more
Do not give up

Main Entree
Pay attention
When you feel a tug on the line, ACT
Do not miss your opportunity
Have the net ready

Dessert
Reel it in
If you lose your fish, try again
Jokes, 2019. ink on paper. 13 x 11 inches (33 x 27.9 cm).
MK Guth
Previous Work
57 x 19 x 18 inches (144.8 x 48.3 x 45.7 cm).
Too Many Curtains (detail)
2 Teenagers, 2016. donated fabric, thread, house paint, wood. 40 x 15 x 12 inches (101.6 x 38.1 x 30.5 cm).
Dinner to Plan a Revolution, 2016. poplar shelf, felt flag, artist book, and three selected books. overall: 10 x 22 inches (25.4 x 55.9 cm).
Dinner to Plan a Revolution brings guests together to discuss desired change. Over a rustic dinner of potato soup, salad, and bread, guests are asked to identify something they believe needs to be revolutionized. Conversation topics can be social, political, environmental, or something more personal in nature, as long as they echo the sentiment expressed by poet Nikki Giovanni: “something needs to be said.”

The artist requests that guests bring a bowl for soup.

Performance of Dinner to Plan a Revolution, June 2016.
Cristin Tierney Gallery, New York.
Instructions for Drinking with a Friend, 2016.
2 hand-blown glasses, artist book, etched bottle of whiskey, embroidered bar cloth, and carrying case.
Case: 16 x 6 x 6 inches (40.6 x 15.2 x 15.2 cm).
Instructions for Drinking with a Friend

1. Invite a friend to participate. The person invited must be a friend, someone that you have spent time with on more than two occasions.

2. Choose an atypical place to share your drink.

3. Sit across from each other.

4. Decide on a topic that is not what you typically talk about. If you talk about art, talk about politics. If you talk about politics, talk about food. If you talk about your job, talk about music. If you talk about literature, talk about nature, or mushrooms, or cats, or poetry, or ethics, or virtue, or feminism, or about being drunk.

5. Before you start your conversation, read the poem Get Drunk out loud by Charles Baudelaire, which is provided at the table. Each participant should read half of the poem.

Why invite someone to have a drink with you?

- Drink good whiskey
- Reduce inhibition
- Regard someone
- Focus attention
- Slow down
- Engage in a conversation
- Contemplate a problem
- Shift out of normal state of consciousness
- Alter perception
- Take a risk
- Prioritize
- Emphasize
- Share time with a friend
- Activate some art

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.

—Henry David Thoreau
In 2011, Guth did a residency and project called *Best Wishes* at the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas P3 Studio. Over 20 days, visitors wrote wishes on ribbons which were then braided into hair extensions attached to the artist’s own hair. The braids were each 300 feet long and weighed several hundred pounds. During the residency, the artist also created a series of photographs in and around Las Vegas.
Bonanza's Naughty Town

NAUGHTY STUFF & PARTY FAVORS

It's in stock! We have it!
Best Wishes, 2011. braided rope.
Ties of Protection and Safekeeping is an interactive braid sculpture that poses the question, “What is worth protecting?” The installation traveled to several US cities, and Guth wove participants’ answers into a growing sculpture that was eventually completed in New York City for the Whitney Biennial.

The work was reinstalled in the exhibition Dread & Delight: Fairy Tales in an Anxious World, which traveled to the Weatherspoon Art Museum at UNC Greensboro, Faulconer Gallery at Grinnell College, and the Akron Art Museum.

*Ties of Protection and Safekeeping, 2007-08.*
I Still Feel the Same was a performance at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts that resulted in a sculptural object. Over a two-day period, visitors to Yerba Buena were invited to write their thoughts about the term “feminist” on a piece of brown fabric, which was then woven into two braids attached to Guth’s head. At the end of the second day, the two braids were cut loose and hung in the gallery.
MK Guth (b. 1963, Stevens Point, WI) works in video, photography, sculpture, performance, and interactive projects. She has exhibited internationally at numerous museums and festivals including The Whitney Museum of American Art, Hallie Ford Museum of Art, Schneider Museum of Art, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Melbourne International Arts Festival, Nottdance Festival, Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, The Art Gym at Marylhurst University, Frye Art Museum, The Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, and the Center for the Art of Performance at UCLA (forthcoming). She is a founding member of the Red Shoe Delivery Service, an ongoing collaborative performance project with artists Molly Dilworth and Cris Moss. Guth is the Director of the Hallie Ford School of Graduate Studies and interim Chair of the Critical Studies Program at the Pacific Northwest College of Art. She lives in Portland, OR.
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Etienne Frossard: 63
Dan Kvitka: 70-71
Matt Wilson: 80-81
Martin Adolfsson: 79, 82-83
MK Guth: 85