

Editorial

01/02

Chances are that in the last couple years, your life has been turned upside down by a pandemic, a war, an economic meltdown, or some combination of these. And you may feel that whatever you were lucky enough to avoid may already be on its way to you. As the coming years are sure to bring more uncertainty, maybe it's time to prepare. Buy a small armory and move into an underground bunker? Blame foreigners or neighboring countries? Attack each other online? Let's try instead to consider how our basic needs are met, as the individual and collective bodies that we are.

Many of us have grown accustomed to an era in which a global logistical orchestra targets and serves our needs and whims, bringing food to your mouth or goods to your home with surgical precision. Especially for cosmopolitan urbanites used to traveling, sampling exotic cuisine, or spending money freely, these delivery mechanisms may appear to have created the ultimate hostage situation. Is it time to bite the invisible hand that feeds? Free trade might feel great when the lines are open and all the dependencies are working in lockstep. But in fact this fragile political ecosystem has something in common with the fragility of the natural ecosystem when forced to supply illusions of abundance. Maybe it's time to see how the sausage is made.

For this issue of *e-flux journal* we've asked a number of authors to reflect on food and agriculture as foundational expressions of life – as sociality, history, and entanglement. Just as they can be weaponized for political or industrial applications, such foundations can also be embraced to explore new and old sensations of autonomy and abundance in Indigenous, interspecies, anarchist, agrarian, or simply experimental forms of life. By attending closely to something that is, for each and every one of us, the bedrock of security and survival, a world emerges where power over production and consumption can be organized less like a hegemonic system and more like a daily routine. Attending more closely to systems of survival may feel austere at first, like a mean-spirited downgrade to economy class for the privileged. But it opens the door to another kind of abundance, one that always evades scarcity. Food is absolutely political, but food is also fundamentally pleasurable and social. Hannah Arendt, while delivering a lecture to college students, allegedly asked them about the difference between love and desire. She then answered her own question: If you desire strawberries, you eat them. If you love strawberries, you grow them yourself.

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With a tight deadline, we were surprised by the enthusiasm of the responses to our invitation to write about food. In a time when some tend to retreat inward, we found many people in different places thinking about and building similar things. Relationships with land and sustenance are very specific, but easy to understand and relate to when one has their own experiences. The crises that demand a new relationship with our environment also threaten to spread into a universal condition for humanity. So why shouldn't a more intimate relationship with the conditions of our survival spread widely as well?

Wishing you a healthy and slow summer. We also asked contributors to the issue to send recipes. Try cooking them and send us pictures if you get a chance!

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