

# These exhibits are food for thought

Table for Ten collaboration covers all aspects of eating, from soup to nuts

By Jan Ellen Spiegel  
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**H**OLYOKE — Given the fundamental truth that eating isn't optional, it may be that a nearly yearlong, multiple-museum series of exhibits on food is a perfect everyman topic. Or, considering the amount of time and effort we already spend dealing with food every day, overkill. The 10-museum consortium in western Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley known as Museums10 is banking on the former.

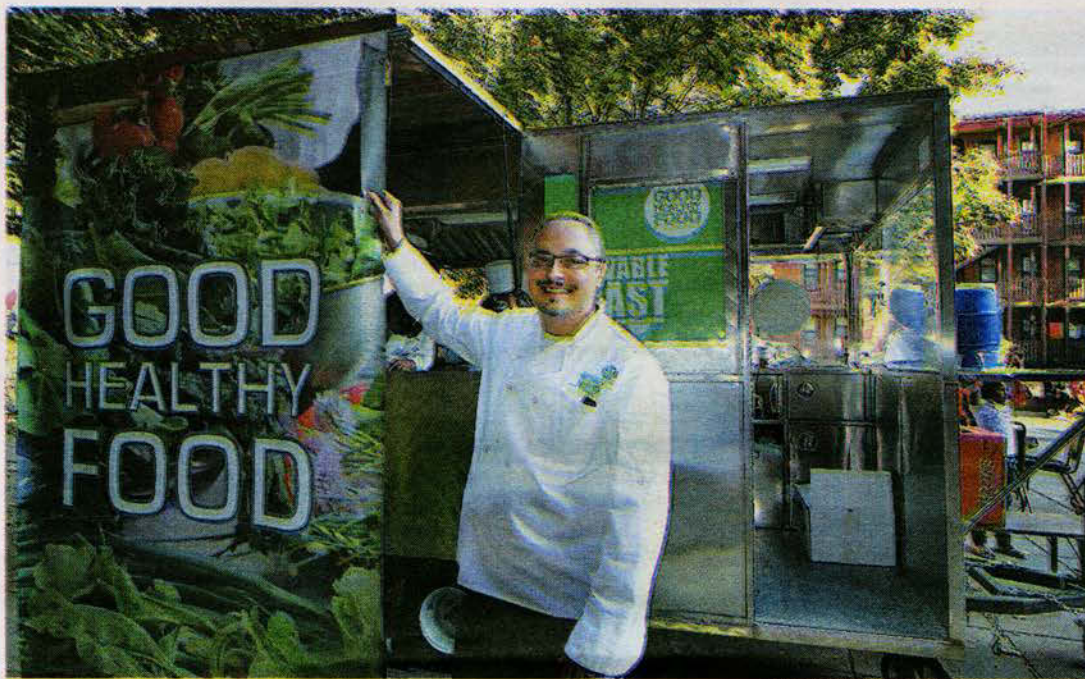
The museums, including those at the area colleges, along with local organizations, restaurants, and special events, are hitting the peak of their collaboration with Table for Ten — a wide-ranging exploration of food as art, history, community, and culture. Oh, and as something you just, well, eat.

"It's been very interesting to see how people come at this from many different angles," says Wendy Watson, curator and interim director of the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum. "I think that's exactly why this is a great idea, because it makes people stop and think."

There are two things to ponder at Mount Holyoke: "From Seed to Supper," centuries of food-related artwork culled from the school's collection, and the larger "Wine and Spirit: Rituals, Remedies, and Revelry," a look at wine as an artistic, historical, cultural, and of course drinkable, thread through time. There's a 7,000-year-old wine jar; many kylixes (wide cups that make you wonder not only how to drink from them without spilling, but how the ancient Greeks did it lying down); a few revelous Picassos and the eyebrow-raising 3,000-year-old Iranian wine container with feet. "It just cracks everybody up," says Watson.

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art has illustrations from Carle's "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," "Walter the Baker," and "Pancakes, Pancakes!" (with a sort-of recipe).

At the Smith College Museum of Art, the exhibit "Luscious," huge paintings of jelly dough-



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF (ABOVE LEFT AND BELOW); MOUNT HOLYOKE ART MUSEUM

Above (clockwise from left): Joseph Krupczynski and the "Movable Feast" food cart; a footed wine vessel; a red-figure kylix with dancing maenad. Below (from left): Monica Maitin, Ana Jaramillo, and Janelis Rivera cook for the Movable Feast cart.



nuts, has been replaced by "Sugar," an installation by Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, exploring her family's victimization by the Cuban sugar industry including its ties to the Atlantic slave trade. "I'm already enjoying the way that it's opening up my thinking about food," says Jessica Nicoll, director and chief curator, as well as a co-chair of Table for Ten, noting the area's cluster of eateries, strong farming tradition, and early conversion to the local food movement. "It shows how deep the history of this stuff that fills our everyday life is."

"The Politics of Food" exhibit at Hampshire College features photos of its 100-acre farm.

Amherst College's Mead Art Museum is offering lecture/cooking demonstrations by local chefs. There are vintage cooking presentations at Historic Deerfield, and the Emily Dickinson Homestead has restored one of the kitchens and revived the poet's legacy as a baker.

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For a recipe for Emily Dickinson's gingerbread cake, visit [www.boston.com/food](http://www.boston.com/food).

Teeth and coprolites (better known as poop) of extinct animals, to show what they ate, are part of an exhibit at the Amherst College Museum of Natural His-

tory. Teeth from the hominid *Paranthropus boisei* reveal a diet of nuts, seeds, leaves, and fruit. *Tyrannosaurus rex* pretty much ate its friends and neighbors.

"A Movable Feast" transcends several media. This public project, by University of Massachusetts Amherst design professor Joseph Krupczynski, is a collaboration with the grassroots food group *Nuestras Raices*, the Holyoke Food and Fitness Policy Council, and local chefs. Krupczynski designed a food cart that is intended to be a teaching device on how to use certain fresh foods. The cart itself, emblazoned with political statements about food in both English

and Spanish, will be attached to a mobile market in a bus that will go into low-income areas.

For now, the cart travels the area offering free vegetarian four-course mini-meals. Opening day at UMass Amherst, O'Brian Tomalin of *Sierra Grille* in Northampton served corn chowder, roasted vegetable sandwiches, a garlicky cabbage slaw, and sweet potato soufflé to a long line of takers. It all begs the question: Is it food or art? "Exactly," says Krupczynski. "I would like to instigate that question."

Amy Cole and Andy Toomajian, architecture graduate students, contemplated the conundrum while digging into their samples. "It really is a combination," Cole says. "It's presenting food and where it's coming from, and how does food influence your life and how does food bring together the community?"

Toomajian scrapes the last of the soup from his cup and offers this: "Maybe it's just food."

*Table for Ten schedules vary; some exhibits, events, and activities continue into next year. Go to [www.museums10.org/tablefor10](http://www.museums10.org/tablefor10)*

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