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STEPHEN MCKENZIE

Noodles and oodles of laughs

THE HOTHAM STREET LADIES ULTIMATE SHARE HOUSE DINNER

When: March 6-10

Where: The Panama Dining Room,
231 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Preview: By Sinead Stubbins

Most people would rather forget their share house days, but Lyndal Walker forged an artistic alliance that lasted a lot longer than her lease.

Ten years ago, Walker lived in a share house in Collingwood with four women who loved art, food and “a laugh”, and thus the Hotham Street Ladies art collective was born. “Our male housemate said, ‘It’s crap, no one will care!’” Walker says. “But then various people moved in and out of the house and we made a recipe book.”

Apart from cake recipes, the book also contained instructions on how to prepare snake meat. Safe to say, these Hotham Street Ladies were not your traditional home cooks. “There tends to be a humorous aspect to our cooking,” Lyndal says. “We certainly get together for a laugh.”

Since the recipe book’s success, the left-of-centre collective has arranged a “recipe swap meet” late last year. The ladies took to the streets of Melbourne, using hundreds and thousands and icing as their tools to create street art. “It’s about having fun with a location, and I guess that in the morning people will be like, ‘What?’” Walker says.

However, people have not always been impressed by the Hotham Street Ladies’ creativity. The Royal Melbourne Show told the ladies their proposal for a rotting wedding cake (complete with maggots and rats) was “too disgusting” to be part of the competition.

“We weren’t making fun of what these ladies do, it just represented a different aspect of culture,” Walker says. “The cake that won was a tribute to Don Bradman, so that’s fairly telling of the crowd.”

This year the Hotham Street Ladies will host a fun-filled dinner as part of the Melbourne Food and Wine festival, with the event remaining true to the collective’s roots. The Ultimate Share House Dinner will take place in Panama Dining Room, and will have patrons eating share house-themed food cooked by top chefs. “It’s sort of fantasy theme having chefs cook for a share house,” Walker says. “And you don’t have to clean up!”

For bookings, call 9417 7663.