



For Immediate Release

Press Release

FEEDING DESIRE EXHIBITION AT WINTERTHUR STUDIES EVOLUTION OF FLATWARE

Exhibition opens November 1, 2008

Images available upon request, please contact vsaltzman@winterthur.org

Winterthur, DE September 10, 2008—Long before the dish ran away with the spoon, flatware designs were adding drama to the art of dining, elevating the act of eating to the art of fine dining. *Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table, 1500–2005*, an innovative exhibition opening at Winterthur Museum & Country Estate on November 1 will showcase the remarkable designs and developments in flatware that have played an important role in both the practical and presentation aspects of dining. The exhibition examines five centuries of European and American dining through the designs and functions of eating implements. The exhibition, created and curated by Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York (a branch of the Smithsonian Institution), features 300 objects. At Winterthur, the exhibition will be enhanced by works from Winterthur’s extensive collection of prints, books, and manuscripts.



Organized along dining-related themes, such as “Dining on the Move,” “Tools for Food,” and “Dining as Celebration,” *Feeding Desire* explores how even familiar objects like utensils can reveal a wealth of information about daily life and changes in society. “Flatware is tied to changing ideas of taste, behavior, and fashion,” says Anne Verplanck, Winterthur’s curator of prints and paintings, “as well as to access to goods and raw materials

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***Add One
Feeding Desire***

through trade, shipping, and mining.” Images from Winterthur’s collection will supplement the dining implements and provide a greater understanding of how they were used over time.

The exhibition spotlights the “biographies” of the most common tabletop tools: the knife, fork, and spoon. These utensils, which have long defined Western dining, provide beautiful, useful and civilized alternatives to using other rudimentary objects. *Feeding Desire* traces variations in social customs, cuisines, and decorative fashions to examine their origin and development over the last 500 years.

From the sublime to the slightly silly, the exhibition features remarkable variations on the tools of the table. Extraordinary examples, such as a Northern Italian traveling set with mother-of-pearl handles from 1590 will be on view, as will more fanciful creations such as silver chopsticks by Tiffany and Co. and double and triple-bowled spoons by contemporary designer Andre Zwiack.

Other highlights include:

- Sets of traveling utensils used before the 1700s, when hosts first began providing dining implements for their guests, juxtaposed with contemporary portable dining gear, such as plastic sets for picnics and stainless steel sets designed for airline dining.
- A collection of unusual serving tools, created when certain foods became fashionable, such as an ice cream knife, olive fork, asparagus tongs, and a potato chip server.
- An exploration of the development of production methods, such as silver-plating, forging and gilding, and the role of newer materials, such as stainless steel and Bakelite.
- A section devoted to the 20th century that addresses themes such as the role of the designer and flatware as social commentary.

Related Events

October 31 ***Exhibition Preview Day for Members***

November 1, 2008–
January 16, 2009 ***Distinctive Collections Tour***
Tour the Winterthur period rooms for a new look at historic table settings and entertainments.

November 21 ***The Theater of the Table: A Winterthur Study Day***
A one-day conference with hands-on study sessions on a variety of design, history and dining topics, featuring *Feeding Desire*’s curator Sarah D. Coffin of Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, and Winterthur curators and experts Anne Verplanck, Ann Wagner, Leslie Grigsby, Jeff Groff, and Jeanne Solensky. \$275; \$225 Members.

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**Add Two
Feeding Desire**

November 30
6:00–7:45 pm

Brandywine Baroque Concert: “Good Eating in Songs and Music”
Feed your desire through song and music! Brandywine Baroque offers a buffet of 17th- and 18th-century music about food and wine. \$25; \$20 Members.

December 4
3:30–5:30 pm

Coffee Tasting and Lecture: “The Americanization of Coffee”
Michelle McDonald, assistant professor of history, Stockton College, New Jersey, discusses the history of coffee. Three area roasters, Crescent Moon Coffee Roasters, Pike Creek Coffee Roasterie, and Brew Ha Ha, offer tastings. Guided tours of *Feeding Desire* are available at 3:00, 4:30, and 5:00 pm. *Included with all admission tickets. Members free.*

January 31, 2009

Feeding Desire Family Day
Special family fun featuring games, crafts, demonstrations, and more!

Catalogue

The exhibition is accompanied by a sumptuous catalogue. *Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table, 1500–2005* (Assouline, 2006), written by Sarah D. Coffin, Ellen Lupton, and Darra Goldstein, contains contributions by numerous other leaders in the fields of design and the history of the table. The history of flatware unfolds in chapters with evocative titles such as “The Sexual Politics of Cutlery” and in more than 200 color illustrations. The book is available for sale (\$65) through the Winterthur Bookstore. Orders may be placed by calling 302.888.4741 or 800.448.3883, ext. 4741.

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Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table, 1500-2005, is organized by Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution. The exhibition is sponsored by The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Additional support is provided by Mr. John H. Bryan, Crate and Barrel, and The Felicia Fund. Presented at Winterthur by DuPont and The Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Additional support provided by Potter, Anderson & Corroon, LLP.

1. **“Assyrian Head” pattern serving pieces.** Produced by the Meriden Silverplate Company. United States, 1885–86. Silver-plated metal. Museum purchase from the Decorative Arts Association Acquisitions Fund 1995-148-7/9; 1996-79-1/6. Photo: Matt Flynn. Courtesy of Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian.
2. **Flatware, place setting.** Made by Claude Lalanne (b. 1924). France, 1966. Silver. Museum purchase from Decorative Arts Association Acquisition Fund in honor of John L. Marion, 1990-137-1/9. Photo: Matt Flynn. Courtesy of Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian.
3. **Flatware, cake server.** Manufactured by Rostfrei, Steakmates, Hull, Cardinal. Germany and United States, ca. 1938–41. Bakelite, stainless steel. Lent by Dr. Robert Lerch. Photo: Matt Flynn. Courtesy of Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian.

Winterthur Museum & Country Estate—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American antiques, naturalistic garden, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. Winterthur has been named one of the country’s “10 great places of historic proportions” by *USA Today* and “one of the 10 grandest mansions in America” by *Budget Travel*.

Museum hours are 10 am to 5 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. Open daily from November 22, 2008 through January 4, 2009 for Yuletide tours. Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907. Online, visit winterthur.org.

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