

The **Justina M. Barnicke Gallery** presents:

Ron Benner's Cuitlacoche Corn Roast

Celebrating the summer garden project *Your Disease Our Delicacy (cuitlacoche)*

Tuesday, September 16, 2014
5:00-7:00 pm

University of Toronto Student Union lawn
Across from Hart House, 7 Hart House Circle



The Justina M. Barnicke Gallery is pleased to host a Corn Roast by London, Ontario-based artist Ron Benner. The roasting of freshly picked corn is an integral part of the artist's special summer-long garden installation, ***Your Disease Our Delicacy (cuitlacoche)***, at Hart House, University of Toronto. Initiated by the Justina M. Barnicke Gallery's 2011-12 Curator in Residence, Su-Ying Lee, the garden is one of several such projects by Benner, whose research into agriculture—its interface with bioengineering, patenting world food heritage, capitalization of bio-diversity in the context of colonial and indigenous histories, and contemporary politics—spans over 35 years. Come out and celebrate the harvest, take a tour of the garden, and eat some fresh corn roasted and prepared by the artist himself.

Over the summer, Ron Benner's garden has grown into a profusion of flowers and edible plants. Accompanied by photo-murals and specimen labels, the garden draws on the rich, but often forgotten history of pre-colonial indigenous cultivation in the Americas and its contribution to contemporary world food production (tomatoes, peppers, tobacco, potatoes, beans, etc.). ***Your Disease Our Delicacy (cuitlacoche)*** involves encouraging the growth of cuitlacoche, a pathogenic plant fungus that forms on corn and is commonly known as Mexican 'corn smut'. Viewed as a disease by some people and a delicacy by others, cuitlacoche serves as an apt metaphor for the contentious issues surrounding food production and consumption.

The final harvest before the Pan American Games occupy Toronto next summer, the Cuitlacoche Corn Roast provides the ideal opportunity for discussions around the cultural and political inheritance of indigenous Latin American food traditions within the Canadian context. Around the artist's picnic table, conversations surrounding cultural appropriation can begin with a feast produced with Mexican 'corn smut' and can develop throughout the year as athletes converge on Toronto.

Justina M Barnicke Gallery

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