




SUGARY MASTERPIECES

Savouring the sweet beauty
of contemporary art

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In the visual arts, sugar can be used as a playful vehicle to express and explore serious issues. *Sugar, Sugar*, a recent exhibition housed at Brenda May Gallery in Sydney, presented the viewpoint of 10 female artists who used this enticing substance to consider the decadence of consumerism and the significance of sugar in a feminine context. This exhibition featured contemporary art made exclusively with sugar; many of the installations only lasted for the duration of the exhibition before they were washed off the walls or scraped off the floor. As part of the showcase, Australian artist Elizabeth Willing held an experimental meal titled 'Dessert (II)' that explored issues of excess through an extravagant consumption of sugar. Willing's practice examines gastronomy with an emphasis on the collective experience of food: how and what we eat. The development of these performance meals includes designing recipes, cutlery, shared eating utensils and serving dishes inspired by the social constructs of dining. The meals are a platform for experimenting with smell, taste and sound to create a multisensory experience. Willing is interested in choreographing the performance of dining, understanding how people eat and challenging it. The following recipes, developed by the artist, are some of the dishes served over the five-courses of 'Dessert (II)'.



[WEDDING CAKE]

"The wedding cake is the most iconic dessert in my eyes. I want to rethink the traditional combination of fruitcake, marzipan and white icing. For 'Dessert (II)', I have taken inspiration from Sugar, Sugar artist Claire Mcardle's 'Gilty', by deconstructing the cake into two pieces, a delicious fruitcake and an edible necklace. The warmth of the diner's body will release the smells of the marzipan and icing roses while providing tasty snacks throughout the course."





WEDDING CAKE

- 500 g sultanas and currants
- 150 g dried pineapple
- 250 g candied ginger
- 100 g dried dates
- 1/2 cup red glacé cherries, halved
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 200 g butter, chopped
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp ground cloves
- 1/4 tsp ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2/3 cup brandy
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 3/4 cups plain flour
- 1/4 cup self-raising flour
- Butter, for greasing

1. Finely chop the dried fruit. Add to a small saucepan with the sugar, butter, orange juice, spices, bicarbonate of soda and 1/2 cup of the brandy. Cook for 8 – 10 mins over medium heat, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melts. Bring the mixture to a boil and

then reduce the heat to low and continue to simmer, covered, for 10 mins. Remove the mixture from the heat, transfer to a bowl and cool completely.

2. Pre-heat the oven to 160°C. Add the eggs to the mixture and sift in the flour. Mix well and set aside. Prepare a 6cm deep pan by greasing with butter and then lining with three layers of baking paper. Pour in the mixture to the pan and tap the pan on the bench top to remove any air pockets and to settle the mixture.

3. Place the pan into the preheated oven and cook for around 3 – 3.5hrs or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Begin testing the cake after 90 mins and if the top browns too quickly, cover with baking paper or foil. Once cooked, remove from the oven, drizzle over remaining brandy and allow to cool for 20 mins before turning out onto wire rack.

BURFI TEMPLE FUDGE

- 1 cup Mawa (milk solids found at most Indian grocers)
- 1/4 cup sugar

- 1/8 tsp ground cardamon
- Gold flakes, for garnishing (optional)

1. Grate or crumble Mawa so it is in even pieces.
2. In a small pan, combine the Mawa and sugar. Cook over medium heat stirring regularly until the consistency becomes gooey. Add the ground cardamon and stir well to incorporate.
3. Continue to cook for an additional 4 – 5 mins and then pour onto prepared greased pan. Allow to cool and then cut into squares to serve. Garnish with gold flakes if desired.

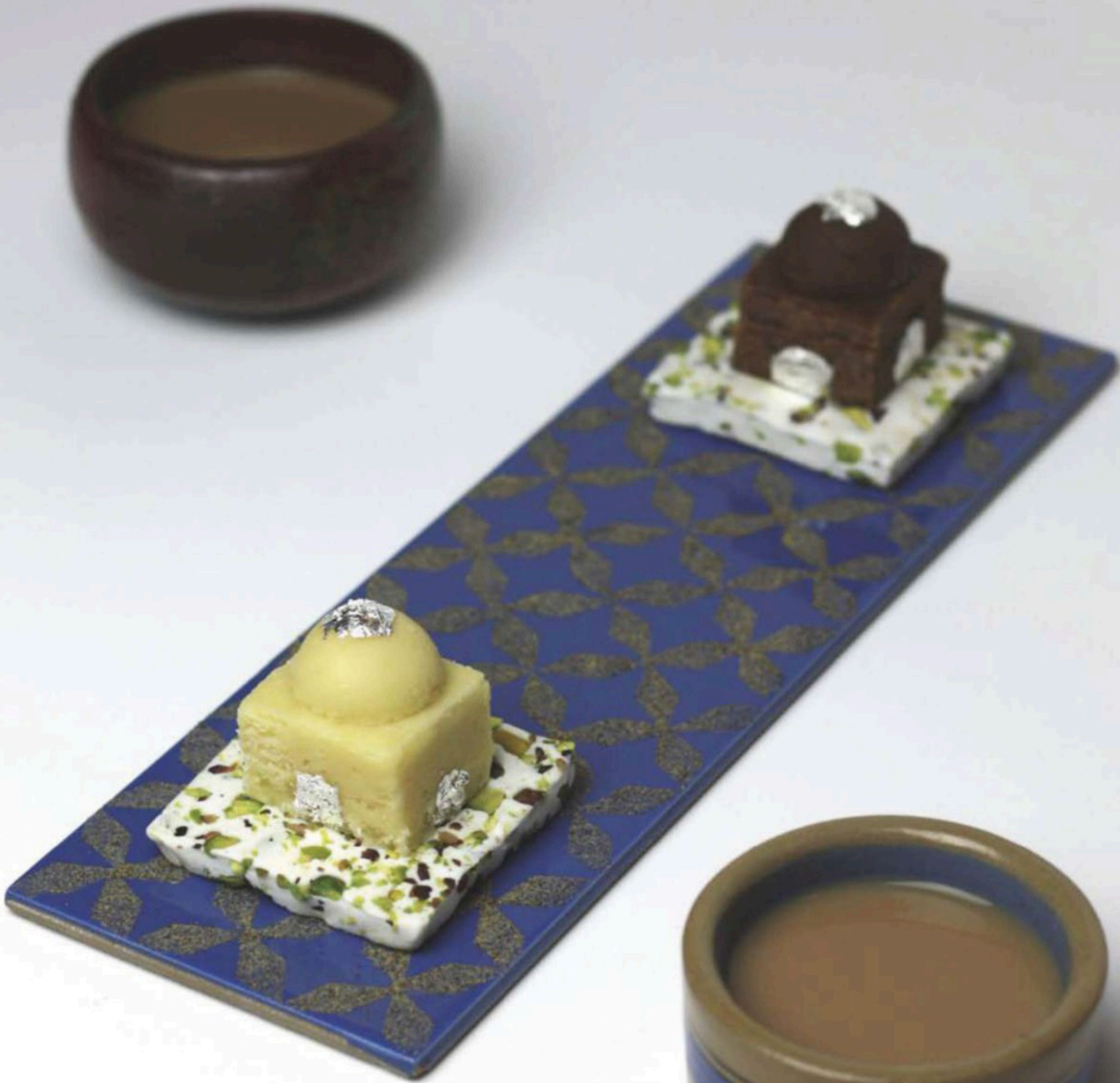
TIPPING PLATE: BANANA + LIQUORICE ALLSORTS

- 1 cup soft dried banana
- 1 cup soft liquorice

1. Roll licorice with rolling pin until about 2mm thick. Roll banana with rolling pin until about 2mm thick, this will be considerably harder.
2. Layer the licorice and banana until you have 5 layers that alternate then cut into even cubes about 3cm x 3cm.

[TIPPING PLATE:]
BANANA + LIQUORICE
ALLSORTS

“The tipping plates attempt to formalise the anxieties and etiquette around sharing food. The tipping plate rolls and settles on the edge that carries the most food to encourage diners from that side of the table to eat more, and will then adjust itself as the diners sample from different sides.”



[BURFI TEMPLE FUDGE]

“On a trip to India a few years ago I sought out sweet shops in every city to eat this milk fudge, Burfi. I have combined the memories of this creamy fudge with the iconic architecture of the Taj Mahal. The plate is to be shared by two people. The sweet is placed atop pistachio Ghat and surrounded by a tiling pattern made of ground cardamon. This course is served with freshly brewed chai tea.”