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Lucy and Jorge Orta give us a flavour of how much food we consume and waste in new show

Exhibition in Peterborough is dedicated to the couple's initiatives on the "politics of food"

by GARETH HARRIS | 8 September 2016

Breaking bread at Studio Orta's 70 X 7 The Meal Act XXXIX, Harvest, Peterborough 2015 (Photo: Chris Porsz)

The husband-and-wife artist team Lucy and Jorge Orta—who in the past 25 years have explored social and ecological issues—focus on consumer food waste and global food distribution in a major show opening at the City Gallery in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, this week (10 September-4 December).

The exhibition examines the couple's initiatives linked to the "politics of food", encompassing the rituals associated with eating together. Last year, the Ortas organised a lunch, or Harvest meal, for 500 residents of Peterborough as part of an 18-month residency co-organised with the arts organisation Metal.

The community event, part of the ongoing series 70 x 7 The Meal, included locally sourced produce. Royal Limoges porcelain plates from the public meal will go on show in the exhibition, along with a major new sculpture incorporating more than 100 loaves of bread made by local residents and cast in aluminium.

The show will also include a series of structures—open re-purposed shopping trolleys—from the series HortiRecycling, which launched in 1996. For this project the couple sold preserves made from food waste at Parisian markets, drawing attention to food recycling processes.

The couple founded Studio Orta in Paris in 1991. A turning point in their collaboration came a decade later in 2000 when they acquired four paper mills and factories in the valley of Le Grand Morin in Seine-et-Marne, around 60 kilometres east of Paris. Their cultural complex—an eight-kilometre riverside stretch named Les Moulins—is one of the art world's best kept secrets. The couple aim to launch a sculpture park in the rural setting, and support the creation of experimental in-situ works there through workshops and residencies.



Lucy and Jorge Orta, Harvest Bread Cast