

# NEW YORK POST

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Your guide to a great weekend

## Out & About



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Photos by Brian ZakNY Post

# FELT SO GOOD

An artist has created an entire New York deli — out of whole cloth

By BARBARA HOFFMAN

**G**O ahead — squeeze that tomato! And while you're at it, feel the eel. You can feel everything at "Lucy Sparrow's Delicatessen on 6th," because everything is made of felt — from the \$10 caramel swirl and Nipples of Venus pastries, to the \$40 demi-baguettes and the \$200 lobsters.

Lobsters, in a delicatessen? "I think maybe it's an English person's idea of a deli," says Sparrow, 33, who vows to be on-site daily through Oct. 20 at the former shoe store at Sixth Avenue and 49th Street. The London-based artist is easy to spot, given her horn-rimmed glasses and a pink-and-white uniform seemingly on loan from "Twin Peaks."

Sparrow says she found her passion at age 6, when she made a felt fried egg: "I wanted to re-create every aspect of real life in felt." Two years ago, her felt-filled "bodega" popped up by the High Line but closed nine days early, emptied by an inexplicable craving for hand-painted and hand-sewn bottles of Heinz ketchup, Moët Chandon Champagne and Tyslenol.

That won't happen this time, Sparrow promises. "I made 600 watermelons, 600 grapefruits and 2,000 oysters," she tells The Post, though the fruit tarts (\$40) sold out two hours after the store

opened on Tuesday morning. (Items are replenished periodically, say staffers, who continue to paint them in the back of the store.)

"I love pop art," says Ashley Bell, 50, clutching a felt rainbow cookie as she surveys the shelves of ersatz bagels, baguettes and rolls. The Flatiron-based collector bought a Wonder Bread, Pepperidge Farm goldfish package and more from Sparrow's bodega. At first, Bell says, she displayed them on her bookshelves, to her visitors' confusion. Now they're grouped together in a Lucite box on her living-room wall.

Richard Stauffacher, 47, says he has no idea where he'll display the spring onions, prawn and clam he selected, each one of them with beady eyes and smiling mouths. "Who could resist this face?" asks the Harlem-based artist, cradling his clam.

A faux-metal SliceMaster 2000, replete with several felted slices, sold the first day for \$1,000. "The woman who bought it said she doesn't have room in her kitchen or living room, so she's going to keep it by her bed," says Sparrow's assistant, Gemma Costin. Making the deli's 30,000 hand-sewn and hand-painted pieces took an actual village of neighboring women.

Alex, a West Village mother of two who preferred not to give her age or surname, waits patiently in the checkout line with two (plastic) baskets full of eggplants, bananas, corn, lamb chops and several kinds of sausage.

"We are a food family," she says. "We cook, we care about where our food comes from... We're also artists, and we believe that art should be in people's lives, not just in a show."

"Lucy Sparrow's Delicatessen on 6th," a joint presentation by Rockefeller Center and the Art Production Fund, is open daily from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. through Oct. 20 at Sixth Avenue and 49th Street.

Artist Lucy Sparrow with a basket full of produce, fish and other groceries from her make-believe deli in Rockefeller Center — where all the goods are made with felt.