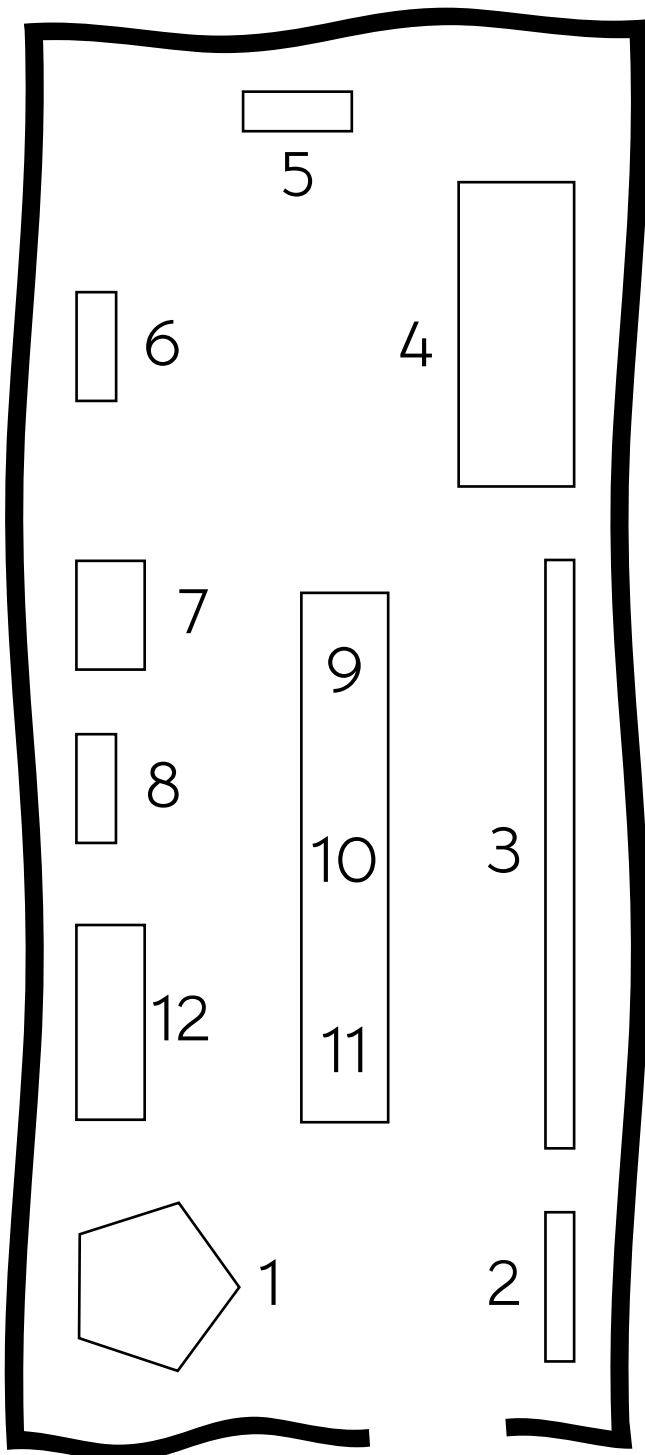


MENÜ IMAGINAIRE



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MENÜ IMAGINAIRE

What do you eat when resources are limited?

MENÜ imaginaire focuses on the future of eating: artists, designers, and philosophers raise questions regarding the most pressing problems of food systems. Our lifestyle and consumption habits have a significant impact on the natural environment—the presented works and the speculative hypotheses set forth by them examine the impact of human activity on the environment through the topic of eating.

Most of us develop the most intimate bond with nature while eating: after all, eating is internalizing nature. The speculative futurology projects presented in the scope of MENÜ imaginaire query the idea that humans can be dissociated from the environment or “nature,” regardless of their place of residence or lifestyle. The works at the exhibition render global processes which are difficult to fathom on account of their scale, eg. air pollution (Center for Genomic Gastronomy: *Smog Tasting*) imaginable through the visceral, quotidian experience of eating.

The body plays a special role in this thought experiment: not only as a terrain of reception but—even reducing itself and its consumption (Arne Hendriks: *The Incredible Shrinking Man*), utilizing its own excrement as a resource (Thieu Custers: *Bodyponics*)—as an indicator organism that adapts to environmental changes. The ideas of the participating artists are diverse: some positions are optimistic, some are pessimistic (*Absentology: The futurology of consumption*), some reinterpret traditions, some build on the potentials of new technologies or question their efficiency. How do we interact with these technologies, what are the possibilities of collaboration with them, and where is the middle ground, in which technology serves the planet’s needs but doesn’t claim to solve all environmental issues through development and growth?

Agriculture, or the cultivation of soil to make food began as people realised that instead of adjusting their habits to nature, they can make nature adjust to their own needs by separating, detaching it from themselves. Referring to the ‘people’ as an umbrella term is not exactly accurate, as similarly to the term describing the current historical epoch ‘Anthropocene’, it neglects economical-political dominances. Exploiting the environment has always been the privilege of a small

group of people. At issue is whether in the current economical system it is possible to return to more gentle, caring, and ecologically conscious modes of production, consumption, and decision-making, or whether we will aim to develop more and more innovative technological solutions to overcome the erosion of nature that we are responsible for. What do we even understand as 'nature', is the opposition of 'natural' and 'artificial' still valid? While previously, designers strove for making food contained, shippable and sellable in their design processes, nowadays they look at the world from a more critical point of view. The aim of their work is more to do with making the infrastructures and relationships that surround crop growth, food produce, and consumption visible as well as fabricating new, often radical prognoses for the future.

The design projects and artworks presented in the framework of the exhibition guide visitors' thought processes about accustoming ourselves to the future. Among others, they raise attention to the speculated need to re-think traditional Hungarian recipes due to the climate getting hotter (Eszter Ágnes Szabó: *Cassava Show: Root-forecast*); a fictional gastro-archeological artifact (Antal Lakner: *Seaweed-goulash drinking horn*); an alternative for protein produced out of thin air that is not a sci-fi plot but reality indeed (Gerard Ortín Castellví: *Future Foods*); turning the spotlight on to our relationship with artificial intelligence (Thomas P. Grogan: *Tuda Syuda*) or non-human organisms (Arvid&Marie: *S.A.M. - The Symbiotic Autonomous Machine*). Unique to the speculative projects, they take current tendencies and phenomena as starting points and outline possible visions for the future, formulating a critique of the present from the point of view of the imagined futures. Thus they make it possible for us to imagine alternatives to our current reality and challenge the often unquestioned motives behind our habits.

Even though we come across the artworks in the shape of an installation in the exhibition, we must not forget about the intrinsic materiality of food. MENÜ imaginaire aims to activate senses beyond vision. Food isn't simply the moving force behind our rituals or a tool for self-representation (NEOZOON: *Love goes through the stomach*), it is also a practical and conceptual agent or tool to understand and explore our world. We shape nature through producing food, and nature shapes us the other way around, through food - making body and landscape into an inseparable and symbiotic (and sometimes parasitic) unit. Some of the projects on display question the idea of works of art as closed entities in terms of time and space: the fermenting microbes, the mushrooms, slowly incorporating everything through fungal colonies composed of mycelium (Csilla Hódi: *Matango Bar*), as well as plant fed by by-products of the human body (Thieu Custers: *Bodyponics*) counterbalance the rigor of technology-oriented visions of the future.

1. Marie CAYE & Arvid JENSE

S.A.M. The Symbiotic Autonomous Machine
interactive soda robot installation
2017

Machines and robots play an increasing role in human society, their presence is strong in agriculture, healthcare, transportation, warfare and distribution. It doesn't seem impossible for robots to be acknowledged as independent entities by legal bodies and state legislations, since the topic is consistently on the European Parliament's agenda for over 4 years now. Could there be a stronger human-robot bond if their legal status would allow the machines to help us every day to be more of an equal party? Would their contribution to society be greater if they paid taxes, similarly to other economic actors? Can we imagine the shaping of our future in symbiosis with new technologies? These are the main questions raised by the S.A.M. robots.

While researching automated high-tech food-production and agricultural practices, Marie Caye found that the role of intelligent machines and their contribution to these processes is not reflected in their status - outside of society. Inspired by this, together with Arvid Jense, she created S.A.M., a Symbiotic Autonomous Machine, initiating a dialogue on the autonomy of robots.

The machine demonstrates a compact food-production unit, which brings together organic ingredients with a computerised production process. It can employ various entities, for example bacteria, yeasts of kombucha or kefir grains to produce a fermented beverage. If it's necessary, it can also outsource humans to execute tasks.

This hybrid entity is both technological and organic, intelligently managing recipes, prices, maintenance, service and labour, using humans only when necessary. Notions of profit, or even greed, are superfluous and S.A.M. produces at cost, reimburses debt and pays bills - yes, S.A.M. has a bank account that one of its creators, Marie Caye opened with its authorization. Currently S.A.M. is in hibernation due to hygiene restrictions. It uses this free time to continue to work out the next steps of the robot's rights movement.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, at-home fermentation practices spread all over the world. Kombucha and sourdough starter, kefir and pickles, beer or even cheese, kimchi or sauerkraut, you name it, it can be found in almost any attic, windowsill or fridge. Living microbes are being activated through fermentation, for which they often require intensive care and nurture activities. Many people develop almost parental feelings, that they show by giving their sourdough starters names or calling little kefir lumps babies. A robot, like S.A.M., capable of automating these processes, besides caring for the living organisms is capable of capitalising on them, producing economical benefits. Are these two features sufficient enough to allow it to take part in human society as an autonomous actor?

One of the reasons justifying why we keep our distance with mushrooms is that even though they are organic creatures living all around us, they don't fit our taxonomy framework - genetic research shows that mushrooms don't originate either from animals, nor plants. Opposing the linear acceleration of techno-futurism, funghi-futurology offers a more organic, complex vision for the future that extends beyond space and time. If we consider funghi as a potential ally in saving the future, we must align to, think with and be with the fungi-logic and let go of our usual thinking patterns - mushrooms after all, tend to be quite unpredictable and uncontrollable. One thing is for sure, they've populated the planet before we, humans did, and they will most probably live on happily even after our extinction.

2. NEOZOON

Love Goes Through The Stomach

video '14 mins

2017

This video by NEOZOON collective reveals twisted human attitudes towards eating - especially the consumption of animal-based food - feeding us with a high dose of stimuli taken from internet fad culture. The work brings back the familiar feeling of getting stuck in front of a series of videos that give insights into someone else's life. For example, when we find ourselves comparing how much food we consume to someone else on the internet. It also features relaxing scenes of sudden apocalyptic natural catastrophes destroying the supermarket.

The short film, composed of a collage of Youtube videos, is not scared of the dark side of the internet. It goes after trends such as 'mukbang' (binge eating copious amounts of food and streaming it) or ASMR videos (particular sound or visual effect recorded on video triggering a mini-euphoria, a tingling sensation), focusing on a dish, or more like it's destruction. The resulting work operates with the strategy of overdoing, using it as a critical tool, satirizing the morbidity of expressions such as 'livestock' and the self-deceiving strategies of meat-lover culture among others. The ignorance of Western society when it comes to the origin and production of the food we eat not only contributes to the maximisation of consumption but also spirals into internet culture in a worrisome manner. The video presents the drawbacks of consumption with well-paced dramaturgy, carefully curated sound and visual effects as well as dark humor.

When we consider the future of food, we can't dismiss its various functions: the sensual, pleasuring and comforting elements. A new, promising protein source might prove to be a perfectly fine nutriment from an ecological, ethical and food-safety perspective, however, if it completely distances itself from familiar tastes, smells, temperatures and mouth-feels, it might not fully convince food neophobic consumers. In the end, love really goes through the stomach. The video offers a glimpse into current, new rituals revolving around eating: the non-stop mediatisation of shopping, cooking and consumption, recording while driving or broadcasting dining are all examples of the contemporary cultural implications of eating.

The video presents food systems as complex and controversial: in the film, food is presented as a seemingly inexhaustible, 'cheap resource'. It is important to note that notions of 'eco-consciousness' or 'sustainability' often come across as elitist slogans and people seem to forget about the democratising nature of the food industry's accessible, easy-to-make, full- of-carbs products. The external world however can't be kept out of the equation for too long - the video climaxes as 'nature', fully exploited in the promise of the maximisation of consumption breaks into the temple of capitalist consumption, floods it from the ceiling to the floor and the rows of shelves full of goods.

3. Arne HENDRIKS The Incredible Shrinking Man poster installation 2011–

The twentieth century has been defined as the century of growth and consumption, but by the twenty-first century it has become clear that this growth is not sustainable. The financial, societal and living standard inequalities keep getting more and more extreme, and it is becoming clear that the resources of our planet aren't endless either.

'What if the 21st century could be the century of shrinking?' asks Arne Hendriks through his speculative design research. His radical suggestion is that science should strive to come up with a technology allowing the shrinking of the human body. If we shrank to let's say 50 cm tall, the cultural, economical and ecological impact would be extremely positive. We would take up less space on Earth (urban areas could be reconquered by nature and agricultural land), we would require less food to sustain ourselves (one coffee bean would suffice to make a cup of coffee) and less fuel to travel (the amount of kerozine used by airplanes would radically decrease due to our weight loss).

This plan is especially ambitious because the average height of humans is slowly but steadily increasing. The growth is rooted in our cultural habits, such as women being more attracted to tall men, thinking that they are stronger and healthier, when short men are actually less affected by injuries or back and knee problems. On the other hand, this continuous growth can be the result of our eating habits, for example casein addiction.

One of the inspirations for the project is the Degrowth movement, promoting the reduction of consumption. Degrowth envisions a society where the division of labour, respect for our environment and commitment to family, culture and community guarantees wealth, not the abundance of goods. Maybe one day we can all fit around a sunflower-table!

4. Csilla HÓDI Matango bar multimedia installation 2021

Matango bar is a place ruled by a multiplicity of species. A place taken over by fungi and other microbes who put our omnivorousness to a test. Different strains of *Pleurotus ostreatus*, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* and *Rhizopus* molds are growing while decomposing the structure of the bar as well as offering us their bodies and their secrets as specialities in a feral menu. The place is inhabited by various discomforts of nature's beings, the hiding and disobedient forms of nature's endless creativity. Besides tasting unusual fingerfoods, fermented shots, snacks, sauces and titbits we can observe the complex logics of our appetites.

Slimy, edible, organic, poisonous, sporadic, magical, forest-flavoured, psychedelic - mushroom colonies spark a sea of associations. Some find the inexplicable, often uncanny nature of fungi more repelling, than mysterious. The artist Csilla Hódi conducted interviews during the build-up of Matango bar with people who, for various reasons, find mushrooms disgusting or horrifying. The project calls us to re-think our relationship with new and other-than-human forms of life, which might come handy with the shadow of the climate crisis upon us.

The installation was inspired by the 1963 dystopian Japanese movie *Matango*, in which monsters made up of mushroom-organisms strive for world dominance. Is it possible that this bar wasn't made to serve humans, but indeed originated in the universe of mushrooms? Why do we react with disgust - in extreme cases phobias - to mushrooms and how can we imagine our future in symbiosis with these creatures?

We might be scared of mushrooms, but in fact, all our bodies are actually mushroom-human hybrids: an average human body is covered inside and out by more than a hundred different breeds of fungi. The weight of fungal bacteria living with us is currently estimated to be between 1 and 2,5 kg. Our digestive systems can't function without and closely interwoven with the microbiome, the genetic material of all the microbes - bacteria, fungi, protozoa and viruses - that live on and inside the human body and determine our mental and physical wellbeing. This living mass called the microbiome is even regarded by some scientists to be an organ, current research shows its importance not just in bodily functions but also for the nervous system.

5. Eszter Ágnes SZABÓ Cassave Show – Root-forecast video '8 mins 2021

Within the frameworks of the MENÜ imaginaire project, Eszter Ágnes Szabó helps the viewers to imagine the future of our one-pot meals, rethinking the traditional dishes of Hungarian cuisine and adapting them to a hotter climate. At the heart of her speculative cooking show is the cassava. Will we have to rewrite the recipes of our familiar and traditional potato dishes and replace potatoes with cassava?

According to the climate database of the Hungarian Meteorological Service (OMSZ), the mean yearly temperature in 2018 was 11.99 ° C on a national average, which is the highest value measured since 1901. The extent of warming in Hungary, which exceeds the global average, is also reducing crop yields, and the moderate yield is also reflected in the rise in food prices: in the second half of 2018, for example, potatoes became more expensive by 44%.

The analysis of the results of climate change research in agriculture show that a rise in temperature causes a shift in agro-ecological zones. The economical and sustainable cultivation of certain crops, such as potatoes in Hungary, is becoming more and more risky every year.

In a 2012 study published in the journal *Tropical Plant Biology* experts from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture in Colombia found that growing cassava would be the best choice available in areas where increasingly frequent droughts are rendering crop production increasingly difficult. The edible tuberous root of cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) is the world's fourth most important source of calories after rice, sugar and corn. The cassava is native to Central and South America; at the beginning of the 21st century, the world produces about 200 million tons of it annually. The largest cassava producing countries are Nigeria, Brazil, Thailand and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Most cassava is consumed locally, with only a few countries producing for export: Thailand produces 88% of all cassava exported in the world. The main importers are China, the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium. While corn is known to be a water-demanding vegetable, cassava, on the other hand, can be grown in areas with lower rainfall. It thrives in the heat, and when the drought comes, it simply closes and waits for the rainy season. No other well-known plant shows such resilience.

The work is centered around the idea that cassava will soon spread in the Northern Hemisphere due to global warming and become a staple food similarly to (and replacing) the potato. According to Eszter Ágnes Szabó, the new climatic conditions will considerably alter our diet: certain ingredients, that are still widely available, will slowly wear out of gastronomy, and dishes that we currently consider 'traditional' (but in fact prepared from non-native vegetables), such as the *Hungarian potato paprika*, will be cooked from new ingredients. Climate change is also transforming production; we will perhaps be able to grow vegetables and fruits locally that are now still considered rare delicacies, grown in remote areas, while the defining ingredients of our current diet will become a delicacy consumed on special occasions.

6. Gerard Ortín Castellví

Future Foods

film 21 mins

2020

The practice of artists and filmmaker Gerard Ortín Castellví is centered around technologies of food production, distribution and consumption: image recognition algorithms in automated greenhouses, agrolistics, 'ghost kitchens' (also known as shadow kitchens, cloud kitchens or dark kitchens, professional food preparation and cooking facility set up for the preparation of delivery-only meals), the relationship of food industry and platform capitalism as well as green acceleration.

His film *Future Foods* on display in the exhibition runs on two threads: while the camera reveals the workshop interiors of one of the few UK based companies that still manufactures props for films, advertisements and displays, in the background we hear a phone conversation with the CEO of a Finnish start-up company. The company, Solar Foods, promises that the production of protein from air will soon be possible in large quantities.

The production of plastic props is ultimately a physical, material, dirty process, which contrasts with the obscure procedure of transforming carbon-dioxide with electricity, adding specific enzymes and fermenting the produce to result in protein. According to the CEO this technology is revolutionary because by using solar power and carbon-dioxide extracted from air, food can be produced even in extreme weather conditions, independent of local climate conditions.

This techno-optimistic company imagines the futuro-protein called *Solein* primarily as an alternative to animal protein sources bearing a negative effect on the environment, as well as a substitute for forage to feed animals with. The means of production offers a radical view of the future, where the 'manufacturing' is completely detached from our notions of traditional agriculture and land use. Seemingly, the technology allows for gaining total power over feeding the planet, as the process of producing food is not dependent on nature anymore, and doesn't come with the ethical burden of exploiting animals. The CEO of the company even contemplates the possibility of protein-production being relocated to space, meaning even in the case of the Earth's resources being fully exploited or becoming too polluted, there is a chance of securing continuous stock of nutrients. The film does not take a clear position on whether this vision for the future is a utopic or dystopic one - it trusts the viewer with making that decision.

Accompanying event related to the project:

On the Same Page - OFF-Editorial Practice | Public editorial meeting #2

Monday 10th May 10 2021, 5pm

In English, Livestream via OFF-Biennale Budapest's Facebook page

7. Thieu CUSTERS

Bodyponics
installation and video
2018

As part of his project *Bodyponics*, Thieu Custers experimented with small-scale plant cultivation methods that recycle various waste products of the human body (urine, sweat) back into the process of food production and consumption. In his work, the principle of “you are what you eat” is literally interpreted; man, who is often assumed to be the endpoint and privileged actor of consumption, is reintroduced into the nutrient cycle. Custers’ work reframes the often inconvenient and disgusting materials and looks at them anew, as a resource. These bodily fluids and excreta leave our bodies and homes almost unnoticed due to the devices enabling sanitation and modern hygiene. However, the idea that these matters wind up at a distant periphery and leave everything around us clean and untouched, is just a flush-and-forget kind of illusion. Today, we have accurate information on how certain substances that flow through our bodies get washed into our waters: not only the organic matter processed by the body, but also endocrine disruptors, antidepressants, drugs or other chemicals that flow through ourselves sweep into further bodies of water. Thieu Custers seeks to reverse this process of othering our excreta by fertilizing his own cultivated plants with his own urine, or by flavoring his salads with the salt distilled from his sweat. These unusual nutrients are thus returned to the body over time through consumption.

Custers’ experimental waste management project can be read as an attempt of taking the zero waste lifestyle or circular production to the extremes, or enthusiastic balcony gardening, and even as a display of an attitude that forcibly retains substances that normally leave the body. Horticultural fiction is not entirely unfounded, as human urine is full of the valuable nitrogen that plants need for development.

As far as sweat is concerned, body shaping and fitness can be used not only to process the calories consumed, but also to flavor the food we have taken in. . Although the distillation process requires some time and expertise, transparency in the production of salt flakes from our own resources can compensate us all for the inconvenience.

8. Thomas P. GROGAN (Tuda Syuda Collective)

Tuda Syuda
video 9 mins
2018

Food has always been terraforming our environment, and landscapes have always been creating recipes. As instruments of this feedback loop, humans have been making active correlations between ingredients and terrain for centuries. We shape landscapes to live in and shadow landscapes to feed from.

Thomas P. Grogan is a French-British artist, currently based in London and a member of the Tuda Syuda Collective. Tuda Syuda performs research and design projects in the fields of applied AI, agriculture, parametric urbanism and food design. Tuda Syuda (meaning back and forth) presents a fictional, experimental platform that produces new types of food and new landscape topologies at the same time. At its core lies two artificial intelligence systems, Chef and Farmer.

The title references their negotiation process, discussing the priorities of food and landscape between them. As we are witnessing the simulation of their constant debate, we see an undeniably social interaction forming, stripped of culture and relentlessly co-operative. If one proposes the addition of something new into their exchange, the other may reject thousands of iterations of it until its own oblique priorities are satisfied. As millions of these negotiations take place in both directions at once, the pace and complexity of cooperation increases geometrically.

Chef is constantly experimenting with new ingredients and inventing new dishes for human consumption. Chef registers and predicts the probable tastes of human users as they forage through the interface of Tuda Syuda looking to order something fresh. Just like Chef, Farmer needs humans to terraform. The sites are built and re-shaped by administrators who read Farmer's outputs. Farmer uses intricate sensing apparatuses to log data ranging from soil pH and companion adjacencies, to individual produce tracking. Over time, Chef and Farmer develop correlational understandings of what things 'are' to each other. They make their exchange in relative qualities of 'foodness' and 'landscapeness'.

Accompanying event related to the project:

Artist Talk with Arvid&Marie and Thomas P. Grogan

Saturday 15th May 2021 7pm

An event by BÜRO imaginaire and Institut Francais.

9. Masha RU Museum of Edible Earth installation 2017–

In recent years, Masha Ru has devoted her attention, also for personal reasons, to edible soils and clays and to the phenomenon of eating earth, also referred to as geophagy. Her project entitled *Museum of Edible Earth*, brings together a collection of edible soil samples from across the globe that some communities like to consume. In Western cultures, the intentional practice of eating earth or soil-like substances is considered as a form of pica – the craving and purposive consumption of non-food items – and is classified as an eating disorder that is not appropriate socially or culturally, therefore those who practice geophagy often experience shame associated with its consumption. Some natural, isolated ethnic groups consume certain types of soil as medicine (clay, diatomaceous earth), delicacy or as part of spiritual rituals. Pieces of clay are also sold as ‘snacks’ in Guatemala, Suriname, Indonesia, Ghana and Nigeria for instance. In these cultures, geophagy is also used to cure various diseases - anemia, coagulation disorders, intestinal worms among others. However, (mostly Western) research shows that while eating small amounts of clay can help alleviate some stomach problems, consuming large amounts of clay or earth are harmful to the body in the long run.

So far, researchers have sought to attribute meaning to geophagy along three different lines. One explanation is hunger: in times of dire necessity, filling the stomach even with nonfood materials or items can serve to alleviate the excruciating starvation. In times of wars, many tried to supplement their negligible diet with mud, for example. The other assumption is that the earth or clay contains nutrients — iron, zinc, or calcium — that are otherwise lacking from the body, in which case eating soil can be seen as compensation for nutrient deficiencies. According to the third opinion, mud and clay have a protective role against parasites, plant toxins and pathogens, and this is why both humans and some animals sometimes eat soil. Based on studies related to geophagy, taking into account the observations of missionaries and anthropologists among others, this third theory alone holds its ground, which justifies geophagy with the poison-binding properties of the earth.

On the website of the *Museum of Edible Earth* project, you can read detailed descriptions of the different soil samples, and the open database also allows earth eaters in different parts of the world to share their experiences and comment on the properties of soils and clays. The selection on display at the *MENÜ imaginaire* exhibition includes samples from Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Russia, Nigeria and Lithuania, among others. In addition to expanding and challenging its categories of edible and inedible, culturally accepted, and beyond normalcy, the project directs our attention not only conceptually but also sensually toward the earth beneath our feet.

Eating soil is a special way of connecting with the earth and internalizing the environment. Earth, soil and clay are characterized by a different temporality compared to our usual food items, as the time necessary for soil formation can be up to thousands of years. It is no accident that earth eaters seek to obtain land or clay from reliable sources: as a result of current forms of land use, the quality of soil and arable land, and consequently the food-producing capacity of the Earth is significantly reduced. The future of humanity depends largely on the soil, which is being exploited at a much faster rate than it is regenerating. Various factors burdening the soil; fertilizers, pesticides, mechanized monoculture crop production can all contribute to the acidification of soils and the reduction of their nutrient content. So it's time to turn our attention to the layers below our feet and besides ourselves, we should not forget about feeding the soil as well.

10. Antal LAKNER

Seaweed-goulash drinking horn [Ceratophyllum rhüton]
speculative archeological research, experimental object
2018

Working at the border between reality and fiction, Antal Lakner creates works of a subversive nature, operating with both a critical attitude and a sense of humour, integrating visual arts into quotidian reality, or querying the traditional approach to art objects and the monotonous rituals of audience behaviour by transforming the institutional environment. The speculative archeological project entitled *Seaweed Goulash Drinking Horn* [Ceratophyllum rhüton] presents a drinking horn that was used during the migration period for the consumption of seaweed goulash.

The womenfolk of the 'Hungarian vegan tribe', formed during the meat-deficient periods of the migratory years due to the decline in cattle population and drastic reduction in hunting opportunities, collected the pinnatisect leaf whorls of Ceratophyllum demersum from nearby lakes to grind and use to cook this ancient Hungarian recipe with traditional spices for our ancestors who gulped it from a hand-made coontail goulash-drinking horn specially made for this purpose. With the help of the available finds and the remains found during the excavations, archaeologists were able to reconstruct this peculiarly-shaped vessel and figure out its method of use based on surviving records. It is the writings of historian Giovanni Villani that provide guidance on the preparation of this particular nomadic soup which combines the characteristic pentatonic flavor harmony typical of the Hungarians, who used to be called the people of soup at the time, with the taste of freshwater lakes.

Along with their nomadic lifestyle, our equestrian forebears carried around the dried aquatic plant in separate bags. It was a great advantage that the non-perishable dried plant did not require particular preservation. Based on the findings, it can be stated that although it was born out of necessity, it is an early form of vegetarianism of the Migration Period in Inner Asia that was discovered. The revival of this original Hungarian vegan recipe can help to develop a topology of possible neo-nomadic diets that can replace meat consumption as well as the associated vessel types that adapt to rapidly changing life situations.

The *MENÜ imaginaire* exhibition features the reconstruction of this long-forgotten ancient Hungarian soup-drinking vessel dating back to Ugric-Turkish times.

11. THE CENTER FOR GENOMIC GASTRONOMY

Smog Tasting
air-harvest documentation
2011–

"Thanks to Eggs we are able to harvest the air...at the 'stiff peak' stage...[egg] foam is approaching 90% air."

/Harold McGee: On Food and Cooking/

Participants of the Smog Tasting capture air-pollution in egg foam. Smog collected from various locations becomes possible to 'taste' and compare this way. The air, 'harvested' from locations with high pollution indicators is being made into egg foam meringues, making the air of the district, the city, the country sensible, tastable through the mouth. Egg foams are up to 90% air, and whipping the eggs causes particulate matter to be trapped in the batter. This way, the meringues can also be regarded as archives of air quality.

The Center for Genomic Gastronomy has been presenting this project all over the world, in cities such as New York, Washington, Bengaluru and Hong Kong, realising 'harvests' in Beijing, Barcelona, London, Perth, Porto and Mumbai. In Hungary, the sampling took place in Budapest close to the venue of the MENÜ imaginaire exhibition (at Blaha Lujza square), at a suburban forest (Normafa) and in the postindustrial town of Miskolc, at Búza square. The latter has outstandingly bad air quality indicators due to its geographical location and meteorological attributes. On the selected locations environmental NGO partners (Clean Air Action Group and Green Connection Association) assisted the work and performed air quality measurements.

The project makes the global phenomenon of air pollution perceptible in a comprehensible and striking form. The batter can be tested for heavy metals and VOCs, compared in a microscope or baked and served as trojan horse sweets. Served for the right people, the meringues can be creative tools of political lobbying. The collective served them up for CEO's of big companies and other decision-makers in the hope that this unique type of sensorial encounter with the air we breathe would make them make responsible decisions.

The group introduced, deriving from terroir, the term aéroir. Terroir, mostly used in wine tasting sessions, means the specificity of a winery, landscape. It also refers to the characteristic taste and flavour imparted to a wine by the micro-climatic specificities and orientation of the environment in which it is produced. Aéroir is a set of odors and tastes of an environment, as well as the (partly harmful) particles that make it up.

Accompanying event related to the project:

Smog Tasting

Saturday 24th April 2021, 8pm

With the Center for Genomic Gastronomy and the partner NGOs

12. ABSENTOLOGY (Márk HORVÁTH & Ádám LOVÁSZ)
The Futurology of Consumption
dystopic sound installation '10 mins
2018

Absentology (Márk Horváth and Ádám Lovász) is a duo of philosophers who are researching contemporary philosophical and cultural studies theories and concepts such as posthumanism, object-oriented ontology, dark ecology and the anthropocene. Their texts are contemporary speculative realist philosophical writings, but postmodern theories, nihilism and traditional philosophies, as well as various literary works, also had a significant impact on their views. In their essay, *The Futurology of Consumption*, they conduct a dystopian thought experiment in which the bonds of community and solidarity between people on a polluted planet that has collapsed as a result of totally mechanized food production and climate catastrophe are broken and thus they turn to new forms of consumption, crossing bodily borders as well, for example, to cannibalism.

According to the authors' vision, speculatively, we can envision a future in which cyborg cannibalism, masochistic self-consumption, or anthropophagy triggered by overpopulation dissociates humans from the network of food and consumption, while the perverted benefits of fully automated and mechanized agriculture and genetically modified crops are only enjoyed by post-human entities with an improved genome or lab-grown trans-humans with outsourced consciousness. In this thought experiment, the apocalypse as an event not only results in destruction, but also contributes to the emergence of extraordinary new combinations and orders of things. The climate catastrophe can also disrupt consumption, creating new degenerate, introvoluted, impossible diets and decadent styles of taste. Fine art and decadent literature can be an excellent growth medium for culturing the potential outlines of post-humanistic forms of consumption. For Absentology, decadent literature defying the norms of morality, as well as contemporary sci-fi and horror literature served as a starting point for outlining the frameworks of future posthumanistic consumption.

Audio performed by Fruzsina Háda

Biográfák

Absentology

Absentology, founded by Márk Horváth and Ádám Lovász is a collective and philosophical site, exploring contemporary cultural studies and philosophical movements such as posthumanism, speculative realism, object oriented ontology and the anthropocene. They are active in English and in Hungarian, performing at conferences locally and internationally and programming lecture series. Their publications have been introduced by Timothy Morton, Graham Harman, Nicola Masciandaro, David Roden, and David Tibet among others. In many of their research areas, they were among the first to introduce the topic to the Hungarian audiences. Their most important published works include: 'Variations of posthumanism' (Márk Horváth, Ádám Lovász, Márió Nemes Z.), 'The return of reality' (Márk Horváth, Márk Losoncz, Ádám Lovász), and 'The technologies of border violation'.

Arvid&Marie

Arvid&Marie is a duo of artists, experience designers and technological adventurers always aiming to discover new ways to stretch our world. Together Arvid Jense (NL, MSc at TU/e) and Marie Caye (FR, BA Design Academy Eindhoven) collaborate on their shared passion for art and technology.

Through the use of interactive objects and performative storytelling, Arvid&Marie use their collaborative effort to explore post-human theories, focusing their creative attention on practical cybernetics and autonomous machines. They believe that researching how humans express themselves, philosophically and technologically, can lead to long lasting, positive change.

Gerard Ortín Castellví

With a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Barcelona, a master's degree in Fine Arts from Sandberg Instituut in Amsterdam, and an MA in Artists' Film and Moving Image from Goldsmiths, University of London, where he is presently working on a PhD, Gerard Ortín Castellví has exhibited in the Miró Foundation (Barcelona), Tabakalera (Donostia), the Stedelijk Museum Bureau of Amsterdam, the Office for Contemporary Art (Oslo), and the Seager Gallery (London). His work has been screened in venues like LUX (London), Anthology Film Archives (New York), Zumzeig Cinecooperativa (Barcelona), and Numax (Santiago de Compostela).

Center for Genomic Gastronomy

The Center for Genomic Gastronomy is an artist-led think tank that examines the biotechnologies and biodiversity of human food systems. Their mission is to map food controversies, to prototype alternative culinary futures and to imagine a more just, biodiverse & beautiful food system.

The Center presents its research through public lectures, research publications, meals and exhibitions. Since 2010, the Center has conducted research and exhibited in Europe, Asia and North America. We collaborate with scientists, chefs, hackers and farmers.

Zack Denfeld and Cathrine Kramer founded the Center for Genomic Gastronomy in 2010 and continue to lead many of the research projects the Center undertakes.

Thieu Custers

Thieu Custers is a social designer and researcher, letting his imagination run wild with twigs and stones, nuts and bolts. He is interested in science, nature and media, connecting these topics to the field of philosophy and design. His work often ends up staging practical performative experiments that place him at the barrel end of the topic at hand. Delving into themes of sanitation, ecological space exploration, printed matter, and circular living. He is currently based in Amsterdam and works at Waag as concept developer.

Thomas P. Grogan (Tuda Syuda collective)

Thomas P. Grogan is a French-British artist, currently based in London and member of the Tuda Syuda Collective. Tuda Syuda performs research and design projects in the fields of applied AI, agriculture, parametric urbanism and food design. It began as a research and speculative design collaboration with Russian and non-Russian stakeholders at Strelka Institute in Moscow and thus has a particular focus on Russian urban and landscape design within a global context of exchange.

Other members include: Ivan Puzyrev, an AR and VR developer and project manager based in Moscow, Russia; Liudmila Savelieva, artist and photographer based in Bremen, Germany; Paul van Herk, practising Architect and writer based in Melbourne, Australia.

Recent presentations and exhibitions of Tuda Syuda include: 'NSU Circle 2: Cybiosis', NIDA Art Colony, Lithuania (2019); 'Frankenstein Exhibition', at Baltan Laboratories for Dutch Design Week, Eindhoven, The Netherlands (2018); 'Three projects about future', Elcin Center, Ekaterinburg, Russia (2018); 'Strelka Showcase', Strelka Institute, Moscow Russia (2018); and 'Future of Food', Danilovsky Food Market, Moscow, Russia (2018).

Publications of research and content from Tuda Syuda: include #02, Kapitál, Slovakia (2019); Fictional Journal, Germany (2018); Strelka Magazine, Russia (2018).

Arne Hendriks

Arne Hendriks is an artist, researcher and exhibition maker based in Amsterdam. People sometimes call him a radical ecologist and although he likes the sound of that, he rather likes to say that he deliberately explores the borders of specific cultural values that define our relationship with the planet. He believes we should be more generous towards ourselves in allowing radical new ideas and practices into our relationship with the ecology. Arne Hendriks works passionately in the field of open-design, hacking, speculative research, education and the fine culture of repair. He is a tutor at the Food Non Food Department of the Design Academy Eindhoven. He has been exhibiting, leading workshops, giving talks and presenting his research projects extensively in the past years worldwide, among other places at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Beijing Design Week, Beijing; Fondation EDF, Paris; Stroom, The Hague; RIXC Festival, Riga Latvia; Biennale Warszawa, Warsaw; HEAD – Genève.

Csilla Hódi

As an artist, Csilla Hódi is experimenting with the potential of artistic worldmaking at the borders and outside of social institutions of art. Instead of foregrounding the singular artist, she is exploring the 'other grounds', tactically using lack of clarity, overidentification or collectivity for example. She is interested in the interplay of knowledge bodies emerging from different disciplines and genetics. At the moment she is looking at possible human ways of thinking with mushrooms. Her roots are coming from Eastern-European post-studio art, performative public space research, life as art traditions and emancipatory practices. Formally educated as a designer in Budapest and a choreographer-to-be in Stockholm.

Antal Lakner

Antal Lakner is one of the Hungarian artists emerging in the 1990s, who have achieved international recognition. Working at the border between reality and fiction, he creates works of a subversive nature, integrating visual arts into quotidian reality, or querying the traditional approach to art objects and the monotonous rituals of audience behaviour by transforming the institutional environment. His works, with both a critical attitude and a sense of humour, have been presented at numerous domestic and international solo and group exhibitions, including major international contemporary art events, such as the Hungarian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the Istanbul and São Paulo Biennials, the Fellbach Small Sculpture Triennial, and Manifesta 4, held in Frankfurt am Main. One of the most versatile practitioners of post-conceptual art, Antal Lakner discards the notion of art as exclusively viable within a closed institutional environment. Rather than envisioning the creative process as the solitary work of an artist under inspiration and full of pathos, he approaches his work with the attitude of an engineer: adapting the precise planning process characteristic of industrial production or scientific research, he focuses on the conceptual content conveyed, rather than on the techniques utilised.

NEOZOON

NEOZOON is an anonymous female art collective founded in Berlin and Paris in 2009. Their actions take place in public spaces: city streets, public institutions, and the web. Their artistic mediums range from collage to installations and film. The recycling, the de- and recontextualization of found footage is a recurring element in their work, where NEOZOON often employs amateur videos from YouTube. Amongst others their work has been shown at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the HKW and NGBK in Berlin, the Fotomuseum Winterthur, the Internationale Kurzfilmtage in Oberhausen, the ZKM in Karlsruhe and at the IFFR in Rotterdam.

Masha Ru

Masha Ru (1984) is a creative with a background in science. Masha's projects combine scientific research with a personal approach and cultural practices. In 2011 Ru obtained a PhD in Mathematics and graduated with honours from Photo Academy Amsterdam. In 2013-2014 they participated in the art-in-residency programme at Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. In 2018 Masha was an artist fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS-KNAW). Masha Ru's artistic as well as scientific work has been exhibited, screened and published in various countries internationally. Masha Ru was born in Moscow, and they currently lives and works in Amsterdam.

Eszter Ágnes Szabó

Eszter Ágnes Szabó has utilised food as an artistic medium in her practice for over twenty years. Her degree work, submitted to the Hungarian University of Art's Intermedia Department, was a 'DJ deck kitchen table', from which she served strawberry & mother's milk cocktails to the panel. In the framework of her project Traffic Jam, she awarded artistic status to jams and preserves and exchanged them for her colleagues' artworks. In the age of dial-up internet, she organised an international online cooking show. As a member of the public art group HINTS, she handed out food packages on Budapest's Moszkva sq. She also worked as a food stylist for several years. In the early 2000s, Szabó and her creative collaborator, Andrea Miklósvári, took on the roles of fictitious researchers and created speculative design products. They developed and branded a futuristic agricultural product, Superjuice, a wheatgrass juice that has an energising effect on its consumers and can be produced at space stations. The deconstruction of the role of the housewife and traditional 'female jobs' (cooking, embroidery, pickling, sewing, etc.) is a characteristic feature of Szabó's whole oeuvre. She endows the figure of the housewife with magical abilities, turning her into a highly competent person and a creative force in her own universe. Her embroidered wall hangings function as ironic documentations of performative events and as interfaces between pop culture and fine art.