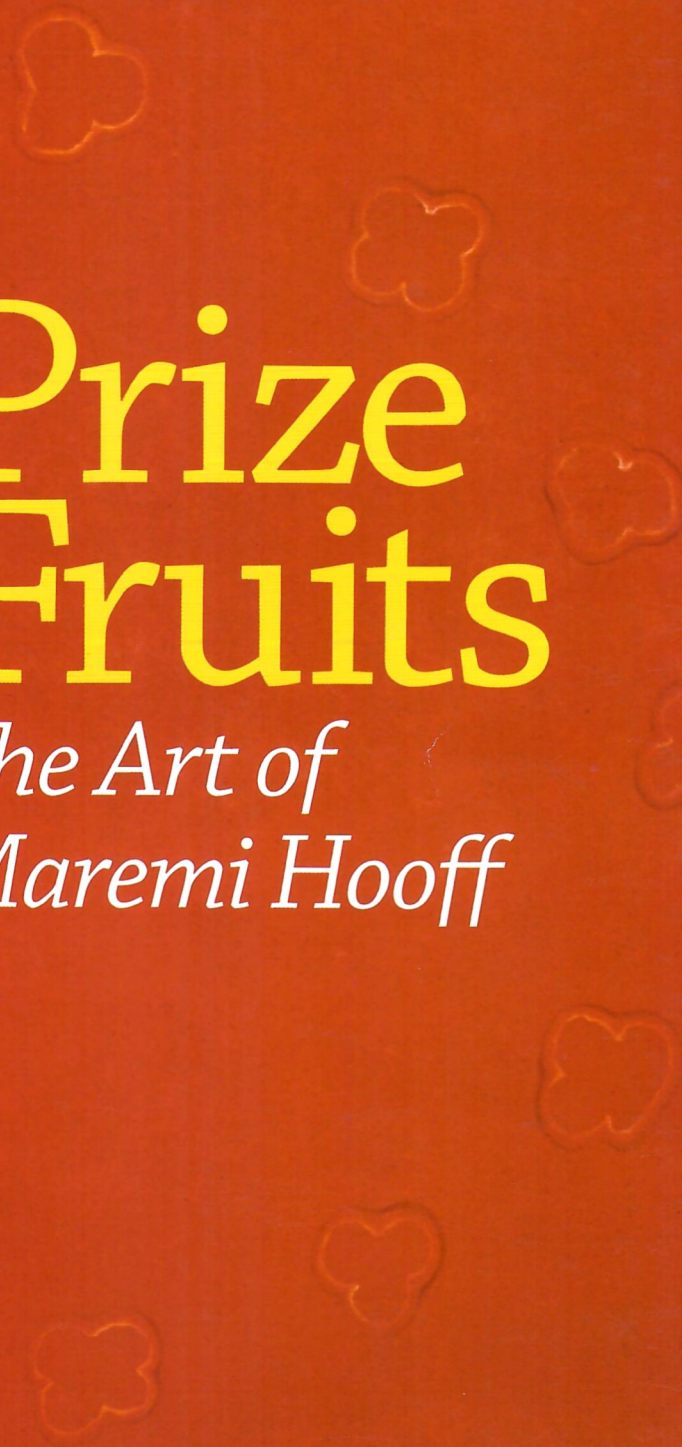




# Prize Fruits

*The Art of  
Maremi Hooff*





Photograph by Marjorie Och

**MAREMI HOOFF IN HER LORTON, VIRGINIA, STUDIO**

# Prize Fruits

*The Art of  
Maremi Hooff*

September 1 – October 16, 2005  
Flossie Martin Gallery

RADFORD UNIVERSITY  
artn  
museum

# Maremi Hooff: Prize Fruits (And Vegetables)

**T**hin slices of mushrooms and bell pepper; loose, swirling patterns of onions and avocados; carefully composed symmetries of Swiss cheese and bacon. These are the elements of Maremi Hooff's paintings done over the past four years, and they make me hungry every time I see them.

But, Hooff is not particularly interested in food. Where we see the ingredients for gazpacho and borscht, pumpkin-filled ravioli or Slooper Soup, she speaks of the balance between the abstract shapes and patterns of the backgrounds and the representational material in the foreground. She resists making connections between the objects depicted in her paintings and her life — “My family did not grow their own vegetables. I don't consider myself a chef or a cook.” Rather, she treats food as a vehicle for connecting with people, enticing them to look at what seems to be the subject matter so she can talk about what she wants to talk about — contrasts of color and form, the coolness of shapes played off against the warmth of the texture of paint on canvas, the tension between what she calls “tiny microcosms of data” and the larger pattern or field.

As a subject for painting, food has had a long history and been given a wide range of treatment. Metaphors of abundance and vanitas informed the seventeenth-century Dutch still life painters; an interest in taxonomy — classifying and cataloging the differences between things, be they vegetables or mixed-race peoples — undergird many Spanish colonial paintings of foodstuffs. Osias Beert's *Banquet Piece* (right) draws our attention equally to the reflections in the glass carafe as to the food. In doing so, it is representative of a third approach, where an artist's virtuoso evocation of textures — note also how the hard, glossy skin of the chestnuts plays against the soft, pliant milkiness of the oysters — was sufficient in itself to justify the work.

While Hooff's paintings share some points of contact with these predecessors — a concern for detail, the sense that the artist enjoys the myriad patterns with which nature



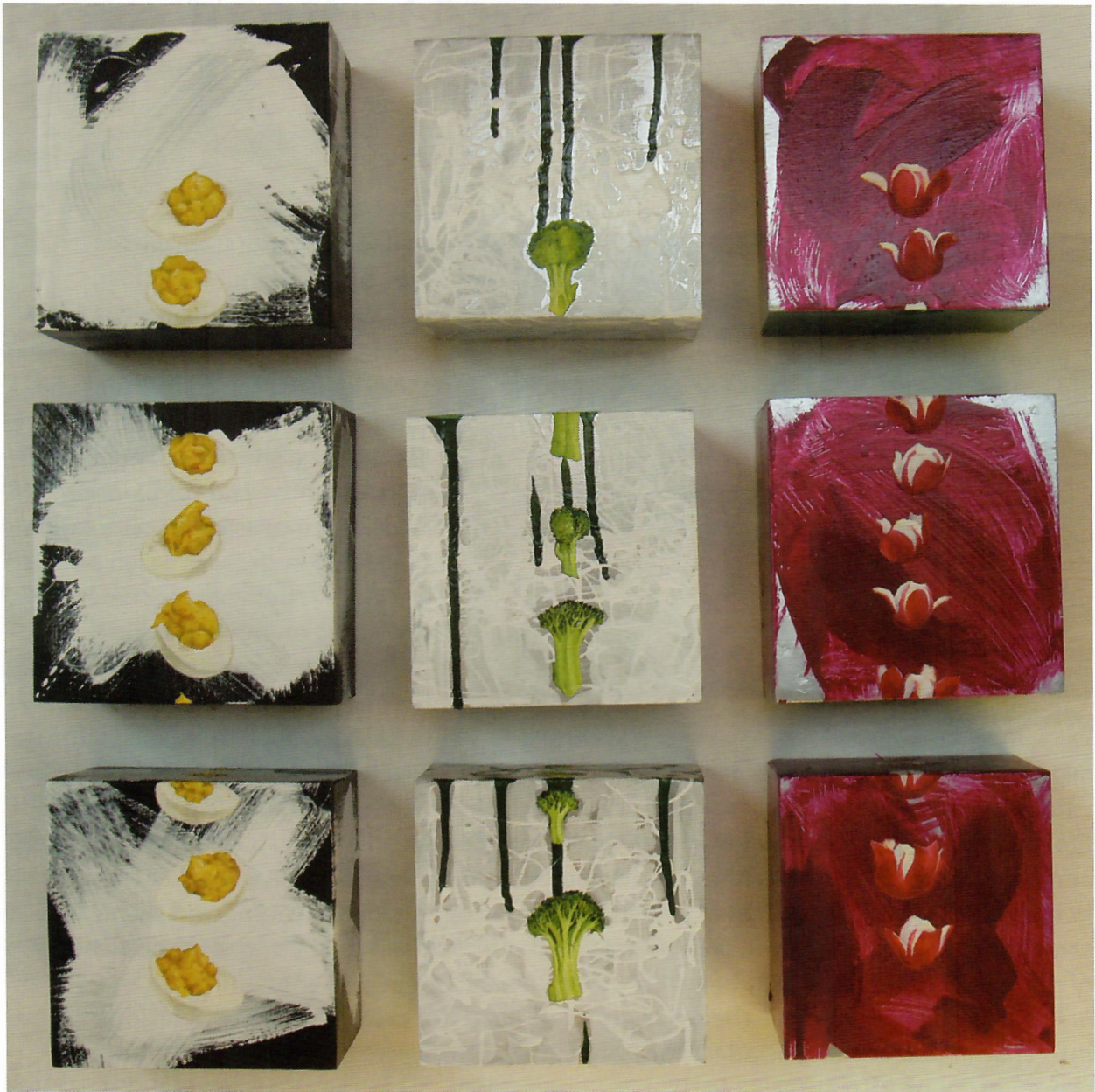
Osias Beert the Elder. *Banquet Piece with Oysters, Fruit, and Wine*, c. 1620

suggest the handing down of ideas from one generation to the next, or of a gift from one culture to another. We all eat; we can all approach these works on some level because the life force that food represents is part of our being. Hooff wants to partake in that life force, and offers it to the viewer, without putting too much of herself in the work. Yet traces of her presence remain in the visual evidence of choosing the food, cleaning and slicing and arranging the pieces so carefully. Maremi Hooff *is* a cook — but she employs the alchemy of paint, rather than the heat of a stove, to transform her ingredients into art.

These paintings then are the prize fruits of her effort to distill social relations into spatial and chromatic ones; they are handcrafted gifts that remind us of our shared humanity.

endows the visual world — they are fundamentally different in effect. Like any master chef, Maremi Hooff includes both the conceptual and the social in her art. She likes the process; she talks about the warmth of the craft of painting. And she is interested in presentation (an earlier series was based on gift wrapping). But there is something else going on here. There are no people in her works, although the chopped vegetables indicate a preparator, and the recipe paintings

*Preston Thayer*  
*Director*  
*Radford University Art Museum*



*Finger Fancy Series*

**DEVILED EGGS**

**BROCCOLI**

**RADISH FLOWER**

6 x 6 x 3 in, mixed media on panel, 1997-1998

*I transitioned from candies to hors d'oeuvres and garnishes at the end of graduate school and continued painting [the Finger Fancy series] for about a year. These paintings were triptych structures on three-dimensional wood boxes. The subject matter was painted in a pattern down the center. I used metallic paints and other enamels to create different effects on the boxes. The repetition of subject matter became important as a means of content and process.*



**TWIGS**  
8 x 10 in, oil on canvas, 1999



**DIRT (2)**  
24 x 24 in, oil on panel, 1997-1999



*There was a period when I was painting dirt, sticks, weeds, seedlings and other natural elements. I had tired of the production of the Finger Fancy works. The preparation of the structures and getting the appropriate subject matter had become tedious and these more natural [compositions] were a welcome relief. The subject matter was simple, bare, elementary and empty. These works are also more abstract. When I look back it all seems so cyclical — eventually I missed the content and moved back to food imagery.*



*Salad Series*  
**CHEF SALAD**  
48 x 48 in, oil on panel, 1999



*Salad Series*  
**CALIFORNIA SLICED FRUIT SALAD**  
48 x 48 in, oil on panel, 2000



*Recipe Series*  
**PAELLA**  
28 x 36 in, oil on canvas, 2002



*Recipe Series*  
**HAWAIIAN PIZZA SUPREME**  
36 x 32 in, 2002

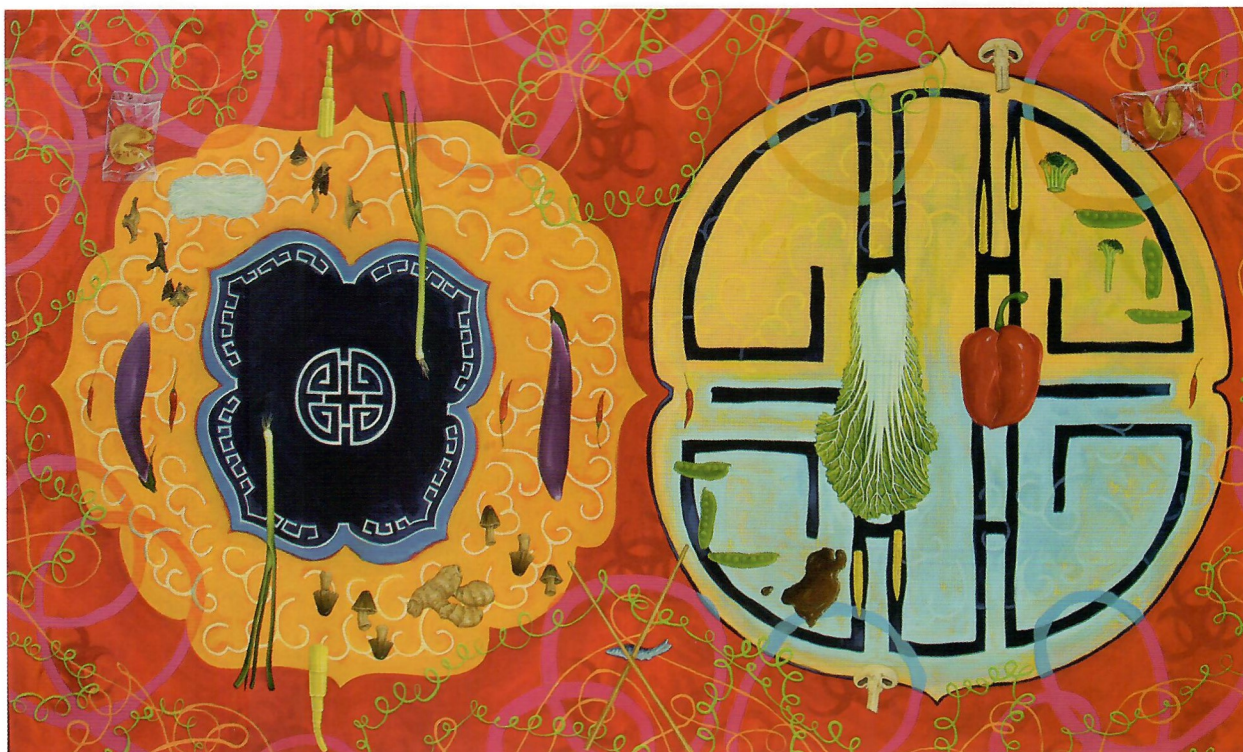


*Recipe Series*  
**SLOOPER SOUP**  
36 x 32 in, oil on canvas, 2002



*Recipe Series*  
**BROADWAY DELUXE**  
36 X 32 in, oil on canvas, 2003

*I want a viewer to connect with the work immediately and instinctively. Food . . . is such a versed and everyday thing. Everyone has a relationship with food on some level. I want a viewer to be lured and enticed to look and enjoy the work further. My goal is to offer a level of comfort and support with the hope of generating a more conceptual dialogue.*



*Recipe Series*  
**GOOD FORTUNE — EAT IN**  
36 x 60 in, 2003





*Recipe Series*  
**PUMPKIN STUFFED RAVIOLI IN ORANGE ZEST SAUCE**  
36 x 32 in, 2003



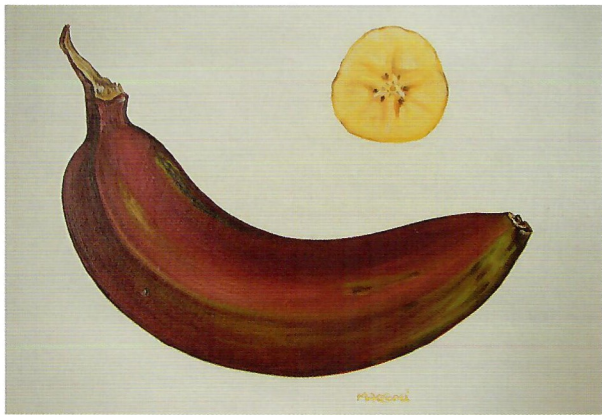
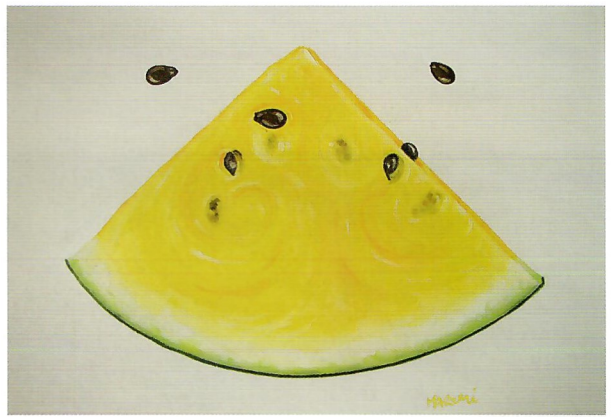
*Recipe Series*  
**BORSCHT**  
36 x 32 in, 2003



*Recipe Series*  
**QUESADILLA**  
36 x 32 in, 2003



**TWO AT THE WHARF**  
30 x 48 in, oil on canvas, 2003

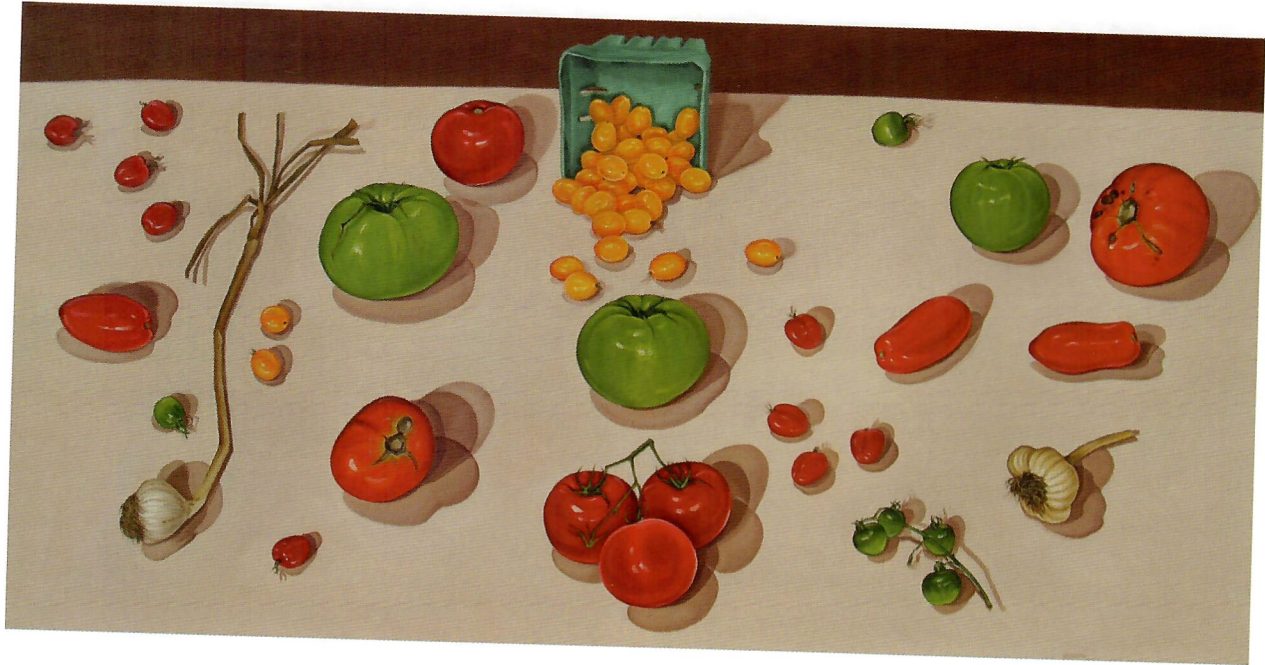


**ITALIAN PLUM  
RED BANANA**

*Botanical Series*

8 x 10 in, oil on paper, 2004

**WATERMELON  
PEANUT**



**ASSORTED TOMATOES AND GARLIC**  
24 x 48 in, oil on canvas, 2004



**ASSORTED ONIONS AND POTATOES**  
24 x 48 in, oil on canvas, 2004



**INTERNATIONAL MARKET 1**  
33 x 42 x 3 in, oil on canvas, 2005





**INTERNATIONAL MARKET 2**  
33 x 42 x 3 in, oil on canvas, 2005



**ASSORTED PEPPERS**  
24 x 48 in, oil on canvas, 2004

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**FRONT COVER:** *Cobb Salad*, detail, 48 x 48 in, mixed media on panel, 2001

**PAGE THREE:** Osias Beert the Elder. *Banquet Piece with Oysters, Fruit, and Wine*, Patrons' Permanent Fund,  
Image © 2005 Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, oil on panel, c. 1620

**BACK COVER:** *Bell Pepper*, 12 x 12 in, oil on canvas, 2004



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