ARTISTS EXPLORE FOOD PRACTICES

University Galleries
WILLIAM PATerson University
RUTH BORGENICH

JUANLI CARRIÓN

SPURSE

MARION WILSON

Breaking Bread

ARTISTS EXPLORE FOOD PRACTICES

Left | Juanli Carrión | Detail, Zea Mosaic, 2017 | Corn kernels, mortar, plaster, and wood | Four panels, each 12 x 12 x 1½ inches | Edition 4/4 | Courtesy of the artist and Y Gallery

Cover | Ruth Borgenicht | Detail, Share Fare, 2016 | Ceramic | Dimensions variable | Courtesy of the artist
INTRODUCTION

FOOD HAS PLAYED a part in art since prehistoric times; cave painters used vegetable dyes, animal fat in their pigments, and a tableaux of food has been a recurring subject for centuries. To cite a few iconic examples: Italian Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526–1593) composed unusual portraits with fruits and vegetables as facial features; sixteenth-century Dutch masters meticulously portrayed “banquet” paintings of everyday foods; and Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) experimented with tonal variations in his still lifes of apples and other produce. Food attained symbolic and even religious meaning as a reminder of the transience of life in addition to providing a platform for formal concerns such as shape, color, and depth. On the whole, artists’ representation of food correlates to a fascination with reinterpreting the natural world.

Cooking and consuming food became an art form when Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944), a member of the avant-garde Futurist movement, published The Futurist Cookbook in 1932. Part cookbook and part manifesto, Marinetti approached food as a means to launch a new worldview. In subsequent decades, other avant-garde movements such as Fluxus, Eat Art, and Arte Povera incorporated food in the effort to merge art and life and defy traditional art mediums. In 1971, Gordon Matta-Clark opened the restaurant FOOD in SoHo, offering meals as performance art and establishing an alternative space to conventional art venues. Feminist artists in the 1960s and 1970s staged performances and created immersive installations using food, often as a critique of women’s role in the kitchen and home, and a challenge to traditional gender roles. As part of “relational aesthetics”—also known as “social sculpture”—which emerged in the 1990s, artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija prepared food in the gallery, inviting the public to become part of the art through consuming these meals.

Building on these antecedents, the artists in this exhibition consider how food is grown, harvested, traded, and consumed, examining the meaning that is created through these practices. Eating is very much a mundane routine, yet these daily acts are infused with profound significance and Value. When we circle the aisles of the grocery store in search of food, we don’t often consider where our food comes from. We are so far removed from our hunter-gatherer roots, and even our agricultural present, that we take for granted the relative ease in nourishing ourselves.

Embracing socially engaged practices, Ruth Borgenicht develops workshops, site-specific installations, and interactive events, often involving ceramics and food. She draws upon locally available resources to engage audiences in eating, foraging, harvesting, fermenting, and other communal activities. Trained as a ceramicist, Borgenicht responds to the functional and ritual role of ceramics across diverse historical periods and cultures. As part of this exhibition, Borgenicht collaborated with Elaine Lorenz, a ceramist and William Paterson professor, along with advanced ceramic students Vanessa Antivo, Grace Brown, Victoria Maslak, and Jennifer McDonnell, to lead a clay workshop. Each participant formed a pinch pot, which was passed amongst themselves and gradually shaped by everyone’s hands. Meanwhile, Borgenicht discussed authorship and explained that historically artists rarely signed their works. The participants then joined the individual pots to form a single drinking vessel that could be shared. Borgenicht demonstrates how we can both create and consume together. She provides a viable alternative to the rising individualization which is evident in both the prevailing notion of sole authorship and the wastefulness of single-serve receptacles.

In a similar vein, her project Share Fare (2016) consists of unconventional eating vessels such as oversized ceramic spoons, conjoined cups, and intertwined ropes. During experimental meals, participants use these implements to experience a new way of consuming food that depends on sharing, coordination, discovery, and cooperation. In Immovable Feast (2015), Borgenicht used ceramic glaze in the kiln to fuse thrift store dishes with construction surplus floor tiles. Her banquet consists of white food such as popcorn, eggs, and bread as a commentary on our obsession with the cleanliness of food. Borgenicht boldly steers audiences outside their comfort zone when they encounter pristine food that is served on porcelain. Throughout these diverse interactive projects, Borgenicht relies upon a nuanced understanding of the history of ceramics to both defy societal conventions and reenvision communal experiences.

Juanli Carrión coined the term Culinialismos, fusing the Spanish words for cooking and colonialism, as the framework for investigating the historical and cultural significance of the appropriation of cuisine. He developed a series of culinary actions that are part performance, workshop, lecture, and participatory sculpture and responds to different contexts and locations through the selection of meaning-laden ingredients. His project, Zea (2017), which was commissioned by Art in General, bears the name of the genus of large grasses that includes maize or corn among its best-known species. Carrión examines the geopolitics of corn, which has evolved from an ancient food source to a world currency that remains vital today as a staple for feeding livestock and producing ethanol.

In Zee Mosaic (2017), Carrión meticulously tiled together kernels of white, yellow, red, and purple corn—the four varieties that were first harvested in pre-Columbian America. Each of the artwork’s four panels depicts original designs inspired by pre-Columbian imagery and patterns, as well as...
the logos of HSBC, Starbucks, Citgo, and Chevron. Carrión observed that the historic forms—the chevron, the diamond, and the trisected triangle—actually appear in the official logos of the multinational corporations, revealing the cultural appropriation of indigenous iconography. He further researched the business practices of these companies to uncover their exploitation of natural and financial resources in Mexico, El Salvador, Venezuela, and Colombia, demonstrating the persistence of economic colonialism in present-day Latin America.

In addition, Carrión identified traditional recipes from these same countries, highlighting the role of the four different varieties of ground maize in various flatbreads: arepas, gorditas, and pupusas. During this current exhibition, this artist leads a cooking workshop for William Paterson students to collaboratively prepare these dishes. Each recipe is culturally specific and demonstrates the diversity of Latin American cuisine. Through these culinary actions, Carrión endeavors to challenge the perceived homogenization of these nations and their respective cultures.

SPURSE is a collective of artists, designers, and scientists that promotes social, environmental, and ethical change by means of initiatives such as Eat Your Sidewalk (2015–ongoing). Through a “sidewalk to table” movement, SPURSE looks at what is underfoot and investigates how to serve it at the table. Activities include foraging walks, lectures, publications, and urban planning. Their related cookbook interweaves over 100 recipes with photographs, travel accounts, diagrams, and sketches. This manual for harvesting, hunting, cooking, and eating endeavors to rekindle our connection to our immediate surroundings. In this exhibition, SPURSE displays local plants such as dandelions and chicory alongside recipes for consuming them, diagrams, custom utensils and dining furnishings, and a mobile research station.

While SPURSE’s strategies involve specific procedures and small-scale actions, they have far-reaching goals to use food as a means to transform our worldview and social and political models. In the detailed diagram, Eat Your Sidewalk V:5 (2013), SPURSE provides a visual schematic for dissecting our current political systems such as communism, socialism, and capitalism in relationship to the notion of having and doing. SPURSE posits that an individualistic, consumer-oriented society overvalues the ownership of goods and possession of rights to the detriment of cooperation and trust. SPURSE favors “doing” rather than “having” and proposes activities such as foraging, hunting, pickling, and eating as steps to become intra-dependent and involved in a collective lifestyle and relational system.

SPURSE interrogates not only what we eat but also how we eat through their custom utensils, Unintentional Tableware (2011–present). These ceramic tools were cast from 3D prints derived from ecological forms that were algorithmically altered. SPURSE encourages us to suspend our conventional expectations about dinnerware, such as a soup bowl, which is typically designed to serve a liquid dish that is consumed by a sole individual. Their experimental tools are instead conceived to accommodate the food being served rather than constrain cuisine to existing vessels. By these adaptive approaches to food and ecological issues, SPURSE fosters new eating habits that set in motion social transformation.

Marion Wilson underscores the experience of eating alone—serving as a powerful counterpoint to the communal meals in this exhibition. Though initially trained as a painter, Wilson creates socially engaged work ranging from sculpture to community based and site-specific projects. In The Last Suppers, she cast the final meals of seven death row inmates using materials such as bronze, glass, resin, and iron. Wilson examines issues related to the death penalty, while conveying our universal connection to food and revisiting the art historical genre of still life.

The artist was inspired to create this project on the eve of Timothy McVeigh’s execution, and was “moved by a radio interview that spoke of the redemptive value (or not) of a death penalty for a victim’s family.” Wilson also draws upon her Episcopalian upbringing and reflects on the symbolism of Jesus’ Last Supper as an act of forgiveness. She not only creates empathy through a discussion of the death penalty, but also highlights food choices that speak to our individual preferences and identities.

In addition, Wilson responds to the still life genre and offers homage to artistic movements such as Pop Art and Minimalism. In Untitled (Timothy McVeigh) (2002), she cast two pints of mint chip ice cream as a reinterpretation of Jasper Johns’ Painted Bronze (Ale Cans) (1960). In Untitled (Manny Babbitt) (2003), which she displays on three stacked wall shelves that are reminiscent of Donald Judd’s “stacks” or columns of cantilevered boxes. In Untitled (Adolf Eichmann) (2002), she represents the bottle of wine and goblet that the Nazi war criminal requested instead of a meal. The accompanying small paintings feature ghostly imagery made with baking soda and plaster on chalkboard paint, evoking the expression: “from ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” In recreating the final repasts of condemned criminals, Wilson calls attention to a ritual of eating that is laden with historical, religious, and social significance.

Together, the artists in this exhibition prompt us to reconsider our relationship to food from social, ethical, ecological, and geopolitical perspectives. They encourage us to take small steps to be more mindful of our otherwise ordinary meals. Ultimately, eating is an experience that unites us; it is essential to our survival and provides a vehicle for expansive dialogues and greater understanding.
04/29/1998 Heaping portion of lettuce, a slice of milk. Asked that all vegetables be washed prior. Baked potato, green salad w/Italian dressing, cheese fries w/ ketchup, chocolate cake and two cans of Dr. Pepper; 02/03/1998 Banana, Peach and Garden Salad Ice with butter, ice water and Dr. Pepper; 11/19/97 Cheese, soft drink; 10/28/1997 Declined last meal; 10/20/97 Cheeseburger, french fries, iced tea; 09/30/1997 toast, punch and package of Marlboro cigarettes (policy); 06/18/1997 Fish, french fries, jalapeno cheeseburgers, french fries, ice cream and cigarettes (policy); 06/17/1997 Liver & onions, cottage cheese, red tomatoes, cigarettes prohibited by policy); 05/20/1997 T-bone cheeseburger, french fries, Coke, strawberry ice; 05/08/1997 fires, bread, cigarettes (prohibited by policy); 04/20/1997 french fries, pack of cigarettes (not permitted by policy). Tomatoes, biscuits, chocolate cake and Dr. Pepper; 04/23/1996 Strawberry shake and cheese fries and Coke; 12/12/1995 T-bone steak (rare), six beans and water; 12/06/1995 Two turkey sandwiches, banana nut ice cream and Coke; 08/15/1995 Six
RUTH BORGENICH

Above | Share Fare, 2016 | Ceramic, plastic, wood, food, and people | Dimensions variable | Courtesy of the artist | Right and Opposite Page

Edible Brick Patio, 2016 | Terracotta bricks, moss, edible plants, dirt, glazed bricks, ceramic rock vessels, food, and people | Dimensions variable | Courtesy of the artist
Below | Zea Mosaic, 2017 | Corn kernels, mortar, plaster, and wood | Four panels, each 12 x 12 x 1 ½ inches | Courtesy of the artist and Y Gallery
Opposite Page | Eat Your Sidewalk, 2015–ongoing
| Site-specific installation | Dimensions variable
| Courtesy of the artists | Above and right |

Civil Appetites, 2013 | Site-specific project for the exhibition, Eat It: Artists Explore Food and Consumption at Rochester Institute of Contemporary Art, New York
Opposite Page, Top | Untitled (Manuel Pina Babbitt), 2003 | Cast iron | 3 x 14 x 10 inches | Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY
Opposite Page, Bottom | Untitled (Timothy McVeigh), 2002 | Bronze, ice cream, and dry ice | 6 x 12 x 9 inches | Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY
This Page | Installation view, Breaking Bread: Artists Explore Food Practices, 2017 | William Paterson University, Wayne, NJ
RUTH BORGENICHT
Edible Brick Patio, 2016
Terracotta bricks, moss, edible plants, dirt, glazed brick, ceramic rock vessels, food, and people
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

RUTH BORGENICHT
Immoveable Feast, 2015
Ceramic floor tiles, found crockery, ceramic glaze, food, and people
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

RUTH BORGENICHT
Share Fare, 2016
Ceramic, plastic, wood, food, and people
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

in collaboration with Professor Elaine Lorenz and students Vanessa Antivo, Grace Brown, Victoria Maslak, and Jennifer McDonnell

Thirsty Caterpillar, 2017
Ceramic
2½ x 12¾ x 6½ inches
Courtesy of the artists

JUANLI CARRIÓN
Zea, 2017
Food cart
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

JUANLI CARRIÓN
Zea Mosaic, 2017
Corn kernels, mortar, plaster, and wood
Four panels, each 12 x 12 x 1½ inches
Edition 4/4
Courtesy of the artist and Y Gallery

SPURSE
Eat Your Sidewalk, 2015–ongoing
Site-specific installation comprised of:
Mobile Apparatus for Place-Based Research, 2016
Books, pamphlets, supplies, plant, stool, and cart
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Modular CNC routed Baltic birch plywood table made using edited Opendesk templates
With assistance from Amanda Brooke Breckner and Conor Landenberger (SUNY New Paltz)
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Spurse
Mobile Apparatus for Place-Based Research, 2016
Books, pamphlets, supplies, plant, stool, and cart
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Unintentional Tableware, 2011-present
Glazed slip-cast ceramics produced using algorithmically derived 3-D printed molds
In collaboration with Professor Jennifer Woodin, SUNY New Paltz and Professor Chad Curtis, Tyler School of Art
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

MARION WILSON
Last Supper, 2003
Bronze
5 x 6 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Adolf Eichmann), 2002
Bronze
12 x 9 x 9 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Adolf Eichmann still life paintings), 2003
Baking soda and plaster on chalkboard paint on wood
Group of 9, each 8 x 8 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Ted Bundy), 2003
Cast iron
3 x 14 x 10 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Texas Department of Criminal Justice), 1994-2003
Ink on paper
52 x 32 inches (frame size)
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Timothy McVeigh), 2002
Bronze, ice cream, and dry ice
6 x 12 x 9 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

MARION WILSON
Untitled (Timothy McVeigh), 2004
Video still
17½ x 24 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

Last Supper, 2003
Bronze
5 x 6 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

Untitled (Ted Bundy), 2003
Cast resin
12 x 20 x 22 inches
Courtesy Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

Works in
Exhibition
JUANLI CARRIÓN is a New York-based artist born in 1982 in Yecla, Spain. She earned her BA in mathematics from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey (1991), and an MFA from Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey (1995). Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions at PULChri Studio, The Hague, Netherlands (2017); Sherry Leedy Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri (2014); Pulés Contemporary Ceramics, Brussels, Belgium (2013); and Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, Missouri (2006); and in group exhibitions at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, Alfred, New York (2017); the Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, New Jersey (2013); the Cheongju International Craft Biennale, South Korea (2006); and the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey (2009). Her work is also featured in many public collections including Ariana Museum, Geneva, Switzerland; Sevres Ceramics Museum, Paris, France; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Delaware; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; and Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, Alfred University, Alfred, New York. She is the recipient of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship (2005), and has been selected for multiple residencies including those at the Visual Art Center of New Jersey, Summit, New Jersey (2017); Anderson Ranch, Snowmass Village, Colorado (2002); and Greenwich House Pottery, New York (2001).

RUTH BORGENICHT is a New York-based artist born in 1967 in New York City. She earned her BA in mathematics from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey (1991), and an MFA from Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey (1995). Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in solo and group exhibitions at PULChri Studio, The Hague, Netherlands (2017); Sherry Leedy Gallery, Kansas City, Missouri (2014); Pulés Contemporary Ceramics, Brussels, Belgium (2013); and Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, Missouri (2006); and in group exhibitions at the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum, Alfred, New York (2017); the Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, New Jersey (2013); the Cheongju International Craft Biennale, South Korea (2006); and the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey (2009). Her work is also featured in many public collections including Ariana Museum, Geneva, Switzerland; Sevres Ceramics Museum, Paris, France; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, Delaware; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania; and Schein-Joseph International Museum of Ceramic Art, Alfred University, Alfred, New York. She is the recipient of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Fellowship (2005), and has been selected for multiple residencies including those at the Visual Art Center of New Jersey, Summit, New Jersey (2017); Anderson Ranch, Snowmass Village, Colorado (2002); and Greenwich House Pottery, New York (2001).

SPURSE is a creative design consultancy that focuses on social, ecological, and ethical transformation. They work to empower communities, institutions, infrastructures, and ecologies with tools and adaptive solutions for system-wide change. Drawing upon their diverse backgrounds that span the fields of science, art, and design, they utilize unique immersive methods to coproduce new ecologies, urban environments, public art, experimental visioning, strategic development, alternative educational models, and expanded configurations of the commons. Members of SPURSE have a diversity of backgrounds that include urbanism, philosophy, architecture, ecology, geology, furniture design, art, music, computer programming, food practices, community development, educational programming, and systems design. SPURSE has participated in numerous exhibitions and events at the Sharjah Biennial (off-site project), Beirut, Lebanon (2017); Women’s Studio Workshop, Rosendale, New York (2015); Pfizer College, Claremont, California (2015); Aarhus Kunsthall, Denmark (2015); San Diego Art Institute, California (2015); Guggenheim BMW Lab, New York (2011); Grand Arts, Kansas City, Missouri (2009); Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, Nebraska (2009); the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indiana (2006); and Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, Massachusetts (2004); among others. In SPURSE’s 2017 project for the North Atlantic Marine Alliance, Hudson River Stoop Cleanwater, Department of Environmental Conservation, River Keepers and Rural Action. Members of SPURSE include Nathaniel Conum (San Francisco, California); Brian Derosia (Brooklyn, New York); Matthew Friday (New Paltz, New York); Patrick Gillespie (San Francisco, California); David Jensensius (Kitchener, Ontario); Ian Kerr (Montclair, New Jersey); Detroit, Michigan); Petia Mozrov (Montclair, New Jersey); Jean Pike (Cerrillos, New Mexico; New York City); Martha Farwell Pipkin (Austin, Texas); and Stan Pipkin (Austin, Texas).

MARION WILSON is a New Jersey-based artist born in New York City. She earned a BA in studio art at Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut (1983), an MA in urban pedagogy from Columbia University, New York (1990), and an MFA at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio (1993). She has had solo exhibitions at the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse University, New York (2003); Dowd Fine Arts Center, SUNY Cortland, New York (2005); Sculpture Center, New York (2000); Dana Arts Center, Colgate University, Hamilton, New York (1999); and the George Ayers Cress Gallery, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga (1994). Her work has been featured in group exhibitions at the McCoil Center for Art and Innovation, Charlotte, North Carolina (2016); Bronx Art Space, New York (2015); Herbert Johnson Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York (2014); Bronx River Arts Center, New York (2014); Kresge and Pascal Galleries, Ramapo College, Mahwah, New Jersey (2013); International Print Center, New York (2013); and the Speed Art Museum, Louisville, Kentucky (1989); among others. She is a member of SPURSE, a mobile art-botany lab, and is currently creating major eco-art interventions in collaboration with Mural Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
First and foremost, I would like to thank artists Ruth Borgenicht, Juanli Carrón, SPURSE, and Marion Wilson, who generously shared ideas and knowledge that greatly shaped and informed the exhibition. Without their creative labors, dedication, and cooperation, this exhibition and publication would not have been possible.

In addition, I extend thanks to my colleague Jane Stein, Executive Director of William Paterson University Performing Arts, who conceived and oversaw the campus-wide series, *Food for Thought: A Yearlong Exploration of the Culture, Politics, and Science of Food*, which features events during the 2017–2018 academic year.

Designer Kristi Shuey produced this refined publication, which reflects her expertise, problem solving skills, and careful attention to detail.

The University Galleries are grateful for ongoing support from William Paterson University: Dr. Kathleen Waldron, President; Dr. Warren Sandmann, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs; Dr. Sandra Hill, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs; Daryl J. Moore, Dean of the College of the Arts and Communication; Lorelta McLaughlin Vignier, Associate Dean of the College of the Arts and Communication; and Professor Lauren Razzore, Chair of the Art Department.

As always, the gallery staff worked diligently to bring this project to fruition. Emily Johnsen expertly handled all aspects of this endeavor. Graduate assistant Angel Fosuhene and work-study students Michael Campbell-Vincent, Jacquelyn Portillo, and Jonté Silver provided valuable assistance to the artists and significantly contributed to this exhibit.

Finally, we are continually grateful that our programs receive significant support from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. State and federal support of the arts is pivotal to all that we do.

K. E.