

# S m a c k M e l l o n

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## ***FOODshed: Art and Agriculture in Action***

An exhibition of upstate/downstate NY artists who work with food and agriculture  
Curated by Amy Lipton

Joan Bankemper/Black Meadow Barn; Joy Garnett; Habitat For Artists Collective (Simon Draper, Michael Asbill, Carmen Acuna, Dan McGinley, Brandon Cruz, Jessica Poser, Lisa Breznak and Sean Corcoran); Natalie Jeremijenko; Kristyna and Marek Milde; Peter Nadin/Old Field Farm; Leila Nadir + Cary Peppermint (EcoArtTech); Andrea Reynosa, Brooklyn Grange and Alloy; Bonnie Ora Sherk; Jenna Spevack; Susan Leibovitz Steinman/Mona Talbott; Tattfoo Tan; Elaine Tin Nyo; Linda Weintraub

**Exhibition Dates: June 7 to July 27, 2014**  
**Artists' reception: Saturday, June 7, 5pm-8pm**

*FOODshed: Agriculture and Art in Action* focuses on sustainable agriculture, entrepreneurship, and artists' use of food as subject matter or medium. The exhibition and programming include 14 exhibiting artists in the gallery at Smack Mellon, 3 public projects in the nearby DUMBO community, as well as public workshops in collaboration with the artists in the exhibition. The gallery exhibition features artworks and inventive projects around agriculture and food that address farming as both activism and art form. Many of the artists in this exhibition are known for bringing community-specific issues into their work and are exploring the real-world implications of small-scale farming and raising community awareness about our food systems. Their varied practices include growing food, cooking food, raising animals for food, and engaging communities around local food production as well as instigating new artist-based economies.

The artists working in New York State today in the realm of food and farming coincide with a larger cultural awakening regarding the ills of our present system, such as the distances food travels to supermarket shelves and the effects of shipping and transport on climate change. Brooklyn has become the epicenter for food activism and culinary explorations. Artists have joined food activists in focusing on environmental problems such as lack of biodiversity in mono-cultural farms, the loss of top soil and nutrient-poor soil, the abuse and poor conditions of feedlot and factory raised animals, the conversion of farmland into housing, and the waste of un-harvested crops. Artists are now farming not only to raise their own food in order to become self-reliant and to eat more healthily, but also to offer alternative and sustainable approaches within their local communities.

For the artists in *FOODshed*, the acts of cultivation, growing, and by implication educating have evolved to a deeper level of activism where the boundaries of real world and art completely disappear. Their projects present new paradigms regarding the growing, production, distribution and consumption of food. The artists in this exhibition advocate for an organic, regional and local approach, which they are manifesting in their own lives.

In 2008 **Joan Bankemper** established The Black Meadow Barn, "a place where culture and horticulture meet". The Black Meadow Barn is located in Warwick, NY. *The Black Currant Jam* is her project about organic farming and environmental sustainability. This project of growing black currants at the Black Meadow Barn is to produce black currant jam from these plants creating a self-sustaining business while making delicious healthful, organic jam. Black currants are a "super food"; they have the highest amount of antioxidants found in any fruit. The design and aesthetic packaging of labels for the jars of *The Black Currant Jam* embodies the ethics of this project.

Bankemper will also exhibit seven flower vases. Each one represents a color related to the seven Hindu chakras. Bankemper's first medicinal chakra garden was with Creative Time in 1994 at the Brooklyn Anchorage. This is

# S m a c k M e l l o n

the twenty-year anniversary of that garden.

<http://blackmeadowbarn.wordpress.com/author/jbankemper/>

Hudson Valley based artists collective **Habitat for Artists** (Simon Draper, Michael Asbill, Lisa Breznak, Carmen Acuna, Dan McGinley, Brandon Cruz, Jessica Poser, Sean Corcoran) will be presenting *Mic-GRO*, one of its signature, temporary, reusable art studios. The studio will be transformed into a growing shed for edible greens and seed propagation, partnering with organizations including the Hudson Valley Seed Library, Obercreek Farm CSA based in Hughsonville, NY and Green Up, a business supporting the design of plant-based systems that showcase the environmental benefits of green technology based in Stamford, CT. All HFA studios are made from recycled or reclaimed materials and are reused in each new iteration of the project. The interior and exterior space will be provided for interaction by artists, individuals and families during the course of the exhibition.

<http://habitatforartists.org/>

**Ecoarttech** is a collaborative art project by Rochester NY artists, Leila Nadir + Cary Peppermint. They will present *OS Fermentation: Collaborative Hacks with Fruits, Vegetables, and Microbes*. Fermentation is a practice being lost in the industrial food system, which has positioned eaters as passive consumers rather than creative participants. Nadir and Peppermint will present an OS Fermentation Workshop, a slow-cooking class, a healing ritual, and a collaboration with bacteria. The Workshop-Collaboration revives the ancient, natural, sustainable rituals of microbiological fermentation that provided our human ancestors with a method of food preservation, diverse intestinal flora, and a visually striking unfolding of carefully managed decomposition and death. To make the subtle revolutions of fermentation visible to the human eye, the artists have installed computer sensors that will be tracking the changing pH, oxygen, and color levels generated by the microbes' activities.

<http://ecoarttech.org/about>

*Piss & Vinegar (art and ferment)* by Brooklyn artist **Joy Garnett** is an installation of artworks and foodworks that reflect the pioneering DIY industriousness of the artist's maternal grandparents: Egyptian poet and beekeeper Dr. Ahmed Zaky Abushady and his English wife Annie (née Bamford). As heir and curator of their archive, Garnett produces works that reflect its compelling intertwining narratives. The installation for FOODshed at Smack Mellon includes two limited edition prints based on images drawn from the archive; a batch of Garnett's bottled home-fermented red wine vinegar, labeled with an adaptation of Dr. Abushady's letterhead; and photo-documentation of Garnett's own DIY vinegar-making process.

<http://thebeekingdom.tumblr.com/pissandvinegar>

<http://www.firstpulseprojects.com/joy.html>

**Natalie Jeremijenko**, artist/engineer and professor/director of the NYU xDesign Environmental Health Clinic will present *the Manufactory: FlowerFLOSS (Free Libre Open Source Systems)* and *xCola event*. This performance event explores open-systems food production. A group of teens will spin *FlowerFLOSS*, serve *xCola*, and sing while assisting in the assembly of these bird, bee, and butterfly-friendly snacks. Video installation will accompany the on-site Manufactory to project Natalie Jeremijenko's own explanation of the experiment.

<http://nataliejeremijenko.com/>

<http://projectsxclinic.com/flowerxfloss-for-your-event/>

Brooklyn-based artist team **Kristyna and Marek Milde** will present *À la cart*, a 2-part project at Smack Mellon and at a public site in DUMBO. *À la cart*, a temporary vegetable garden, uses shopping carts, soil and plants to create a participatory, edible workshop experiment. The gallery serves as a base for the project, "a garden shack", presentation platform and hub for gathering and talks on food and sustainability. The Milde invited members of the DUMBO community to join the project and grow ingredients in the shopping carts for a single dish. The participants are tending, watering, harvesting and later cooking the vegetables, to actively experience the process of growing food instead of shopping for it. "If we are what we eat, who are we if we don't know the origin and the context of the production of our food?"

<http://www.mildeart.com>

# S m a c k M e l l o n

*Thinning Carrots* a film by artist **Peter Nadin** was created at his Old Field Farm in Greene County, NY and was inspired and facilitated by the farm's plants, livestock, products, activities, and landscape. Since he started farming in 1989, Nadin's art practice has increasingly overlapped with the day-to-day responsibilities of the farm. Old Field Farm/Art and Agriculture consists of 160 acres of forest, wild bee pastures, indigenous and cultivated mushrooms, and habitat for goats, chickens, pigs, and ducks; vegetable and fruit gardens. Integral to the farm is a greenhouse, ceramic studio and painting studio. The goal of the farm is to establish an equilibrium between many varied species and to focus on the contribution they make to each other and thus to the overall productivity and health of the farm.

<http://artandagriculture.org/>

<http://www.peternadin.com/>

*John Street Pasture* is a temporary living earthwork that celebrates green space, agriculture, and the transitional nature of urban land. A planted cover crop of crimson clover will bloom into a lush field of reds and greens while creating a nutrient rich resource of nitrogenized soil for the now under-construction John Street section of Brooklyn Bridge Park. John Street Pasture is located at 1 John Street and is a collaboration of **Andrea Reynosa, Brooklyn Grange and Alloy**.

<http://johnstreetpasture.com/>

**Bonnie Ora Sherk**, a pioneering ecological artist founded *Life Frames, Inc. (LFI)*, sponsor of *A Living Library*, in 1992 and *Crossroads Community (the farm)*, an early *Life Frame*, in San Francisco in 1974. *The Farm* led the transformation of 7-acres of derelict land fragments into a vital and bucolic environmental and agricultural community education center replete with agro-ecology gardens, farm animals, multi-arts programs, and a new City park. Beginning in 1981, the *Life Frame* evolved to become, *A Living Library (A.L.L.)* a powerful framework, planning tool, and series of strategies and methodologies that incorporates local resources: human, ecological, economic, historic, technological, and aesthetic. Sherk will exhibit a series of photographs from the current *Roosevelt Island Living Library & Think Park* as well as a video - *A Living Library: Cultivating the Human & Ecological Garden*, and drawings from *A Living Library* and her earlier master plan, *Roosevelt Island Living Library & Think Park for Southpoint*, 2003.

<http://www.alivinglibrary.org/blog>

**Jenna Spevack's** "domestic microfarms" explore the value placed on food and artistic social practice through interactions with gallery visitors. Spevack started experimenting with apartment-sized farming by converting a bookshelf in her Brooklyn apartment into a mini greenhouse. She designed an efficient, sub-irrigated system for growing energy-packed edible plants (microgreens) in small, urban spaces. To suggest a feeling of domesticity household objects were modified to house the microfarms. For example: a dresser, a suitcase, a chair, a kitchen cabinet, a desk, etc. were adapted with a planter and lights. As an urban agricultural design project, she envisioned a way to grow food in an anthropogenic landscape for all strata of citizens, but as an art project, she hopes to facilitate conversations about what we value: convenience vs creative effort, regenerables vs disposables, neighbors vs strangers.

<http://jennaspevack.com/>

For nearly a decade, during the month of July artist **Elaine Tin Nyo** has been making sour cherry pies for her friends (at least one a day) and sending messages to her Pie List about who ate them each day. *Life Is a Plate of Cherries*, 2014 will be exhibited via ebook presentation. Tin Nyo will also present 2 recent videos works; *Genesis One: Salies-de-Bearn to Hasparren*, marks the beginning and the end of the ham making process and **JFK**, a brief story from Josette Arrayet, American-born Basque farmer about her son's understanding of the cycle of life.

<http://elainetinnyo.com/>

Social sculptor **Susan Leibovitz Steinman** will collaborate with **Mona Talbott**, a slow food expert/master chef and owner of Talbott & Arding Cheese and Provisions in Hudson, NY. Their *Pomona Project* is named after the

# S m a c k M e l l o n

Roman goddess of apples and refers to Talbott's years of experience developing an organic garden and work with renowned California chef Alice Waters. They will create handmade apple vinegars from a local-source recipe: foraged wild apples. The vinegar will be produced as a community project working with Perfect Ten, an after-school high school program for girls in Hudson, NY.

<http://www.steinmanstudio.com>

<http://www.monatalbott.com>

<http://perfecttenafterschool.org/perfect-ten-people>

*NEAKA (New Earth Apocalypse Knowledge Advancement) Unit* by Staten Island artist **Tattfoo Tan** is sited at Squib Bridge Park/Brooklyn Bridge Park. *NEAKA* is an aluminum structure in the form of a catamaran. It acts as a symbol for a post-economic meltdown, global warming and Tan's ongoing social practice project- *NEMRE (New Earth Meal-Ready-to-Eat)* a dehydrated meal harvested from food waste. Through this project the artist inspires others to practice this ancient food preservation technique. Dehydration of food can help prepare for future disaster as well as provide nutritious meals, knowing every ingredient and wasting none. Preparing for climate change is not just about prevention, but includes disaster preparation like *New Earth MRE*. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy on Staten Island, food supplies were cut off. The local supermarket was flooded and food was destroyed and had to be thrown away. Modern society is dependent upon acquiring food from supermarkets, delis or restaurants. It is becoming necessary to have provisions for times of emergency for our communities and ourselves. **"Don't Despair. Be Prepared"**.

[http://www.tattfoo.com/new\\_earth/NewEarthMRE.html](http://www.tattfoo.com/new_earth/NewEarthMRE.html)

**Linda Weintraub's** art installation, "Let Us Eat the Colors of Nature's Spectrum" consists of 26 foods harvested from her gardens in Rhinebeck, NY and preserved through canning. They are arranged according to the color continuum they suggest. She comments, "Gardens expand the definition of fertility far beyond the production of edibles. Their fertility nourishes the full complement of categories that account for humanity's interactions with the material world. For example, by satisfying the pragmatic need to acquire nourishment, gardening represents the material world as a resource. Beyond resource, the nurturing care that plants receive in gardens introduces the personal interaction and responsibility of caring for pets. In addition, by heightening awareness life's vulnerabilities and its resiliencies, gardening enters the realm of the sacred where life is continually experienced as mysterious and wondrous.

<http://lindaweintraub.com/>

## Panel Discussion

Wednesday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6:00pm, at Smack Mellon, Free

**FOODprint**, a panel discussion on food and climate will investigate the current national debate about our food systems and the intersection of farming, culture and climate as it relates to the Upstate/NYC focus of the FOODshed exhibition. Panelists: Jennifer Grossman, Farmer/NRDC Food Systems Advocate; Ben Flanner, Farmer, Brooklyn Grange; Josh Morgenthau, Farmer and Entrepreneur Good Eggs; Linda Weintraub, Artist/Writer; Tattfoo Tan, Artist; John Gorzynski, Farmer, Gorzynski Ornergy Farm; Patricia Watts, moderator.

## Public Workshops

Smack Mellon's *FOODshed* will offer workshops in collaboration with the artists in the exhibition and With Food in Mind, a nomadic organization operating at the intersection of food, visual culture, and social change that develops drop-in workshops, afterschool classes, and other educational programs that dynamically combine art and food. All workshops take place at Smack Mellon unless otherwise indicated

## Grow a Salad in Your Apartment, With Food in Mind

Saturday, June 21, 11:00am-1:00pm. Space is limited to 15 people. Must be 18 or older to participate.

Cost: \$38 per person. Pre-registration required; email [suzanne@smackmellon.org](mailto:suzanne@smackmellon.org).

Eating well on a budget can prove challenging in New York City. One way that urban dwellers can reduce their

# S m a c k M e l l o n

expenses is by growing and cooking some of their own food. In this joint farming and cooking workshop, participants will learn how to grow edible microgreens indoors and different ways to eat them after they've sprouted. Hands-on tutorials demonstrate all of the steps to take from plant to plate. Artist Jenna Spevack and With Food in Mind founder Nicole J. Caruth will lead the workshop.

## ***Kale Chip Workshop with artist Tattfoo Tan***

Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1:30-2:30pm, Free

Tattfoo Tan will teach participants how to save surplus food by dehydrating vegetables and fruit to create healthy snacks. Participants will learn to make kale chips and be amazed how addictive these chips are. As climate change poses increasing threats to our agriculture, artist Tattfoo Tan challenges us to reduce food waste by rethinking what produce should look like. Tan shares creative techniques for salvaging deformed vegetables, which, with a little love, are transformed into beautiful meals. "Dehydrated food is considered raw and contains most of its nutrients. The problems of climate change and food waste are new, but the solutions don't have to be. People have been eating bruised vegetables and using techniques like dehydration and fermentation for centuries. Sometimes in order to move forward, we have to look back and relearn what we have lost. We can use this knowledge and these techniques as bearings to find a more sustainable path instead of wasting our natural resources and destroying the earth."- Tattfoo Tan

## ***OS Fermentation: Collaborative Hacks with Fruits, Vegetables, and Microbes, with Ecoarttech workshop with Leila Nadir + Cary Peppermint.***

Saturday, June 21, 3:00pm \$25

The workshop revives the ancient, natural, sustainable rituals of microbiological fermentation that provided our human ancestors with a method of food preservation, diverse intestinal flora, and a visually striking unfolding of carefully managed decomposition and death.

## ***Roosevelt Island Living Library & Think Park Annual Community Planting Day***

June 21, 9-1, FREE

**Bonnie Ora Sherk** will lead the annual planting of the *Roosevelt Island Living Library & Think Park* on Roosevelt Island behind 504 Main Street as part of Roosevelt Island Day. Sherk has worked with the RI community since 2001 and the *RI Living Library & Think Park* has been planted on Roosevelt Island each year in diverse locations since 2002, including Gardens at PS/IS 217. This current *Branch Living Library Garden* has been at this location since 2010. All are welcome! June 21<sup>st</sup> from 9am to 1pm. (Easy access from F Train or Tram to Roosevelt Island.) For more information: [www.alivinglibrary.org/blog](http://www.alivinglibrary.org/blog)

## ***The Truth About Your Food, with Aurore Ballengée***

Check website for date in July, Free

Consumers are now being offered a wide spectrum of products stamped as organic or natural. But some of these products are damaging to the environment and can be dangerous for your health. In this workshop, environmental educator Aurore Ballengée will teach participants about ecological and health issues related to food often considered as healthy. Through an interactive presentation, they will learn how to recognize potentially dangerous ingredients in their everyday food and how to make educated choices. This workshop will cover a range of food sustainability issues including GMO, food coloring, BPA, endocrine disruptors and other toxic ingredients that end up in our plates.

***Workshops with Habitat for Artists*** – check website for dates in July and further information

# S m a c k M e l l o n

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