

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

This February, poetry, alchemy, food and art combine in two special events to mark the launch of the Australian Future Foods Lab.

The Australian Future Foods Lab is an artist-researcher collective re-igniting taste buds and the cultural imagination in support of emerging and sustainable food systems. Working in collaboration with environmental artist Janet Laurence, the Australian Future Foods Lab launches by presenting two exquisite gustatory experiences, which showcase native flavours that support biodiversity and celebrate our unique Australian cultural identity.

On 13 February, Elixir Bar – a one-night-only pop-up bar at Melbourne's Silo Café – offers an opportunity to discover distinctively Australian tastes and tales. The Lab brings Laurence's Elixir Bar, a concept she developed in Japan for the Echigo Tsumari arts triennial. Elixir Bar invites guests to enjoy a selection of native plant inspired cocktails and canapés, develop their own potions and contribute to new cultural traditions in support of sustainable food systems.

On February 23, Laurence's exhibition, 'The Alchemical Garden of Desire' at the **McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park**, is the setting for the **Native Botanicals Dinner**, a unique dining experience themed around native Australian plants. A **six-course degustation menu**, designed by award-winning chef **Douglas McMasters (byJoost)** will offer forty guests an insightful and delicious perspective on native foods. With their unique contributions to human health, landscape restoration and climate resilience, increased use of native plants in cuisine could drive a future food revolution. The dinner will be **hosted by a performative botanist** who will divulge some of the scientific and culinary secrets of the plants featured in each course, accompanied by **microscopic visuals by artist collective Scale-Free Network**.

Both events represent the Australian Future Foods Lab's real interest in tying together knowledge, experimentation, creativity and sensory experiences of food culture. As such, the dinner is offered on its own or as part of a day of botanical adventuring in Cranbourne, featuring a tour of edible native plants at the Australian Garden, a talk by Janet Laurence about her work at McClelland Gallery, and the Elixir Bar.

These events mark the first public steps of The Lab's creative and participatory exploration of Australia's food future.

LISTING INFORMATION

Elixir Bar: <http://www.carbonarts.org/events/elixir-bar/>

Venue: Silo Café, 123 Hardware Street, Melbourne

Date: Wednesday 13 February 2013

Times: Session 1, 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm

Session 2, 8.00 pm – 9.30 pm

Tickets: \$25

Bookings: SOLD OUT

Native Botanicals Dinner: <http://www.carbonarts.org/events/native-botanicals-dinner/>

Venue: McClelland Gallery, 360 - 390 McClelland Drive, Langwarrin

Date: Saturday 23 February 2013

Times: Australian Garden Tour, 3.00 pm

Artist Talk, 5.00 pm

Elixir Bar, 5.30 pm

Native Botanicals Dinner, 7.00 pm

Tickets: \$120 / \$160 (with transport) – event limited to 40 guests

Bookings: Online at: <http://www.trybooking.com/40346>

PRESS CONTACT

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ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN FUTURE FOODS LAB

An initiative of Carbon Arts together with Round Angle Studio and human ecologist Asha Bee Abraham, the Lab invites innovation and experimentation through unique collaborations involving artists, scientists, chefs and the food industry.

<http://www.carbonarts.org/projects/the-australian-future-foods-lab/>

ABOUT JANET LAURENCE

Sydney-based Janet Laurence's practice examines humans' impact on a fragile and increasingly disappearing natural world. In the gallery space she creates immersive environments that reveal the interconnectedness of all living forms, evoking chance encounter, memory and loss. Laurence is also widely known for her many public artworks that open the potential for a broad public engagement, empathy and knowledge of the natural environment.

A recipient of both a Rockefeller and Churchill Fellowship, Janet was also a Trustee of the Art Gallery of NSW, on the VAB Board of the Australia Council and is currently Visiting Fellow at COFA NSW University. Laurence is currently developing a public artwork at the Bendigo campus of LaTrobe University showcasing their native plant collection.

Janet is available for interview.

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