

## – Media Release – We Eat We Are

**We Eat We Are**, curated by Sarah Pirrie presents audiences with a visually immersive and interactive exhibition experience as it tours through the Northern Territory.

Celebrating food as a form of social sculpture that unites, nourishes and renews, *We Eat We Are* explores the relational experience of food as a cultural determinant, as a sacred language and as a vital environmental resource at the heart of community.

Sarah Pirrie, SPARK NT Curator said “the exhibition celebrates social cohesion through food and food culture, and in doing so encourages community engagement and reflection. Audience members are actively invited to take part and contribute to the exhibition in each venue.”

The exhibition brings together work by leading, mid-career and emerging Northern Territory artists, and features artworks and collectives influenced by the Territory’s food culture. Senior Yolju artist **Mulkuṅ Wirrpanda** creates exquisite and lyrical paintings that systematically document the cultural significance of local plants and places for the benefit of future generations. Works by **Tiwi artists** revel in the shared experience of collecting and cooking mussels, highlighting the communal experience of harvesting and eating. Darwin based artists, **Christine Barzaga** and **Vi Bao Truong**, cook up an eclectic mix of fanzines, recipe cards, altarpieces and video installations that explore intergenerational and cross-cultural food experiences. **Siying Zhou** and the **Temporary Territory** project team smash popular cultural food myths through moving image cooking demonstrations and temporary Warung street stall banners. While environmentalist **Emma Lupin** focuses audiences’ attention on the food bowl as a source of belonging and personal identity.

Pirrie said “Warung street stalls are the life of Indonesian food culture and are demarcated by colourful banners advertising pictographic menus which delineate the restaurant from the busy road, providing a dining area for customers.”

In homage to Warung and in the spirit of communal sharing and exchange, *We Eat We Are* incorporates a **Story Larder** where audience members are invited to participate in communal activities that contribute to an ever expanding visual and verbal foodie narrative. Warung food stall banners have been used to signal a place for creative participation where audiences can participate in a range of activities.





# Artback NT

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Louise Partos, Executive Officer, Artback NT said “*We Eat We Are* is an exhibition that will entice audiences from Katherine to Alice Springs to Darwin to engage with the artists through the stories behind their artworks. Interactive programming will encourage adults and kids alike to explore the culturally diverse communities that not only live in the Top End but also what makes it so unique.”

The program **Out of the Bag** begins in Katherine which Pirrie sees as a natural place of convergence, this ‘Crossroads of the North’ is a meeting place for trade and supplies, where ‘big shops’ centre around the town’s large supermarket. Pirrie said “in our increasingly environmentally conscious times, single-use plastic bags are being abandoned for reusable shopping bags. I would like to invite audiences to contribute to the exhibition by donating a loved and appreciated shopping bag and reminisce about its past gathered goods within.”

In Alice Springs, audiences will be invited to create ceramic bowls and cups to contribute **Tea Tales** to the *Story Larder*, capturing the spirit of sitting and sharing favourite recipes and food stories while engaged in communal activity. Partos said “The interactive components in *We Eat We Are* extend the concept of the exhibition and add a flavour making art accessible and enjoyable for all audiences.”

### About SPARK NT Curator Program

This is the second exhibition to be produced as part of the SPARK NT Curator Program, an Artback NT initiative which supports an independent or emerging curator, residing in the Northern Territory, to develop an exhibition project for tour. SPARK NT is designed to foster critical thinking in art and curatorial practice and provide artists from the Territory with opportunities to showcase their work within a curated touring exhibition.

### Exhibition Dates

Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts & Culture Centre until 26 October, 2019

Araluen Arts Centre, 13 March – 26 April 2020

Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, 1 May – 31 May

For information about the exhibition including exhibiting artists, online catalogue and available images visit: <http://bit.ly/2mM3uLP>

***Sarah Pirrie, SPARK NT curator; Jo Foster, Visual Arts Manager, Artback NT and selected artists are available for interview upon request.***

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