

Exhibition-related Programs

Opening Reception

Thursday, June 8, 6-8pm
BMoCA

Gravity Fed: Futurefarmers Procession

Sunday, June 11, 10am-12pm
Boulder JCC's Milk and Honey Farm

Exhibiting Artist Futurefarmers lead a procession through Boulder JCC's Milk and Honey Farm with performances along the way.

Natural Dye Workshop with Maki Teshima

Saturday, July 8, 11am-1:30pm
BMoCA

Dye your own textiles using sustainably sourced food scraps.

Sweet, Spice & Fizz: The Art of Fermentation

Friday, August 4, 6-7:30pm
BMoCA

Join chef Mara King for a tasting and hands-on demonstration of various fermented foods created from local farm-grown produce.

Sundays on the Farm

Celebrate the work of Exhibiting Artists Margarita Cabrera, Futurefarmers, Amanda McCavour, and Sam Van Aken with art, food, music, and more.

Agricultural Heritage Center Sunday, June 25 10am-3pm; Free	Boulder JCC's Milk and Honey Farm Sunday, July 16 10am-1pm; Free	Ollin Farms Sunday, August 13 10am-1pm; Free
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For complete information on these programs and more, visit <https://agriculture.stqry.app>

agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land is generously supported by the Art Dealers Association of America Foundation, Boulder County Arts Alliance, Boulder County Farmers Market, CU Boulder Apple Tree Project, National Endowment for the Arts, Amie Knox, Lynn McGowin, Michael Smith, and Nicky Wolman & David Fulker. BMoCA's annual exhibition fund is graciously underwritten by the Kemper Family Foundation, the Scintilla Foundation, City of Boulder, Boulder Arts Commission, Scientific & Cultural Facilities District, and Colorado Creative Industries.

Please Do Not Touch Works of Art
Flash Photography Not Permitted

BMoCA

Boulder Museum of
Contemporary Art

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BMOCA.org

BMoCA



Art inspired by the Land

Summer Exhibition 2023

agriCULTURE:
Art Inspired by the Land

June 8 – October 1, 2023

In partnership with the Longmont
Museum and Boulder County Farmers

agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land

Presented by BMoCA and the Longmont Museum, *agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land* is a multi-venue exhibition including works on view at the two museums and three local farms. BMoCA and the Longmont Museum commissioned 18 artists to partner with farmers along Colorado's Front Range. Collectively, the works on view celebrate the region's rich farming heritage while also sparking dialogue about challenges facing our local community and the world-at-large.

The exhibition curation is led by Guest Curator Jaime Kopke in partnership with Curators Jane Burke at BMoCA and Jared Thompson at the Longmont Museum.

Curatorial Statements

If we imagine our world as a tapestry—a beautiful, delicate, and complex weaving where every fiber supports those around it—we can also see it unraveling. As humans pull apart the strands to serve our own purposes, we are left with the vision that we are separate from the natural world to which we belong and depend.

Farmers, with their unique and intertwined relationship to nature, offer us a glimpse of a life more connected.

To learn the history of the land and understand what will grow.

To bring people together through food and to reciprocate the nourishment.

The artists in this exhibition hold up a mirror to us all. Through these collaborations they have sought to share the many stories the farmers—and thus the land—have to offer.

As you wander the gallery and hold these strands, what vision will you choose to weave?

—Jaime Kopke, Guest Lead Curator



Esoterra Culinary Garden hoophouse.



Image courtesy of Esther Hz.

Esther Hz Erin Dreistadt & Jason Griffith, Aspen Moon Farm

Interdisciplinary artist and former urban farmer Esther Hz revisited her research in biodynamic farming through her collaboration with Aspen Moon Farm. Hz's familiarity with Rudolph Steiner, founder of biodynamic farming, helped her translate his philosophies emphasizing soil and its care into a multimedia installation.

Steiner compares soil to a "stomach" for "terrestrial digestion" and reveres cow manure and horns as nutrients. In line with this, the cows at Aspen Moon Farm are considered "celestial beings" raised only for their manure. Hz was inspired to play her flute for the cows based on Steiner's philosophies and studies dating back to the 1930s that show that music reduces stress in cows.

Hz's experimental flute serenade aligns with her explorations into the interchangeability between the soul and soil. She proves a linguistic connection by replacing "soul" with "soil" in famous quotes. To compound this idea, she constructed two zoetropes (a pre-film animation device) to emulate the "wheel of life," the cycle of the soil, and the sacred cow that keeps it turning.

agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land @ BMOCA

agriCULTURE: Art Inspired by the Land features newly commissioned work by local and national artists developed in collaboration with Boulder County farmers. The exhibition provides insight into how the methodologies of artists and farmers overlap through observation, experimentation, and repetitive labor. Beyond parallels in their interdisciplinary approaches, these eight pairings reveal the liminal space the works occupy within a nexus of environmental and social justice.

Topical issues concerning colonization, industrialization, food access, and land rights are addressed through lived experiences that speak to cultural heritage, intergenerational knowledge, plant kinship, and migration. The regenerative practices shared among farmers mirror our own cycles of vulnerability, resilience, and adaptation in the face of rapid urbanization and automation.

The ability to replenish depleted land through increased biodiversity is a metaphor for our ability to restore social equity by honoring cultural diversity. In conversation with one another, artists and farmers paint a bigger picture of how we are all interrelated through personal and plant histories.

– Jane Burke, Curator



Artemis Flower Farm. Image courtesy of Dylan McLaughlin and Jessica Zeglin

Dylan McLaughlin & Jessica Zeglin Helen Skiba, Artemis Flower Farm

Dylan McLaughlin and Jessica Zeglin created this multimedia installation about human-modified plant morphology and theories of flower cultivation based on time spent at Artemis Flower Farm with owner Helen Skiba. During a week-long residency at the farm, the artists observed its regenerative system and the influence of Skiba's multi-hyphenate background in creative writing, gender studies, medicine, ethnobotany, and soil science.

Following Artemis' Blizzard Dahlia, a native species of the Americas, the artists examine the shifts of one flower species over time and across continents through interventions, interruptions, and interferences occurring in floral morphology, genetics, and agriculture. Originally grown as a food source in present-day Mexico, the tuber of the dahlia was eventually disregarded (usurped by the potato), and instead cultivated solely for its flower. Bioprospectors brought the dahlia to Europe where they bred over five hundred varieties based on an aestheticized empirical taxonomy.

Zeglin and McLaughlin have created a multi-sensory language of hand-drawn phrases, auditory textures, photographic reflections, and data-driven illustrations to incite an intimate, time-based experience. The evolution of a flower is presented both scientifically and poetically, mirroring Skiba's interdisciplinary approach to relational farming.



Image courtesy MASA Seed Foundation.



Image courtesy of Yumi Janairo Roth.

Yumi Janairo Roth Mark DeRespinis, Esoterra Culinary Garden

Yumi Janairo Roth explores how agriculture impacts immigrant communities through her mother's experience. Shirley Janairo Roth emigrated from the Philippines to Washington D.C. in the 1960s and became a beloved restaurateur. Due to the inaccessibility of Filipino produce, she uses substitutions for essential ingredients, leading Roth to question: "what would it mean to give my mother access to vegetables that are central to her cooking?"

Mark DeRespinis, farmer/owner of Esoterra Culinary Garden, pushes the boundaries of what is planted through his work with innovative chefs. He relates his own Sicilian heritage to the way in which farming can "reflect and refine iterations of self and cultural lineage... through remembrance and renewal." Working with Roth, DeRespinis grew kangkong (water spinach), a Filipino staple strictly regulated by the US because it can grow prolifically.

Roth constructed a Filipino market-like food cart in order for her mother to serve the kangkong grown by DeRespinis to the public. Roth painted a botanical illustration of kangkong from the book *Flora de Filipinas* (1837) in the style of James McNeill Whistler's *Peacock Room* (1877) to reference the nineteenth-century Western imagination of Asia. Through these layers, the cart becomes an emblem of how, as DeRespinis puts it, "people, plants, plates, and place" continuously intersect through diasporic migration, cross-cultural representation, and approximation.



Image courtesy of Adán de la Garza.

Adán de la Garza Krisan Christensen, Wild Wellspring Farm

These images present one variation of how agriculture, art, and technology intersect through AI. Adán de la Garza has sewn AI-generated digital images into an hour-long loop. The subjects that were fed to the automated generator stem from political concerns shared by de la Garza and Krisan Christensen, farmer/owner of Wild Wellspring Farm.

De la Garza expects skepticism over AI, almost as an initiation rite endured by antiquated forms of "advanced technology," like the shovel. Although the artist and farmer consider AI simply as another tool within an evolutionary continuum, the rate at which it is accelerating is undeniably amplifying anxiety about its takeover. De la Garza equates this feeling to a suffocating vastness of an expansive landscape, like the beach, desert, or in Christensen's case, the Rocky Mountains.

Farmers and artists are at the crossroads of absorbing the boundlessness of nature and human creation. At the same time, they are subject to the "system" that relentlessly increases production without considering nature. De la Garza captures this push and pull through a soundtrack of words, cross-wired between an artist and farmer.



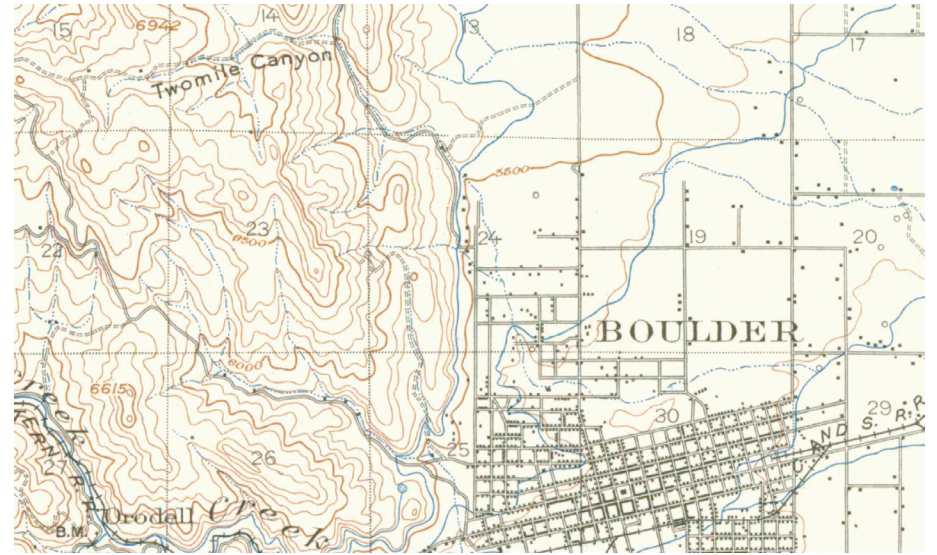
Image courtesy of Melanie Yazzie.

Melanie Yazzie Krisan Christensen, Wild Wellspring Farm

Homeland, nature, and the female archetype are central themes in Melanie Yazzie's work. Her time with bioregional farmer Krisan Christensen of Wild Wellspring Farm inspired her representations of nature in these mixed-media, re-appropriated panels and sparked memories of her grandparents' farm on the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona.

Yazzie considered her mid-winter visits to Wild Wellspring auspicious timing because winter is the time to share stories in Diné (Navajo) tradition. Yazzie contentedly observed Christensen's practice of "crawling on the ground and making piles," while looking up at the expansive mountains. As she listened to grasshoppers, spiders, and flies, she recalled the physicality of farming with her grandparents.

Yazzie layered her collages with outlines of clouds, symbolizing air movement, thought lines, and a stream of consciousness that she relates to the universal concepts of care-taker, elder, farmer, and artist. Christensen's ceramics interspersed throughout Yazzie's panels reveal that artist and farmer are often one and the same and reflect their appreciation of each other as both stewards and storytellers of the land.



Archival map. Image courtesy Desert ArtLab

Desert ArtLab: April Bojorquez & Matt Garcia Andre Houssey, Jacob Springs Farm

April Bojorquez and Matt Garcia of Desert ArtLab (DAL) and Andre Houssey of Jacob Springs Farm blur the lines between artist and farmer; indigenous and immigrant. Through regenerative farming, DAL rebuilds and maintains ancestral kincentric ecologies within indigenous dryland cosmologies. Houssey's alternative, sustainable food systems overlap with DAL's work concerning cultural heritage and land rights.

This small-scale wheat field and the series of maps signify the erasure of significant contributions by Black and Brown legacy farmers, from wheat in the Middle East to corn in the Americas. The seeds were brought to Boulder by an Iraqi refugee and given to Houssey, an Arab-American refugee of Lebanese descent, who regerminated them with Masa Seed Foundation. Houssey has since grown this variety as an homage to the cradle of wheat cultivated by his Mesopotamian ancestors.

Houssey compares the positioning of a wheat field in a museum to his experience feeling out of place as a farmer of color. Garcia and Bojorquez, artists of color with ancestral roots in Pueblo, CO, explore the reclamation of legacy farming and land ownership through historical maps documenting the Western expansion of indigenous lands. Throughout Colorado and the US, the stigmatization of Black and Brown farm laborers has directly impacted the lack of diversity among landowners. However, as Houssey notes, a single stalk of wheat does not grow well by itself, making the field itself a metaphor for our shared agrarian past.



Image courtesy of Patricia Rangel.

Patricia Rangel Kena & Mark Guttridge, Ollin Farms

When California-based artist Patricia Rangel visited Ollin Farms, she learned from owners Kena and Mark Guttridge that “Ollin” is an Aztec word meaning constant motion or transformation. At Ollin, they consider the farm a living, changing organism and harken back to ancient sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices modeled by the Aztec civilization.

Rangel’s landscape recreation is made of extracted soil from Ollin Farms. Her laborious, repetitive process of recompacting soil reflects the arduous work of farmers and enables the soil to narrate its history. Rangel’s monoliths examine regenerative life cycles and how ecosystems heal themselves, creating a metaphor for our cycles through vulnerability, resilience, and adaptation.

The Guttridges told Rangel about a torrential rainstorm and flood on the farm. After their initial reaction to the destruction, they saw that the water ultimately made the soil more fertile. The farm also became a habitat for many birds that sought refuge there. To commemorate this, Rangel integrated wooden stakes to represent agricultural methods, the birds, and cyclical regeneration.



seed shelf by MASA Seed Foundation.

Anthony Garcia Laura Allard-Antelmi & Richard Pecoraro, MASA Seed Foundation

Anthony Garcia Sr.’s serape murals are one facet of his public work. His non-profit, Birdseed Collective, improves socioeconomic equity by advancing art, culture, and food security. Masa Seed Foundation is a non-profit bioregional seed bank dedicated to transforming our agricultural system by establishing food sovereignty—a socially-engaged mission that intersects with Garcia’s practice.

Masa harvests, distributes, and archives bio-regional, climate-adapted, open-pollinated heirloom seeds, each with a unique history. Garcia, an Indigenous Chicano, was instinctively drawn to the Three Sisters: corn, bean, and squash, although initially unaware of their role in indigenous agriculture. Through such encounters, Garcia claims he is continuously “running into culture.” Similar to the ongoing adaptation of seeds, he is constantly responding to his environment.

The story of the Three Sisters metaphorically teaches that when planted together, certain seeds form a kinship that improves the nourishment of each. This seed shelf, a small cross-section of Masa’s massive library, educates us on how plant kinship exists throughout the world. Like the migration of people, the seeds survive through remembrance, resilience, adaptation, and community.