



Harvest exhibition in Brisbane whets appetite

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By Susan Parsons



In the foyer of Queensland Gallery of Modern Art you will find a site-specific commission *Fallen Fruit of Brisbane: Pineapple Express!* There is spiffing wallpaper as a backdrop to a cabinet of objects and paraphernalia contributed by members of the public with the pineapple as the subject. It includes the book by Canberran Claudia Hyles, *And the Answer is a Pineapple* (1998).

In the Harvest galleries an artist friend and I admired the 17th century European depictions of food, flowers and spices, were captivated by Simryn Gill's *Forking tongues* (1992) a huge spiral of dried chillies and cutlery, chortled at a bold and sensual food-themed video, and were dwarfed by pineapples, coconuts and strawberries in a work by Shirana Shahbazi and Sirous Shaghghi, *Still life*. Works by other contemporary artists covered the production of what we eat, from the farmer to factory worker.

Tracey Moffatt's wonderful First Jobs Series depicts her work in a pineapple cannery in 1979 when she was 17. A Brisbane-born friend tells me that a university student pal who worked in a pineapple factory said the smell was enough to put you off pineapples for life and they had to wear thick rubber gloves and boots so the acid didn't burn their skin.

When all that sugarcane and tinned pineapple triggers your appetite, the GOMA Café Bistro on a leafy terrace beside the Brisbane River will satisfy your hunger with a Harvest-inspired menu. Try the Hervey Bay prawns and gnocchi or roasted spatchcock with puffed corn and toasted grains. Potted herbs decorate trestle tables in the sunshine.

We were in tropical fruit mood and headed to Tweed Heads for a couple of nights. At Greenmount Beach the water was 21C and whales were wallowing off Snapper Rocks. Further south we visited Tropical Fruit World that grows the world's largest selection of tropical and rare fruits in one location with more than 500 varieties.

The eco-agri-tourist farm and research park is situated on the rim of an extinct volcano with views to the McPherson Ranges. Avocado and jackfruit trees line the carpark that faces west over fields of sugarcane. In July-August we bought or studied abui (caramel fruit), chocolate pudding fruit, custard apples, yellow dragonfruit, carambola (5-star fruit), mandarins, creamy baby Cavendish bananas, and Haas avocados that were three for \$1. Frozen mango cheeks on sticks provided our morning tea in a paddock off Tweed Valley Way, overlooking the river.

On the hill above us was the Tweed Regional Gallery, a modern building with superb views to Mount Warning, Mount Nullum and fields leading to the river. We were there to see the recreation of Margaret Olley's home studio that was opened in March this year by the then Governor-General Quentin Bryce who called them "the most famous rooms in Australian art".

More than 20,000 items were relocated from the interior of the old hat factory where Margaret Olley painted but the vases of flowers and bowls of fruit presented a challenge.

Tropical Fruit World provided fresh pomegranates to curator Ingrid Hedgcock to be dried for display in the exact places where Olley had them in her studio. Susi Muddiman, the director's gallery, says that the orange hue in the old hat factory is an exact colour match to a paint sample taken from the walls in Duxford Street, Paddington. The red/orange/amber-but-not-quite-terracotta hue is almost that of pomegranate skin. It glows. Muddiman says that the recreation of Margaret's home studio is permanent at Tweed Regional Gallery (entry is free).

For a taste of the Tweed, the terrace at the Art Gallery Cafe is the spot for lunch with views to the Border Ranges and "Margaret's Lunch specials" of chunky lamb and rosemary pie with organic salad, classic sponge, organic Nessum Dorma coffee or local Madura tea. As you drive north, stop at Dave's stall near Condong where the farmer sells the best Camarosa strawberries and homemade strawberry ice creams.

Harvest is on at the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art until September 21, free entry.