Kindred Soils

Earth CRAFT

Spring Sessions '23

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ZINE

Edition V of the Craft series, that **reclaim suppressed knowledges (saberes) and entanglements with a kindred more-than-human world.**

All zines are non exhaustive reference and source companions to the KABK Studium Generale Sessions of the Royal Academy of the Arts in The Hague.

Content curation and research, Erika Sprey

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Shrine, Aya Koné

See the back side of this zine for all the earth crafting hosts, cooks, gardeners and movers involved with the program.

Special thanks to all the guests in our previous Wxtch Craft and Earth Craft cycles that illuminated the way.

... and special thanks to all our followers for your inspiration, warmth and encouragement!

STUDIUM GENERALE

Head and curator program, Erika Sprey
Visual communication, zine editor, Tereza Novakova
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with various illustrations, quotes and alumni contributions spread throughout the zine.

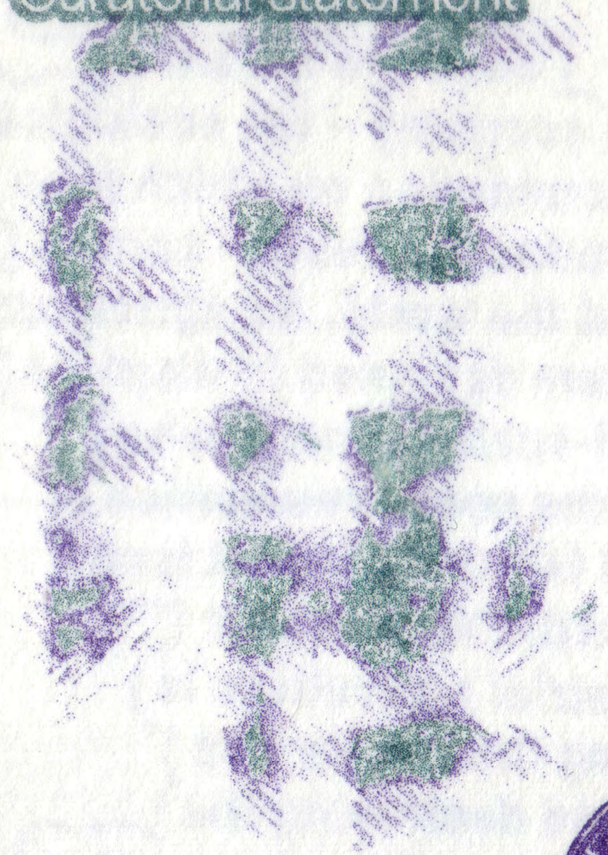
Nutritional composition for the modified and unmodified maize was compared. The selection of the DK404SR maize hybrid through somaclonal variation had no meaningful effect on the corn plant nutrient levels. The use of maize products derived from DK404SR maize hybrid would therefore have no significant impact on the nutritional quality of the food supply. (GM Crop Database)

Our Creation Story teaches us that the first Grandparents of our people were made from white and yellow corn. Maize is sacred to us because it connects us with our ancestors. It feeds our spirit as well as our bodies.
(Juana Batz Puac, K'iche' Maya, Day Keepera)

GUEST-EDITORS INTRODUCTION

Bakudapan Food Study Group is a collective of 8 members with different backgrounds and interests. Our research focuses on food, both as a field in itself and as an entry point to explore broader socio-political issues in the world today. Our projects are interdisciplinary in nature, taking from art, ethnography, and many other disciplines; and take the form of performances, art installations and exhibitions, as well as cooking, gardening and reading, amongst others. We are committed to writing and publishing texts, a way to share our research results and further distribute knowledge.

Kindred Soils
Curatorial statement



When water mixes with soil, an expansive mud emerges, the magical stuff of which many creation stories are made. From the ancient Sumerians to contemporary Yoruba, the Gods created their peoples from clay, speaking to the need of fertile, habitable land for human subsistence: *you are what you eat from.* Sometimes in these stories, either the mud people, mute and blind, would disintegrate too easily at the slightest touch, or it needed to be kept in check when becoming too powerful and godlike in its excessive expansiveness. In either case, the missing and regulating ingredient would be a certain food (f.e. a drop of milk ①) or a crop (f.e. maize) planting sense and spirit into humans who were now finally able to place themselves in a right, reciprocal relation to the Gods and the land.

If Gods created humans of mud, wouldn't that mean that the Gods are made of mud too?
(Ali Cherry, 'Of Men and Gods and Mud')

For a third time, the Creators met to put their heads together. They needed a new way to bring life to the human race that they had envisioned. Just as the Creator's meeting began, four animals came to visit: a mountain cat, a coyote, a crow, and a parrot. The animals told the Creators about an amazing food called maize, or corn, that grew nearby in an area called Broken Place. The Creators were very curious about this new food and wished to see it for themselves. So the animal quartet led the Creators to the Broken Place where they found corn growing in abundance. The Creators realized at once that this was the key ingredient that had been missing. It was exactly what they needed to make the kind of creatures they had hoped to place on Earth.
(The Creation of People According to the Popol Vuh, the Quiché Mayan book of creation)

Today, supermarket racks are not transmitting reverence or reciprocity, but subliminal marketing messages that present food as an industrially produced commodity. In the West, approximately 80% of all food is produced by 5 large corporations ② and over 90% of the grain trade worldwide is controlled by four corporations ③, those entities that once have been constituted as legal persons to exploit the colony cheaply and efficiently, and that today appear as the new Gods of the current world (food) system. But instead of rebalancing and regulating power, these Gods exacerbate imbalances on every level under the all-legitimizing flag of a profit- and growth and profit driven Green Revolution. It has been able to do so by making every link in the modern food chain – from sowing and growing to consumption and excretion –

①

At the beginning there was a huge drop of milk.
Then Doondari (God) came and he created the stone.
Then the stone created iron;
And iron created fire;
And fire created water;
And water created air.
The Doondari descended a second time.
And he took the five elements.
And he shaped them into man.
But man was proud.
Then Doondari created blindness and blindness defeated man.
But when blindness became too proud,
Doondari created sleep, and sleep defeated blindness;
But when sleep became too proud,
Doondari created worry, and worry defeated sleep;
But when worry became too proud,
Doondari created death, and death defeated worry.
But when death became too proud,
Doondari descended for the third time,
And he came as Gueno, the eternal one.
And Gueno defeated death.
(Ulli Beier's, 1966)

at once radically disconnected and hyperconnected nodes in a massive globalized industrial web that supposedly would be the only system that can 'feed the world'. It has also been able to do so by painting ancestral agriculture as too 'primitive' and 'ignorant', and therefore not geared to meet the ever growing global demand. Underneath this fragmentation of the industrial food chain looms a much more fundamental disconnect that would have every part of nature as 'seperable from the rest: the seed from the soil, the soil from the plant, the plant from the food, and the food from our bodies' (Who Really Feeds the World? Shiva, 2016), that are suffering all kinds of diseases as the result of an impoverished industrialised gut microbiome. Faced with the alarming social, ecological and bodily imbalances that this disjointed, atomized way of thinking, producing and eating is causing – and that is also more fragile than we might think ④ – many people are realizing that a sharp U-turn is needed in our care for the soil, if we are to avert a global implosion of all systems, human and more-than-human alike.

'A food system that destroys nature's economy – the ecological foundation on which food production rests – cannot feed the world. An agricultural system designed to displace small-scale farmers, who form the social foundation of real farming, cannot feed the world. Every aspect of industrial agriculture is rupturing the fragile web of life and destroying the foundations of food security.'
(Vandana Shiva, 2016)

④
'George Monbiot explains:

Global food, like global finance, is a complex system that develops spontaneously from billions of interactions. Complex systems have counterintuitive properties. They are resilient under certain conditions, as their self-organising properties stabilise them. But as stress escalates, these same properties start transmitting shocks through the network. Beyond a certain point, a small disturbance can tip the entire system over its critical threshold, whereupon it collapses, suddenly and unstoppably.

We now know enough about systems to predict whether they might be resilient or fragile. Scientists represent complex systems as a mesh of nodes and links. The nodes are like the knots in an old-fashioned net; the links are the strings that connect them. In the food system, the nodes include the corporations trading grain, seed and farm chemicals, the major exporters and importers and the ports through which food passes. The links are their commercial and institutional relationships.

If the nodes behave in a variety of ways, and their links to each other are weak, the system is likely to be resilient. If certain nodes **become dominant**, start to behave in similar ways and are strongly connected, the system is likely to be **fragile**. In the approach to the 2008 crisis, the big banks developed similar strategies and similar ways of managing risk, as they pursued **the same sources of profit**. They became strongly linked to each other in ways that regulators **scarcely understood**. When Lehman Brothers failed, it threatened to pull everyone down.

So here's what sends cold fear through those who **study** the global food system. In recent years, just as in finance during the 2000s, key nodes in the food system have swollen, their links have become stronger, business strategies have converged and synchronised, and the features that might impede **systemic collapse** ("redundancy", "modularity", "circuit breakers" and "backup systems") have been stripped away, exposing the system to "globally contagious" **shocks**.'

Unpacking the seeds, the rind, the juice, and the skin. This project takes the history of climate denial (environmentalists were framed as watermelons: green on the outside, red on the inside) as a catalyst to digest the political narratives attached to reproduction, ecology and plural futurity.

Dayna Casey **'Fertile Imaginaries: A Vessel for 92% Water'** (2020)

Bringing back these concerns to our material, daily realities, how are we to re-soil and re-seed our body minds in a day to day?

The gap between the immensity of the challenge that lies ahead, and the seemingly smallness of our actions can feel disheartening at times, especially since we often have no choice than to ingest neoliberal spirits on a daily base, imprinting a mechanistic notion of food into our cell memory that is already thoroughly permeated by late capitalist modes of consumption. Nonetheless, crucial nodes of awareness and resistance are gaining strength everywhere, countering a system that reduces food to only a set of 'scientific' and therefore 'objective' nutritional values that have been (ab)used to introduce, for instance, trans-national trade deals and genetically modified crops, to the detriment of local, ancestral varieties. Less people seem to buy into the too good to be true promises of the so-called green economy and the often (hidden) political agendas driving many flashy green washing practices, such as some 'conservation' laws that break ancestral ties locals may have to the land. Lastly, concrete practices such as cooking, gardening and local farming are increasingly (re)valued as full, dignified ways to earth craft human soil relations while imagining, as Jumana Manna writes, 'alternative, affirmative care structures that remain, within and beyond the current reality, aligned towards plant and human life alike.' ⑤

The next cycle of this program will therefore dwell in many gardens and kitchens, as we try to collectively re-imagine how the current world food system could be decolonized one grain of sand (or soil, or mud...) at the time.

How can food, seed and land sovereignty and justice look like in a world that is almost completely enclosed but in which also alternatives are emerging through the cracks?

Every session will celebrate a specific food culture and land practice that unearth community (her) stories of struggle and resistance within a web of life that ultimately connects all continents, for the love of soil. Foods such as Za'atar, (heirloom) seeds, palm oil, wildly foraged plants and pollution remediating mushrooms are not only carriers of personal, social and political issues of concern, but also guides and kindred companions throughout this exploration. For these same entangled and muddy reasons, we have invited this cycle the kindred Bakudapan Food Study Group to co-edit the Earth Craft zine, that hopefully inspires further self-study of this magically expansive subject matter that reminds us that everything in this world is food and food for something else.

Erika Sprey
Program curator
and head of the Studium Generale
of the Royal Academy of Art

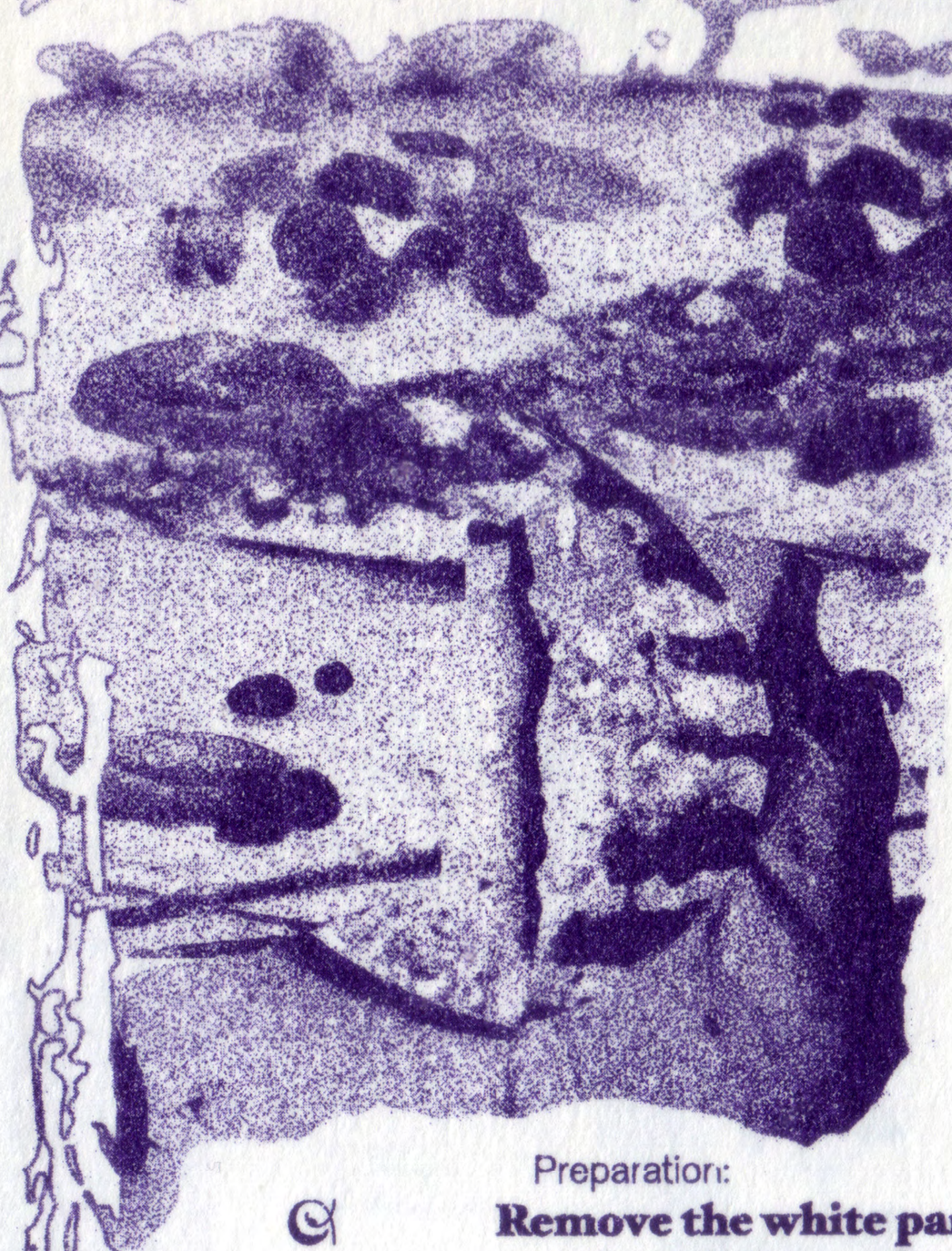
① Beier's, Ulli.
The Origin of Life and Death: African Creation Myths, 1966

② theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2021/jul/14/food-monopoly-meals-profits-data-investigation

③ wionews.com/world/four-global-grain-firms-record-profits-amid-food-crisis-calls-grow-for-windfall-tax-509592

④ Monbiot, George. 'The banks collapsed in 2008 – and our food system is about to do the same.' theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/may/19/banks-collapsed-in-2008-food-system-same-producers-regulators

⑤ e-flux.com/journal/113/360006/where-nature-ends-and-settlements-begin/



Stir-fry Watermelon Skin

*The recipe was adapted from Ibu Mudji's story about surviving internment in Plantungan Camp with limited food supplies

Ingredients:

- **The white part of the watermelon (from one round of watermelon)**
- **3 cloves of garlic**
- **5 cloves of shallots**
- **Pinch of white pepper**
- **Vegetable oil**
- **Water**
- **2cm of Galangal**
- **1 Bay leaf**
- **3-4 (or more) Birdseye chillies**
- **1 tsp of salt**

Preparation:

1. **Remove the white part from the hard part of the watermelon and cut it into cubes**
2. **Peel the garlic and shallots, sliced thinly**
3. **Slice thinly the birdseye chillies**
4. **Peel the outer skin of galangal**

How to cook:

①

Put a bit of oil in your pan/wok, once it's heated, put the garlic, shallots, galangal and bay leaf. Stir them until the garlic and shallots turn their colour to golden.

②

Put the white part of the watermelon and birdseye chillies. Mix them well and put a bit of water and let them simmer.

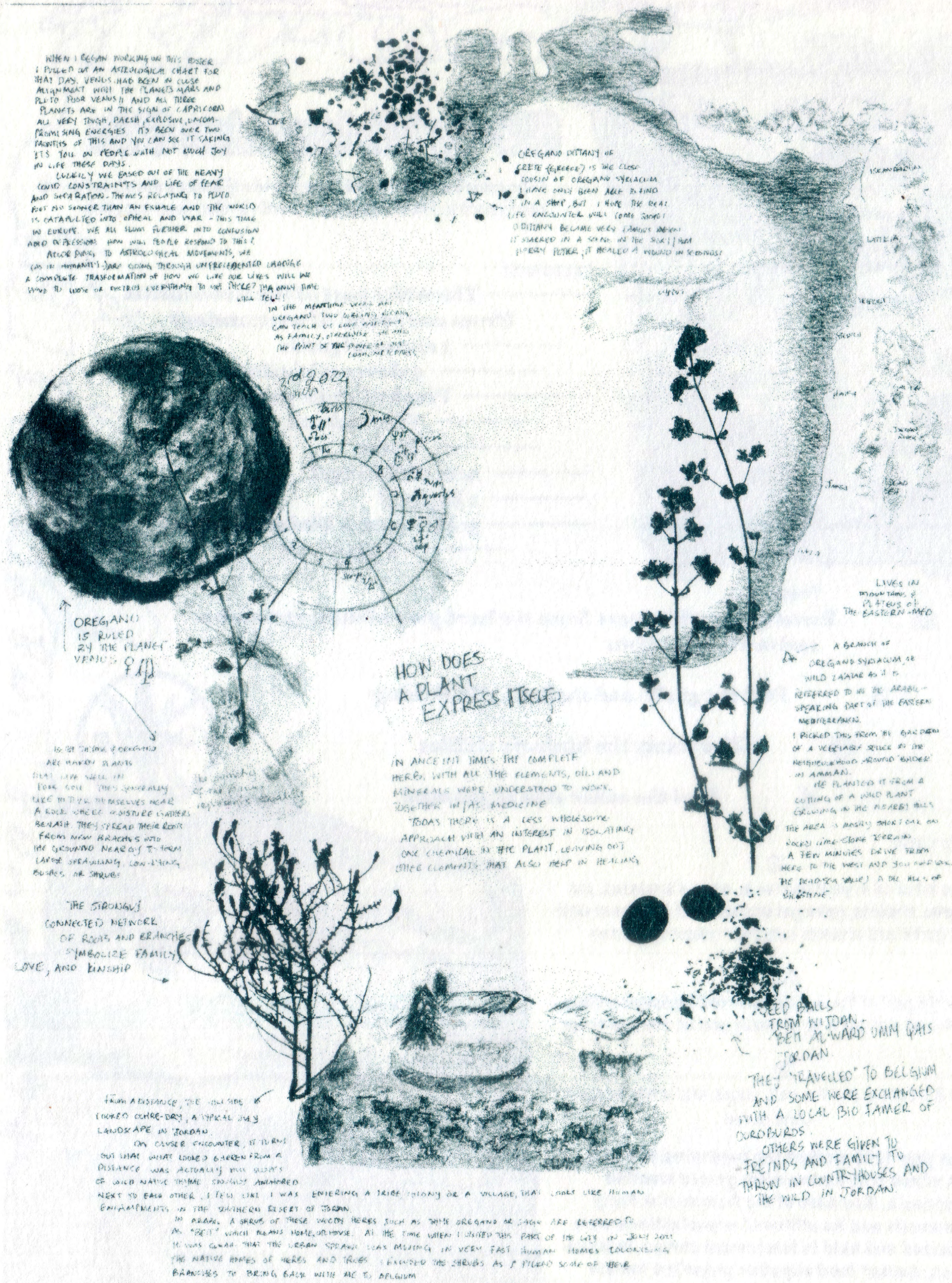
③

After it's boiled, put the salt, sugar, and white pepper. And done!

The year 1965 marked the beginning of a new era where anti-communism gained traction in Indonesia. Members of the Communist Party of Indonesia and its affiliated organizations were ostracised and held in internment camps. In those camps, limited food supplies propelled female political prisoners to create recipes previously unimaginable to us. Watermelon was a fruit that their families would bring during visits. To make use of the whole fruit, stir-fry watermelon skin was created.

bakudapan.com/id/the-power-of-hunger/

Samah Hijawi (she/her) is a multi-media artist (a painter, a performer, an astrologer, a story teller, a researcher and an academic, a cook—it's up to you to decide). Regardless of the form through which she materializes her work, her projects are always deeply rooted in historical narratives which are used to re-imagine our contemporary life outside of the radicalized and polarized discourses that direct our lives today. In her recent project **Kitchen. Table.,** she researches the movement of food practices over time and across geographies, and the body as a site of food memory. The research materializes in food map posters and performative dinners that map out the stories and spectacular trails of migration of plants, herbs and spices—to unfold the politics of the food on our tables.



Samah Hijawi **'How does a plant express itself?'**

HEIRLOOM SEEDS

Heirloom seeds are open-pollinated, which means they 'breed true'. When plants are open-pollinated, they can self-pollinate or are pollinated by natural means (insects, birds, wind or other natural mechanisms), resulting in seeds that are near identical to their parents. Heirloom seeds are not genetically modified. In fact, heirloom seeds are genetically diverse which is crucial to maintaining genetic diversity of the world's food crops. Every time an heirloom seedis planted, that seed stock is regenerated, maintaining that gene pool. Heirloom varieties represent a reservoir of genetic possibilities. Every year seed companies add and drop mass produced varieties based on commercial demand. By growing heirlooms in your garden, you are helping to preserve heirloom, historic and rare seeds for future generations to enjoy. Each heirloom has a story and there are many different stories of where they came from and those you grew them. Stories like 'Chioggia' Beetroot that originated around 1840 in the island town of the same name, just south of Venice and 'Amish Deer Tongue' lettuce that the Amish people grew in 1840. Through a tiny seed you are connecting with gardeners from long ago. These seeds provide a link to our ancestors that we can pass down to future generations.

diggers.com.au/pages/what-are-heirloom-seeds-1

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food sovereignty is the right to feed the population not only with healthy but also with Indigenous-sourced foods. From community gardens that focus on non-GMO heirloom seeds to Vivien Sansour's Seed Library, all are fighting against forces that threaten farmers' right to grow healthy, sustainable crops.

As Sansour explains, the seeds that she works to preserve "carry the DNA of our survival" despite the Occupation's violence, including both direct physical harm as well as chemical warfare sprayed on Palestinian land. "Heirloom seeds tell us stories," she continues, "connect us to our ancestral roots, remind us of meals our families made at special times of the year."

The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library is an effort to return the seeds' stories back to their rightful people, a place where seeds are viewed as "subversive rebel[s]," an accomplice that crosses "borders and checkpoints to defy the violence of the landscape while reclaiming life and presence." They become an avatar who stakes out space willing its people to follow.

'Heirlooms, which have been carefully selected by our ancestors throughout thousands of years of research and imagination, form one of the last strongholds of resistance to the privatization of our life source: the seed. These seeds carry the DNA of our survival against a violent background that is seen across the hills and valleys through settlement and chemical input expansions.

Heirloom seeds also tell us stories, connect us to our ancestral roots, remind us of meals our families once made at special times of the year. The Palestine Heirloom Seed Library (PHSL) is an attempt to recover these ancient seeds and their stories and put them back into people's hands. The PHSL is an interactive art and agriculture project that aims to provide a conversation for people to exchange seeds and knowledge, and to tell the storie of food and agriculture that may have been buried away and waiting to sprout like a seed. It is also a place where visitors may feel inspired by the seed as a subversive rebel, of and for the people, traveling across borders and checkpoints to defy the violence of the landscape while reclaiming life and presence.'

palestinechronicle.com/on-making-land-day-2022-an-international-movement-of-resistance

AHL AL THRA

In Arabic, generous people are referred to as people of the soil—*ahl al thra*. The language has other references to soil as the mother of us all, but the most telling is *zareea'*, which means "plant" and "seed," but is also the word for "children."

Vivien Sansour

HUNGER

A literal and symbolic hunger. Both arise due to social-political processes that pull apart communities from other species and their environment. Borrowing from Sophie Chao's conceptualization of hunger in Marind communities, changing landscapes and the proliferation of processed food have fractured connections that made food fulfilling.

"...sago's valued taste arises from the physical and affective investment of those who process its pith. In contrast, no one knows who produces processed commodities or where they come from. More than this, processed foods are said to exacerbate the hunger of those who consume them."

Bakudapan Food Study Group

LIAR [Read: 'lī(ə)r]

Liar seringkali dimaknai dengan tidak mudah diatur, tidak diketahui asal-usulnya, dan dalam konteks tumbuhan, ia bisa jadi tumbuh dimana-mana, dalam jumlah banyak, di wilayah yang berbeda-beda dalam medan yang sulit sekalipun. Liar or Wild (in English) is often understood as uncontrollable, of unknown origins, and sporadic. Plants described as wild can unintentionally grow anywhere, in unexpected areas, even in the harshest terrains.

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PANGAN LIAR

Wild food is often linked with the practice of meramban, or collecting wild plants for food,

which is a culture that has been passed down from generation to generation before humans adopted agriculture. When agriculture no longer guaranteed healthy and abundant food, wild plants are seen as promising sources, an alternative that is easily obtained with two conditions, namely knowledge and accessibility. Knowledge of wild plants as part of the local food system has unfortunately been eroded in the modern era. Debates and discourses on food availability never address the accessibility of wild plants and our knowledge about them.

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PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS

It refers to Putri Permata Sari essay titled Prefigurative Politics: Towards Climate Justice Seized on Our Own published on Struggles for Sovereignty website. This term refers to a book written by Paul Raekstad and Sofa Saio titled "Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today". On Putri's text, she emphasized prefigurative politics as a way to imagine our world after the chaos. Moreover, this text written during the pandemic when people were isolated and faced crisis in many layers. Putri highlighted that prefigurative will not give a bright future but it will enable people to connect, being in a solidarity, but also give an individual freedom.

Prefigurative Politics: Towards Climate Justice Seized On Our Own by Putri Permata Sari

PLANTATIONOCENE

Plantationocene is a proposed alternate name for the epoch often called the Anthropocene. Anthropocene is a geological epoch dating from the commencement of significant human impact on Earth's geology and ecosystems, including, but not limited to, anthropogenic climate change. Global change scientists refer to this as the Great Acceleration. But what the Anthropocene label masks, and what the litany of graphs documenting the Great Acceleration hide, is a history of racial oppression and violence, along with wealth inequality, that has built and sustained engines of economic growth and consumption over the last four centuries.

Meanwhile Plantation worlds, both past and present, offer a powerful reminder that environmental problems cannot be decoupled from histories of colonialism, capitalism, and racism that have made some human beings more vulnerable than others to warming temperatures, rising seas, toxic exposures, and land dispossession occurring across the globe.

edgeeffects.net/plantation-legacies-plantationocene

LAND GRABBING

Land grabbing is essentially *control grabbing*: grabbing the power to control land and other associated resources such as water in order to derive benefit from such control of resources. Land grabbing in this context is often linked to a *shift in the meaning or use* of land and associated resources as the new uses are largely determined by the accumulation imperatives of capital that has now the control over a key factor of production, land. "Extraction" or "alienation" of resources for external purposes (national or international) is often the character taken by land grabs.

Control grabbing is inherently relational and political; it involves political power relations. Control grabbing manifests in a number of ways, including, "land grabs" (capture of vast tracts of lands), "(virtual) water grabs" (capture of water resources) and "green grabs" (resource grabs in the name of the environment).

Foreword of The Palm Oil Controversy in Southeast Asia edited by Oliver Pye & Jayati Bhattacharya

FLEX CROP

Is a crops that have multiple uses (food, feed, fuel, industrial material) that can be easily and flexibly interchanged: soya (feed, food, biodiesel), sugarcane (food, ethanol), oil palm (food, biodiesel, commercial/industrial uses), corn (food, feed, ethanol). It has resolved one difficult challenge in agriculture: diversified product portfolio to avoid devastating price shocks, but is not easy to achieve because of the cost it entails. With the emergence of relevant markets (or speculation of such) and the development and availability of technology (e.g., flexible mills) that enables maximization of multiple and flexible uses of these crops, diversification has been achieved within a single crop sector. When sugarcane prices are high, sell sugarcane; when ethanol prices are high, sell ethanol. When the actual market for biodiesel is not there yet, sell palm oil for cooking oil, while waiting (or speculating) for a more lucrative biodiesel market to emerge (a feature not present in *jatropha*).

tni.org/en/publication/state-of-the-land-reconfiguration-of-the-power-of-the-state-and-capital-in-the-global

MAY YOUR TABLE ALWAYS BE PLENTY

In Palestinian homes around the world, we say sofra daymeh to extend a blessing onto the dinner table—wishing food and prosperity onto every table to come. InPalestine, wishing eternity onto your table can also be a reflection of self-preservation, a ritual of resistance to the threats imposed under Israeli occupation. Fightingcolonization, Palestinians must resisterasure of their physical tables, homes,and communities, while also combating theless tangible cultural erasure that comes along with it

Sofra Daymeh

PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS: TOWARDS CLIMATE JUSTICE SEIZED ON OUR OWN

Putri Permata Sari

This essay departs from my rage and discontent in the state, its political-economic system, and mainstream environmental movements, which often draw media attention. My aim in writing this essay is to demonstrate that hope still remains amid the pandemic crisis. It is still alive, discreetly flickering in the midst of despair. Prefigurative politics may well be an example of this hope.

What are prefigurative politics?

There is no precise definition of prefigurative politics. Several academics, authors, or activists who have attempted to explain it, have come to a similar conclusion. The term was popularized in 1977 by Carl Boggs, an American academic, in his article "Marxism, Prefigurative Communism, and the Problem of Workers' Control".[1] The main focus of the article was on the uprisings of workers' councils in Russia, Italy, and Germany between 1917-1920. In his article, Boggs defines prefigurative politics as an organization or a movement that embodies "those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture and human experience that are the ultimate goal".[2]

In their book Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today (2019), Paul Raekstad and Sofa Saio Gradin describe prefigurative politics as "the deliberate experimental implementation of desired future social relations and practices in the here and now".[3] Unlike Boggs, Raekstad and Gradin further emphasize that prefigurative politics should be intersectional, because "after all, creating free, equal and democratic social relations requires changing not just formal institutions, but also how our social norms, values, divisions of labour, and other social practices affect our powers and what our organizations are really like."[4]

Within the anarchist movement, Ruth Kina argues that, "prefigurative politics has been identified as a core concept in contemporary anarchist thinking".[5] In 2011, two months after the start of Occupy Wall Street,[6] political theorist David Graeber identified prefigurative politics as one of four distinctive principles of the anarchist movement, the other three being direct action, civil disobedience, and the refusal of hierarchy. Graeber described Occupy as a "genuine attempt to create the new institutions of society in the shell of the old".[7] Expanding on this idea, Graeber linked prefigurative politics with the initiation of democratic General Assemblies, decision-making based on consensus, mutual aid, and self-organization, including kitchens, libraries, clinics, and media centers.[8]

I will not describe anarchism much further here because it is not my main focus. But the unpacking of forms of prefigurative politics that I will explain now, will be closely related to anarchist principles such as gotong royong[9] ("mutual aid" in Indonesian), self-organization, anti-hierarchy, direct democracy, decentralization and voluntary association.

To realize our dream of a world where there are no exploiters or exploited, no dominators or dominated, no oppressors or oppressed, which in our present world is ongoing, we can collectively start sowing the seeds for this world today, through our action. It is key to imagine and practice alternative ways to stop ourselves from reproducing the Capitalist system,[10] especially after more than two years in which the coronavirus has infected and caused the deaths of millions of people around the world.

The pandemic crisis is only one of many crises that have occurred and that are still ongoing, from economic to environmental crises, hunger, poverty and so forth. From the start, it has never been the aim of Capitalism to reduce these crises. On the contrary; they have always been galvanized and modified to generate as much profit as possible. But so far, it seems that Covid-19 has succeeded in unveiling the true face of the capitalist system, which is usually always concealed.

Countless times I have rewritten, erased, and changed some of the points I'm hoping to make in this essay. It feels like being trapped in a vicious circle. During my writing process, and since the second wave of Covid-19 broke out in Indonesia, especially Yogyakarta, the city where I live, I have read, seen and heard many horrible events (repeatedly). Although many victims died because of the lack of proper medical facilities, the governor of the Special Region of Yogyakarta instead blamed residents for being ungovernable, as they "seemed unable to stay at home after being instructed to do so." Furthermore, the local government (Pemda) also imposed Restrictions on Community Activities (PPKM) without guaranteeing the city's residents' that their basic needs would be met.

What did they think? Did they think people would be able to stay quiet at home on an empty stomach, not being able to work? And what about people who are homeless or who do not have a place to live? Instead of allocating trillions of rupiah of special funds ("dana keistimewaan") to provide the people with food and access to health care, the local government were instead

busy assigning blame and forcibly controlling people's mobility.

The hardships experienced by Indonesian people during the pandemic were further exacerbated by the government's passing of the Omnibus Law for job creation, and major revisions to the Mineral and Coal Mining Law (Minerba). This law aims to provide people in power with easier access to maximize profits by exploiting both humans and nature. In fact, long before the new law was passed, the pandemic had become a justification for corporations to arbitrarily fire their workers under the pretense that they were unable to pay their wages because their earnings had plummeted drastically.

It is not a coincidence that the coronavirus, which has infected millions of people across the world, broke out as the environmental crisis deteriorated. Rob Wallace, an epidemiologist, argues that "the real danger of each new outbreak is the failure [...] to grasp that each new Covid-19 is no isolated incident".[11] According to him, the "increasing occurrence of viruses is closely related to food production and the profitability of multinational corporations."[12] He also adds that "anyone who aims to understand why viruses are becoming more dangerous, must investigate the industrial model of agriculture and, more specifically, livestock production".[13]

The increasing need for multinational corporations to relentlessly maximize profits fosters land grabbing which in turn causes deforestation. In the end, it is the lives of indigenous communities, villages, and non-humans, who are most threatened. Even the urban poor are not exempt from forced evictions by the state on the grounds of "development". In 2000 alone, for example, Konsorsium Pembaruan Agraria (KPA, or "the Consortium for Agrarian Reform") noted that there were 241 agrarian conflicts being monitored by them.[14] Yayasan Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Indonesia (YLBHI, or "the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation") and the Alliance of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago (Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara, AMAN) noted 41 cases of violations committed by the state and multinational corporations against indigenous communities. These violations took the shape of criminalization and land grabbing, to spiritual right violations and environmental pollution.[15]

This does not mean that there is no resistance from those who are marginalized. One example are the residents of the village of Wadas (Purworejo, Central Java), who are currently resisting a quarry mine that will later be utilized for the construction of the Bener Dam in other villages. For the people of Wadas, who are mainly farmers, their village is the 'land of heaven' that has always provided them with a source of livelihood. If mining is carried out, the land that is their source of livelihood is prone to extinction. The Wadon ("Women") of Wades have been organizing various direct actions, from building roadblocks, to resisting the mining company mounting a tent in the village hall, to the suing of Central Java governor Ganjar Pranowo, which is underway.[16] Aside from the people of Wadas, there are many others who are fighting to defend their land in their own ways. It is only one of many examples rooted in the structural violence produced by the state and other extractive systems.

So one can imagine the worst possibilities after these two laws [the Omnibus Law and the Minerba Law, ed.] have been passed. I vividly recall how excitedly the Indonesian House of Representative (DPR) held their meeting until midnight to speed up the process of passing this anti-people law. It seems strange to me that the House of Representatives is said to 'represent the people's voice'. In practice, people can manage their own lives and take care of each other.

This became especially clear when the government first implemented a lockdown in almost all areas. People worked together to distribute free face masks on the street, they set up public kitchens, free markets and gardening communities in order to survive together in a crisis situation. The horizontal autonomous movements, in which citizens participated voluntarily, ran smoothly without any assistance from the government, political parties or institutions, and without regulations or anyone being regulated.. Although it does not mean that there were no obstacles in the implementation, their current existence shows that solidarity among people is quite effective, at least to fulfill common basic needs.

Now let's get to the fun part, in which I'll discuss some examples of prefigurative politics.

I'll start with Pasar Gratis Jogja ("Jogja Free Market"), where I had the chance to talk with the people involved on several occasions. Thinking of the enormous number of goods that are produced every single day across the world, you'd think there would be more than enough for everyone. Yet, with the current economic system, basic needs have been transformed into commodities: products to be purchased and sold. Pasar Gratis tried to resist that in simple ways. Every time a market was held, it provided clothes, food, and sometimes drawing workshops for kids. And sometimes there were people who offered servic-

es like haircuts, blood pressure or glucose level check-ups. And all of it was completely free.

Many people visiting the market asked if the free market was a social aid-related activity from the university. Every individual who participated gave more or less the same answer: Pasar Gratis is not a charity movement, it is a form of protest. Unlike common charities that usually aim to 'save' the poor in the name of compassion, this collective was able to act on the realization that we as part of an oppressed society, cannot continue to expect aid from those in power, who deliberately created the oppression to begin with.

With regard to the collective's organizational aspect: every individual is free to determine their role and is aware of their own responsibilities. They also do not have a chairman or a leader. In the decision-making process, all opinions or critiques will always be heard and respected. Everyone has equal power.

In the Region of Yogyakarta, Pasar Gratis has flourished in three places: in the cities of Yogyakarta, Bantul, and Wonosari. Since the start of the pandemic, other Pasar Gratis have begun to spread in several regions across Indonesia (perhaps there are dozens now).[17] No, they are not branches. Each is established and organized by different people. Even though they are not centralized, they got to know each other and foster solidarity through social media and by visiting stalls in each city. In 2020, several Pasar Gratis located in different regions in Indonesia held day-long markets simultaneously.

Based on my observations, Pasar Gratis is not only about experimenting with the production of an independent economic system. On market days, they also create spaces where people can gather, get to know each other, share stories, exchange knowledge and skills, and have fun together without having to spend money. So Pasar Gratis is not simply about creating space, it's more about creating spaces that enable us to expand and strengthen solidarities. As someone born and raised in Jogja, I have noticed how communal spaces like these have increasingly started to erode in the past few years. Even if you only want to enjoy green scenery, you have to go to a coffee shop near a rice field or river (where of course you have to buy a drink or food). Unbelievable.

Perhaps for most people, a movement like Pasar Gratis doesn't really have a major impact, especially when it comes to climate justice. But according to environmental activist Gopal Dayaneni, "[...] if you want to understand the climate crisis, you can't look up at the atmosphere and count carbon, you have to look down at the economy, at the erosion of land and labor and loving systems and the exploitation of seed and soil and of story. And I think that's the place where, for me, the real imagination lives, it lives in the ability to both imagine a different way of being in the world, a different set of relationships to each other."[18]

This also reminds me of the Social Ecology theory of Murray Bookchin, which states that "hierarchies (social, political, economic, or otherwise) are the root cause of all human social problems and also create the conditions for human exploitation of nature, leading to ecological crises."[19] And in fact, that's what has been happening until now. However, the good news is that we have the choice to stop living like this. The solidarity movement that started amongst people during the pandemic is proof of this. Instead of struggling alone, helping each other to deal with this crisis turned out to be a better way. Prefigurative politics have been practiced on a large scale long before the pandemic broke out. This kind of resistance is not a new phenomenon.

In the summer of 2012, many different ethnic and religious communities in the Northern and Eastern parts of Syria, a territory better known as Rojava, got together to build a pluralist, decentralized, gender-egalitarian, and ecological independent system of self-government.[20] The self-government system they use is known as 'Democratic Confederalism,' which Dilar Dirik, activist of the Kurdish women's movement, describes as follows: "'Democratic Confederalism' is a social, political and economic model of self-administration of different peoples, pioneered by women and the youth. It attempts to practically express the people's will by viewing democracy as a method rather than an aim alone. It is democracy without the state."[21]

"The system places "democratic autonomy" at its heart: people organize themselves directly in the form of communes and create councils. In Rojava, this process is facilitated by Tev-Dem, the Movement for a Democratic Society. The commune is made up of a consciously self-organized neighborhood, and constitutes the most essential and radical aspect of the democratic practice. has committees working on different issues like peace and justice, economy, safety, education, women, youth and social services."[22]

"While the communes are the areas for problem solving and organizing everyday life, the councils create action plans and policies cohesion and coordination."[...] "Commune sends out elected delegates to the councils. Village councils send delegates to the towns, town councils send delegates to the cities, and so on. Each commune has their own autonomy, but

they are linked through a confederal structure for the purpose of coordination and the safeguarding of common principles." [...] "The communes work towards a "moral-political" society made up of conscious individuals who understand how to resolve social issues and who take care of everyday self-governance as a common responsibility, rather than submitting to bureaucratic elites."[23]

In their publication Make Rojava Green Again: Building an Ecological Society (2018), the Internationalist Commune of Rojava elaborate on their ecological principles:

"Rojavan society, a cooperative, ecological, and decentralized mode of production is the goal. All assets, or natural resources, must be socialized, and the economy democratized. It is crucial that production be decided on the basis of a democratic process of negotiation. It must be based on the possibilities of an intact and balanced ecological system and on the capabilities of the people themselves."[24] [...] "There are already 57 cooperatives, comprising around 8,700 families, in Cizîrê Canton alone."[25] [...] "The Rojavan system builds on community self-government in communes and production in cooperatives. It's intended that all resources, such as water, energy and land, become common goods".[26]

In the first chapter of the book Pandemic Solidarity: Mutual Aid during the Covid-19 Crisis (2020), Emre Sahin and Khabat Abbas write: "During the early days of the pandemic, the AANES [the "Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria", ed.], established a Central Crisis Committee bringing together representatives from the areas of education, security, health and local governance", with the aim to provide aid for affected community members.[28]

Aside from managing local lockdowns, the committee distributed food to residents who were required to stay at home and also governed medical facilities in all areas. In March 2020, they decided to close down schools and move to online learning. For residents living in rural areas with irregular access to internet, teachers delivered course materials in print-outs and CDs.[29] Moreover, "due to the ongoing war, embargo and lack of health infrastructure," the committee's strategy was "to prevent the spread of the infection and prioritize public health over the economy."[30]

In short, the residents of Rojava have a say in the highest levels of government, which means that "Shelter, food, healthcare, education and employment are not left to the mercy of the market or the state. It is nearly impossible to find people sleeping on the street or begging for food or money in NE Syria."[31] People's direct involvement in decision-making fosters social relations, and an economic and political system based on collective care, including care for nature.

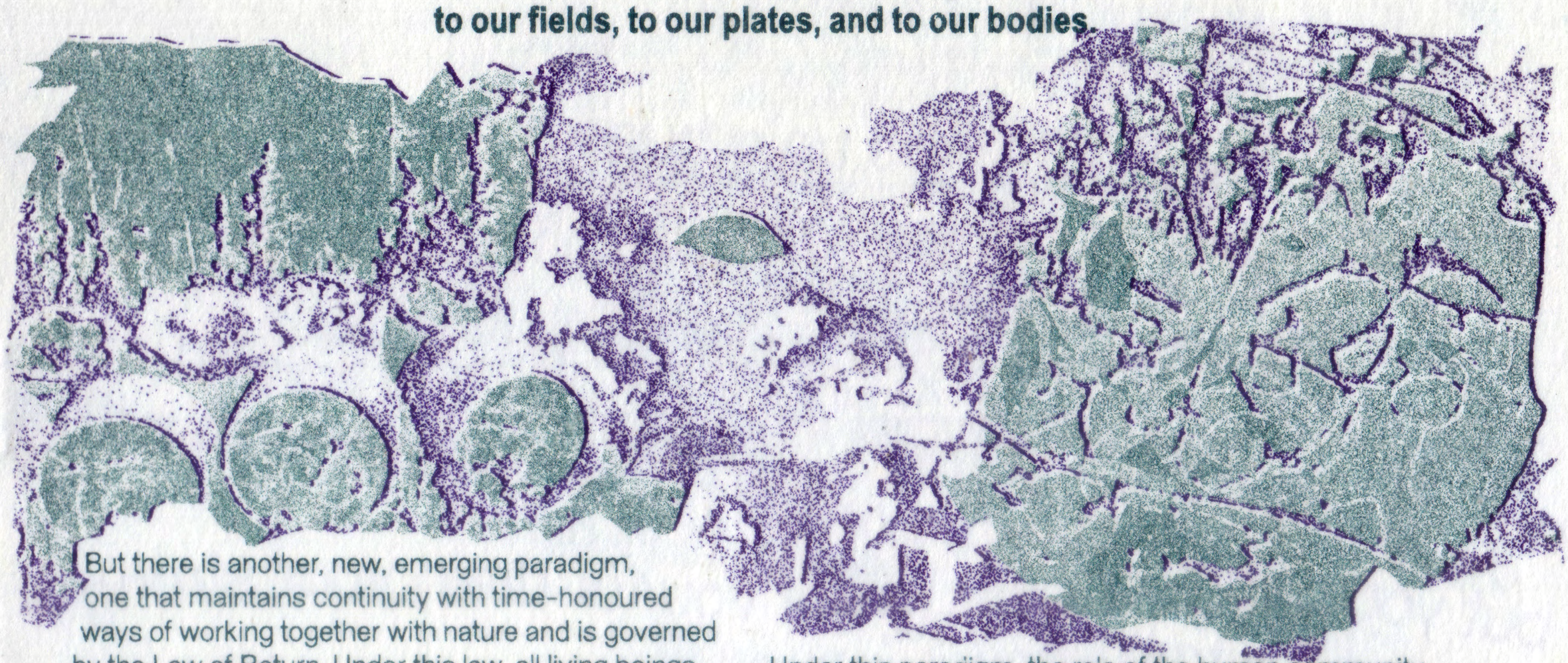
Based on the two examples I have unpacked above, there are lessons to be learned when we think about how we could reduce the impact of climate destruction in the midst of other crises that are getting worse every day. Unlike mainstream climate movements whose demands tend to remain within the framework of the state, the practice of prefigurative politics firmly demonstrates its reluctance to compromise with the current systems that have caused the destruction of the balanced nature of ecosystems on Earth.

However, it is necessary to emphasize that prefigurative politics will never be able to exactly resemble the kind of society we desire in the future (I have no idea what it would look like, what is certain that it will always be in becoming, dynamic, and non-homogenic) as long as we are still in the grip of this oppressive system. Prefiguration is just one of many ways that we can work together to destroy Capitalism. Yet, the social order that prefigurative politics attempts to actualize situates itself outside of the structure of coercion and oppression, and therefore it can open up many different possibilities. Prefiguration also allows us to be better prepared to face any crisis in the future. In addition, individuals engaged in this experimental practice can experience firsthand the freedom they are building together in the here and now. I don't know exactly what the future will look like. It is likely to deteriorate, but it could get better. Or it could be a combination of both. Based on my personal experience of participating in prefigurative politics, I have learned that climate justice is part of the relentless daily struggle for total liberation from the oppression, domination and exploitation of tovday's ruling systems.

The world where all forms of life can live and thrive together is not only possible, it is in the making.

For footnotes please see article: Prefigurative Politics: Towards Climate Justice Seized On Our Own by Putri Permata Sari. To be found on: strugglesforsovereignty.net

Tools shaped with the objective and governed by the Law of Exploitation and the Law of Domination harm people's health and the environment. These tools are often marketed as "agrochemicals", and we are told that farming is impossible without them. In reality the corporations that make these chemicals are shaping the paradigm of possibility. They define what constitutes scientific knowledge, what an efficient food production system looks like, and what the boundaries of research and trade should be. When applied to agriculture and the food system, a paradigm rooted in the violence of war and a militated mindset brings the war to our fields, to our plates, and to our bodies.



But there is another, new, emerging paradigm, one that maintains continuity with time-honoured ways of working together with nature and is governed by the Law of Return. Under this law, all living beings give and take in mutuality. This ecological paradigm of agriculture is based on life and its interconnectedness. It is centred on the Earth and small-scale farmers, and especially women farmers. It recognises the potential of fertile seeds and fertile soils to feed humanity and diverse species to whom we are all related at Earth Citizens.

Under this paradigm, the role of the human community is to act as cocreators and coproducers of Mother Earth. Within this paradigm, knowledge is not owned; rather, knowledge grows through farming, where we are all participants in the web of life. In ecological agriculture, the cycles of nature are intensified and diversified so as to produce more and better food, while using fewer resources. In ecological farming, the waste of plants becomes food for farm animals and soil organisms. Adhering to the Law of Return, there is no waste; everything is recycled.

Ecological food systems are local food systems, growing what they can, exporting real surpluses, and importing what cannot be locally grown. Sustainability and justice flow naturally from the cycle of the Law of Return and from the localisation of food production. The resources of the Earth that are vital to the maintenance of life, such as biodiversity and water, are managed as a "commons," or shared spaces of communities. The ecological paradigm cultivates compassion of all beings, including humans, ensuring that no one is deprived of his or her share of food.'

Shiva, Vandana. **'Who Really Feeds the World?'** (2016)

Semedi, Pujo, Li, Tania. **'Plantation Life: Corporate Occupation in Indonesia's Oil Palm Zone'** (2021)

A plantation is a giant, an inefficient and lazy giant,

but still a giant. It takes up a huge amount of space.

It is greedy and careless, destroying everything around.

It is alien, strange, and unpredictable. It is human,

but you cannot form a normal human relationship with it.

It can trample you, eat you, or drain your strength

then spit you out. It guards its treasure. You cannot tame

it or make it go away. You have to live with it.

But it is a bit stupid, so if you are clever you can steal from it.

Thiwul

*The recipe was taken from Gatari Surya Kusuma text from Bakudapan Food study Group second journal from the interview with Diah Widuretno from Sekolah Pagesangan

Ingredients:

- **1kg of cassava**
- **4pcs pandan leaf**
- **500gr shredded coconut**
- **Water and salt**

How to cook:

①

Wash and peel the cassava and slice it as thinly as you can. You can also use a mandoline slicer to make it easier.

②

Dry the sliced cassava under the sunlight until it turned really dry and hard. If there's no sunlight you can also use a dehydrator as an alternative.

③

Smash the dried cassava until it turned into powder. In this stage, we called them GAPLE.

④

After the cassava turned into powder, put salt a little bit and water slowly until the powder turned into pieces of small lumps.

⑤

You can save it or mix it with shredded coconut and steam them until it's cooked. Once it's done, you can eat it as a replacement of rice.

On the Southside of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, there is an area with dry soil. Drought-tolerant tuber plants, such as cassava, are widely grown in the area. Ironically, the New Order government politicized rice and obliged people to plant rice instead of other carbs plants. This created a transitory social hierarchy based on food. Families who eat other than rice would be socially judged as poor. Slowly, rice replaced other local carbs plants, including cassava. Sekolah Pagesangan comes with the spirit of recalling and preserving local food knowledge and brings it back as daily food, including Thiwul.

Harawi papa yupaychana

Noqan kani comunidad Amarumanta. Noqaq sutiymi Francisco Ccana. Noqa napaykuni llapan aylluta teqsi muyuqtinpaq. Kunaq punchaumi hoj harawitaq ruasaq hanan pachaq taytanchispaq sutinpi "Harawi papa yupaychana".

Papacha papacha qanmi canki lluy waqcha wawayke sonqoypi yarqaypi chakeypi wiqsaq huntachiq papacha. Pacha papacha anchay hatumy sonqoy noqayku kinsa chunka unchay samuray killapi huj wataykita juntashanki. Papacha papacha chaymi jatun sonqoyoq noqayku jamuyku kay machulachaykupas tarpurkanmi ajay uraq ayllupi araq sutiyoq papata. Papacha papacha ajay hawaq ayllukunapi tiaq papacha loma kunapi puriq papacha waylla wayllapi paco pacopi sillu silli allpapi. Kan rurunki papacha. Puca poncho wayna, yana lliqlla pasñacha qanpas sonqoyki yuraq rosa hinaraq tikarin noqayku ranku kasatapaq chiritapas`manan ayninkichu. Papacha papacha anchay jatun sonqontinmi Punchayniykita yupaychaykiku. Papacha kanmi kanki kusikuypipas llakipipas. Sawakuqñankaqtin; kusipachañan hamuqtin Llakipachañan hamuqtin. Kusqa noqaykuwan kusqa kausanki noqayku rayku.

Añay

Potato Veneration

I am from the community of Amaru. My name is Francisco Ccana. Greeting to all the local communities and the whole world. Today, I recite a poem for the potato, in the name of our Apus (i.e. mountainous ancestors).

Little potato, little potato, you are the heart of all your poor children; the one who calms thirst and hunger, the one who fills the belly.

Little potato, little potato, with our huge heart, we are celebrating May the 30th because you are a year older.

Little potato, little potato, we are coming with our huge heart overflowing with joy because our ancestors sowed the elders' potato (araq papas) in the lowlands of our community.

Little potato, little potato, in these highland communities where you live, in the mountains where you walk, little potato, between springs and springs, between alpagas and alpagas, in soils where sillu sillu plants grow and you give us your fruits.

Young man Puca Poncho, young lady Yana Lliqlla (two native potato varieties meaning "red poncho" and "yellow cover" respectively), your heart flourishes like white roses. For us you endure the frost, and you don't surrender.

Little potato, little potato, with our huge heart, today, on your day, we remember you. Little Potato, you are present in our joys and sadness. You are present in our weddings, or when sadness and happiness come, you are present.

You live together with us, and you live for us.

Thank you

ON PRESERVING LOCAL FOOD KNOWLEDGE: STORIES FROM SEKOLAH PAGESANGAN AND WILD VEGETABLE SCHOOL

Meivy Andriani

In March 2021, Bakudapan organized a two-part focus discussion group session entitled, "On Food Resistance and Utopias", as a part of the Turn of the Fifth Age exhibition in Selasar Sunaryo in collaboration with Taipei Contemporary Art Centre (TCAC). We inquired into issues on food sovereignty: what does it mean in the perspective of the state? How is it built by common people? How does food policies influence agricultural practices and knowledge from grassroot and indigenous communities?

In the first focus group discussion, we sought to learn about how local food knowledge preservation is envisioned as a path to food sovereignty. In this lens, food sovereignty is then not only understood from the state's point of view, but from grassroot communities who understand their context best. We invited Diah Widuretno from Sekolah Pagesangan (ID) and Mr. Walice from Wild Vegetable School (TW) to understand their practice of organizing informal schools to encourage local people to relearn their ancestors' food knowledge.

Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School shared similar concerns on formal education. Today it estranges us from our living surroundings. As humans, Mr. Walice says, we have to be connected to our land and nature, but schools teach us the opposite. In the case of Sekolah Pagesangan, formal education and dependence on cash have made students in Gunungkidul area unwilling to be farmers in their own land. Instead, they would rather be urban workers.

This situation is further exacerbated by food policies implemented by the state, such as favoring imported food products. In turn, the price of locally produced products are uncompetitive and its diversity is marginalized in favor of more standardized products. This entails another major problem: farming traditions are going extinct.

Stories from Sekolah Pagesangan hit close to home for Mr. Walice. He, too, was seeing how formal education is oriented to urban areas and industry. That way, to live in the urban areas as laborers is the goal students often envision in their head. As a person of indigenous descent, Mr. Walice knows that certain indigenous communities in Taiwan do not have a written language system. Therefore, verbally telling stories and histories are the main means to transmit values from one to another. However, this is no longer possible due to modernization, more and more people are moving to urban areas to earn cash. As a consequence of losing touch with nature, we also lose touch with the true value and the hard work put into the food we eat.

Another adversity they face is neoliberalism penetrating their daily lives. As investors and more investments are made in Gunungkidul, local people are often forced to sell off their land to make ends meet. In line with Diah's story, Mr. Walice also found that with the scale of development today, there are numerous problems that arise, such as environmental pollution, ecological imbalance, amongst others.

Up until today, Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School attempted to revive local food knowledge by inviting people to study collectively. There is an urgent need to reproduce knowledge so it can be accessible

to more people in the future. The learning model Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School used is similar. Members and students learn informally through experiencing first hand what they are learning about. This makes learning a sensory event, as it is not purely guided by text books or the like. They eat, cook, and learn how to cultivate the land together.

> Aside from that, Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School also raise funds in similar ways, such as organizing experience camps or live-in programs where people from outside of the community can learn about farming traditions and wild vegetables. They also sell products gathered from theirpractice, such as thiwul and other processed wild vegetable products.

Although both initiatives attempt to revive local food knowledge, there are differences in their practice. Sekolah Pagesangan employs a contextual education model; members think about the problems closest to them and solve the problems in their capacity. Wild Vegetable School, on the other hand, approaches the vanishing local food knowledge by opening the opportunity to a wider audience. WVS is not driven by problems faced in the community in real time, but invites people to be reintroduced to nature. The three main points WVS is working on are: knowledge about wild vegetables; biodynamic farming methods, and educational courses.

> With the work Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School do, the biggest challenge they face today in their initiative is a matter of regeneration. With urbanization, development, and neoliberalism thriving today, many youth are hesitant to take on farming for their livelihood. It is undeniable that cash is very important in our lives today, and to farm for a living could not guarantee its availability. It doesn't come as a surprise that there are not many people involved in these initiatives. Mr. Walice, for instance, expressed how the organizational system in Wild Vegetable School still needs to be consolidated so each member can have a strong relation with one another. Similarly, not all alumni of Sekolah Pagesangan eventually take up farming for a living. However, there are few who stayed and continue to work with the community. These few people are the seeds we sow to hopefully extend local food knowledge to the generations to come.

From their discussion, we learned that building a system or organisation to preserve local food knowledge should start from one's own community because they know their area best. Preserving local food knowledge can start from a simple act of familiarizing ourselves with our land, the living beings around us, and our food. We may not be able to know everything about our past farming traditions today, but Sekolah Pagesangan and Wild Vegetable School show us how important it is to start sharing the knowledge we have today with children and to build a firm foundation of local food knowledge for the next generations.

PALM OIL: THE GREASE OF EMPIRE

Max Haiven

We find ourselves in a system of racial capitalism that appears as a vast, globe-spanning system of mystified human sacrifice, hidden in plain sight. The stories I tell in Palm Oil trace this system's contours and seek answers in its past. These are stories of how one largely invisible thing emerged from the nexus of capitalism, colonialism, and empire to define the cruelties of our world. Secreted within it is a story of our collective power to transform the world for the better. The story of palm oil is our story. This almost magical and ubiquitous substance is part of the way our bodies reproduce themselves and the way our material world is reproduced. It is a key element in the vortex of labor, commodities, meaning-making, and social relationships that make up the world in which we live.

Nearly every element of the process that now finds you reading these words could have been touched or facilitated by palm oil: it could be an additive in the paper, a stabilizer in the ink, or part of the resin in the binding of the book; it is almost certainly either inside or essential to the manufacture of one of the hundreds of the components of the digital electronic device on which I am typing these words, and on which you might be reading them. It's probable that one of the transport vehicles that conveyed these artefacts to you burned hydrocarbons that included palm oil-derived agrofuels. And it must be taken as given that the body and brain that writes and that reads has been reproduced, in part, through the metabolism of palm oil. We have both used palm oil products to clean or care for our skin. We have ingested palm oil as a carrier of medicines. Though I suspect neither of us are intentionally investors in the palm oil industry, we are nonetheless economically entangled with it. The money that we receive for our labor is blood in the same ocean. Though it derives from a natural source, we created refined palm oil as it exists today, and it has, in turn, helped to created us.

Red, virgin palm oil has been an intimate and vital part of the life of West African peoples for thousands of years, providing food, medicine and cosmetics and serving as a unit of exchange and a spiritual sacrament in many diverse ways. But the form of palm oil that you and I know is something else entirely: industrially produced derivatives of the palm fruit can, like a god with many faces, appear as some 200 different ingredients in nutritional, industrial, and cleansing products around the world.8 RBD (refined, bleached, and deodorized) oil has become a staple of the diets of billions of people, especially poor people, around the world. This globally traded, indifferent commodity emerges from intensive processing plants, predominantly located in Indonesia and Malaysia, but also in West Africa and Latin America, typically on clear-cut or razed lands that once sustained rainforest, though they may have taken many other forms since. Fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide used in the intensive cultivation of this cash crop has, more often than not, found its way into local waterways. At these factories, as well as at the nearby plantations on which lab-germinated oil palms grow in neat rows, most of the workers are, in one way or another, displaced, sometimes for multiple generations. Perhaps it was civil war, perhaps imperialist-backed counter-insurgency campaigns, perhaps the ecological impacts of mining, perhaps land grabbing, perhaps it was government or international "development" incentives seeking to relocate workers to locales more convenient for corporations in need of cheap labor. As a result, palm oil workers are now typically dependent on precarious employment for a means of buying the necessities of life.

Today, you and I find palm oil, palm kernel oil or derivatives of these substances in an estimated 50% of

the world's supermarket foods, predominantly in industrially produced, processed foods like packaged baked goods, edible spreads, ramen noodles, dairy products, and snack foods. But palm oil also enters us in trace amounts in a mind-boggling diversity of preservatives, emulsifiers, stabilizers, coagulants and additives. Palm oil's unique chemical composition and extreme cheapness makes it a perfect base or additive to industrially produced foods to afford a long shelf life and facilitate transit through globe-spanning networks of trade. It covers us, too: it is in the lion's share of cosmetics (though some higher-end brands occasionally boast of avoiding it). It is an important element in the production of plastics, dyes, inks, paints, and even paper products, including product packaging. It is in many of the lozenges, pills, suppositories, and other consumer and professional medical products that we use to transform our bodies. And it is also present in a multitude of industrial and manufacturing products and processes, notably in the surfactants that are an important part of machine lubricants, dying and tinting processes, detergents, and a dizzying array of other processes. Globally, 72-million metric tons of refined palm oil was consumed in 2020, roughly 20 pounds per human being. Its intensive cultivation has transformed our planet: over 27 million hectares of the earth's surface is under palm oil cultivation, an area greater than the size of New Zealand and approximately equivalent to all the agricultural land in France. The clearing of forest and especially peatland for palm oil cultivation adds significant quantities of carbon to the earth's atmosphere—an estimated 6% of global annual emission—contributing to the dire, if unevenly distributed, risks of climate change.

Our story will necessarily begin with the origins of the global commodity of palm oil in the European colonization of West Africa in the nineteenth century, where whole civilizations and millions of lives were sacrificed on the altar of that three-faced god: capitalist accumulation, white supremacist ideology, and inter-imperialist rivalry. We will visit nineteenth century Liverpool, where palm oil literally and figuratively lubricated the wheels of empire and furnished rich and poor alike with new commodities like soap. We will travel with some tender seedlings on steamships with palm-greased engines to South East Asia, to British and Dutch colonies where imperial powers took advantage of the social, economic, and environmental disjuncture they themselves had unleashed to open up new lands for palm oil plantations, and to recruit dispossessed and migrant workers, often through techniques of debt bondage. Today the independent nations of Malaysia and Indonesia are undisputed palm oil superpowers, though the legacies of colonialism remain pivotal in the industry. We will follow the oil as it seeps through the fabric of our world, becoming the fat of the world's poor and the grease of capital's global empire.

In this short book I am trying to understand something that is abundantly obvious and yet somehow also unseeable: this system seems to be a vast and merciless organization of human sacrifice. The relentless logic of the market insists that the millions of needless deaths from malnutrition, toxic poisoning, overwork, sabotaged migration, climate chaos, or neo-imperialist wars are somehow accidental, incidental, or inevitable. By following palm oil, I want us to recognize the way we are all bound up in a global paradigm none of us chose, but that benefits some vastly more than others, and places so many on the altar of accumulation.

To be found on: dark-mountain.net

ETHNO- BOTANICS THE EVIDENCE OF AN UNPERFECTED CRIME

Vivien Sansour

Originally published in This Week in Palestine

Daoud was a young man in 1967 when he came back to look for his aunt in his destroyed village of Imwas. Imploring the help of a local priest, Daoud was, in reality, looking for his aunt's corpse. She and the other elderly people in the village who could not flee were buried under the rubble when Israeli forces demolished their homes. But unlike Daoud's aunt, many who survived that year are still alive and able to remember in graphic detail the place where they once lived and the land they once cultivated. In fact, the plants and trees of their village now serve as some of the most compelling evidence of the crime that rendered the people of Imwas refugees in their own homeland.

Since the destruction of Imwas more than 46 years ago, the village has been "planted over" with non-native pine trees that have covered up the ruins of the homes and made the land uncultivable. Today Imwas is known as an Israeli national park: Canada-Ayalon Park, which stretches over more than 7,000 dunams of land that belong to the people of the village. Bernard Bloomfield, then president of the Canadian Jewish National Fund (JNF), led a campaign to raise millions of dollars to plant trees that would hide all evidence of Palestinian presence in the area. Today Israeli and international hikers and nature lovers come to camp and picnic in the "park," and every year the JNF sponsors tree-planting days for Jewish youth in Canada-Ayalon. In this devious power dynamic, the case of Imwas, as in most other destroyed Palestinian villages, trees end up playing quite an interesting dual role as both culprits and subversives represented by the dichotomy of non-native pine and indigenous varieties of fig, pomegranate, carob, and almond trees.

My first visit to Imwas was in April of last year. As I walked around the "park" with my friends, our guide shared a map that was drawn from survivors' memories. Dots and lines marked the homes of the families of the village. But while our guide was pointing out all the locations where houses once stood, my eyes wandered to where some native trees had survived. These indigenous almond and pomegranate shoots, which can go easily unnoticed in a sea of pine trees, were making their way to life. The more we walked the more trees I found. And very soon it became evident that these trees were serving as evidence of an unperfected crime: although the people had been successfully uprooted, the seeds of their trees had survived and now provided a trail to uncover the story of a sophisticated agrarian society that had once subsisted in this very same landscape.

During my walk through the village, I was able to identify sixteen kinds of native flora that are still present. From cacti to carob and sumac to the identification of an aqueduct system of irrigation that is distinctly Palestinian, it became clear to me that while a colonizing power could eliminate houses and stones, they could not change the "ethno-botanics" of a once thriving community—one of the many reasons we cannot speak about rural Palestine without paying close attention to the details of these landscape politics. Yes, Palestinian farmers are still cultivating their lands, what is left of them anyway; and yes, we can continue to sell various versions of Zeit ou Za'atar logos everywhere, but the truth is that our survival depends on more than a marketing scheme for symbolic foods. Our understanding of our current food consumption trends and food production practices goes deeper than recipes and traditional dishes. It has a lot to do with our health, of course, but most importantly it has everything to do with our position in a capital-driven political economy that includes Palestine and its military occupation. Whether it is by physically destroying the natural terrain, such as the case of Imwas, or by weakening the producer base so that people become dependent consumers, political hegemony can only be achieved by unthreading people's ties to their sources of power: their land and their ability to live from it.

Excerpt of orginal publication Saah, Daleen. Sofra Daymeh Navel (2019)

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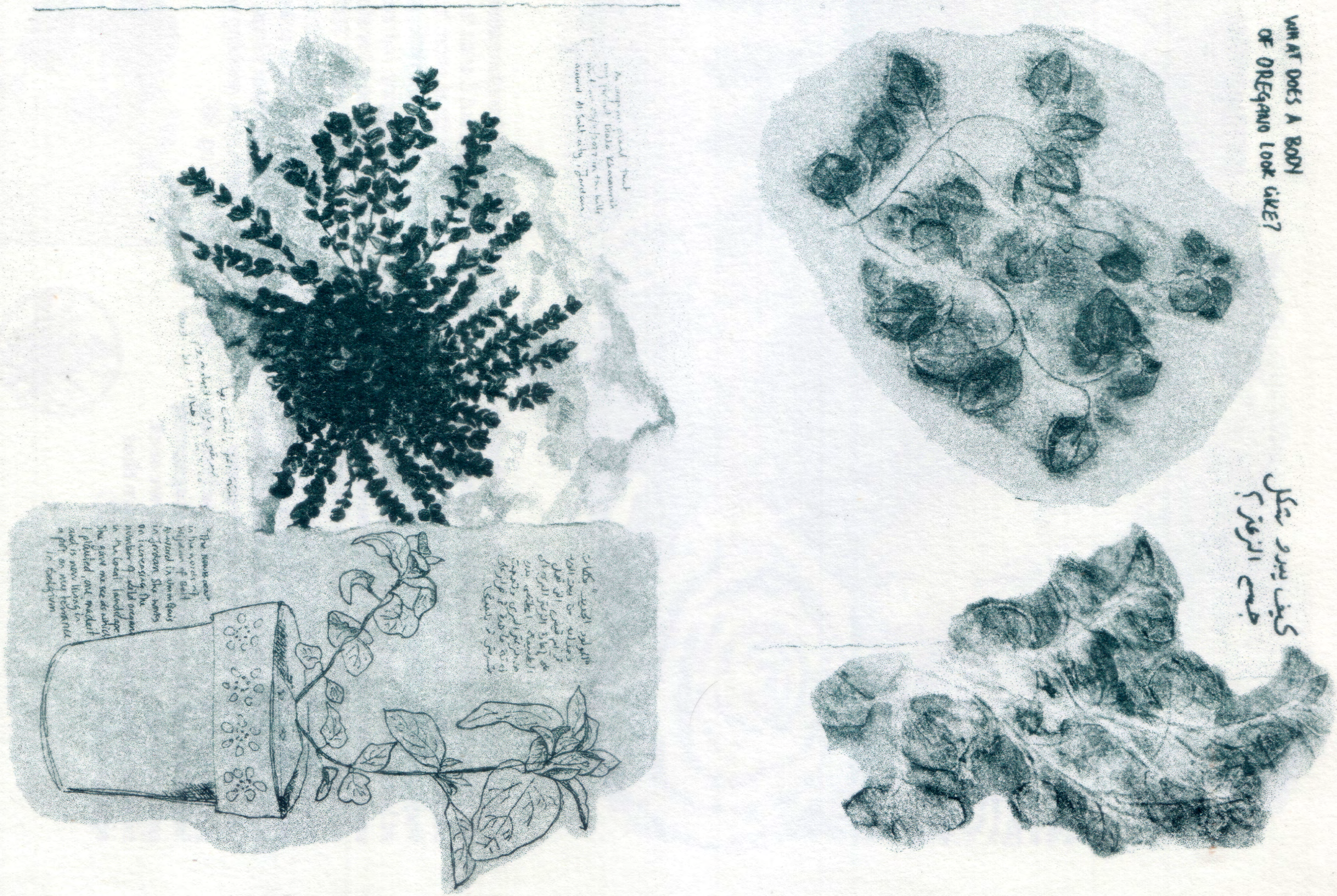
We take a deep dive in our love and curiosity for food with the artist **Samah Hijawi** and her on-going project **Kitchen.Table.**, a research on the movement of food-making practices through trade and migration. In her performative dinner, she begins with the story of the herbs in the eastern mediterranean herb mixture *Za'atar*, and the three plants needed to make it: *sesame, oregano and sumac.*

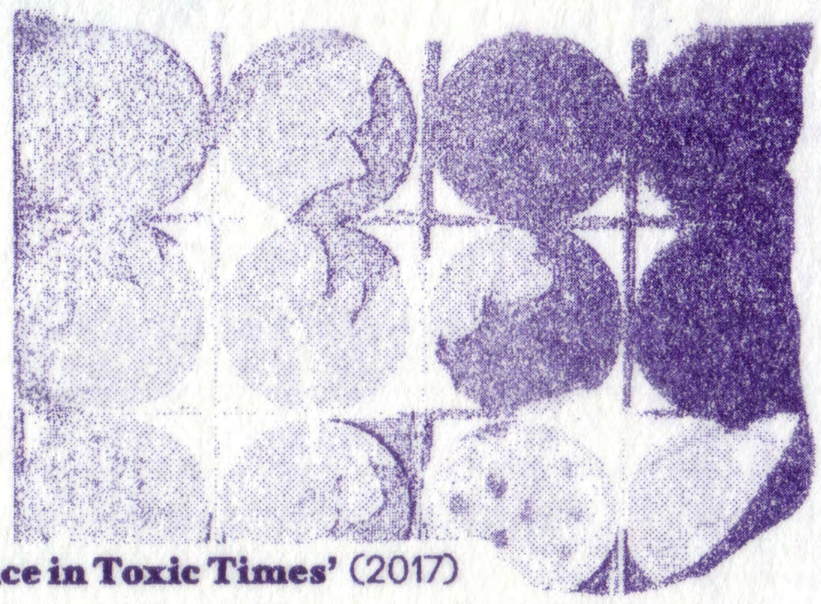
Taking these as a starting point Samah's performances weave the stories of people, planets and landscapes that can be traced by following the life-line of a plant. Together we sit at the dinner table for a meal of ancient and contemporary recipes inspired by these plants, offering us a deeper reflection on the politics of the food on our tables.



Samah Hijawi '**What does a body of oregano look like?**'

The first step, for us, has been to affirm that we are already otherwise: **we all have parts of ourselves that are drawn towards other ways of being. Everyone has glimmers, at least, of the ways that fierceness can be intertwined with kindness, and curiosity with transformation. Every space is a complex ecology of different tendencies. Rigid radicalism is always only one tendency among others. There are—and—always have been—many places and spaces where alternatives are in full bloom. Beyond merely diagnosing or combating rigid radicalism, we seek to affirm the multiplicity of ways that spaces can be otherwise.** (pg. 27)

A joyful process of transformation might **involve** happiness, but it ends to entail a whole range of feelings at once: it might feel overwhelming, painful, dramatic, and world-shaking, or subtle and uncanny. Joy rarely feels comfortable or easy, because it transforms and reorients people and relationships. Rather than the desire to exploit, control, and direct others, it is resonant with emergent and collective capacities to do things, make things, undo painful habits, and nurture enabling ways of being together. (pg. 33)



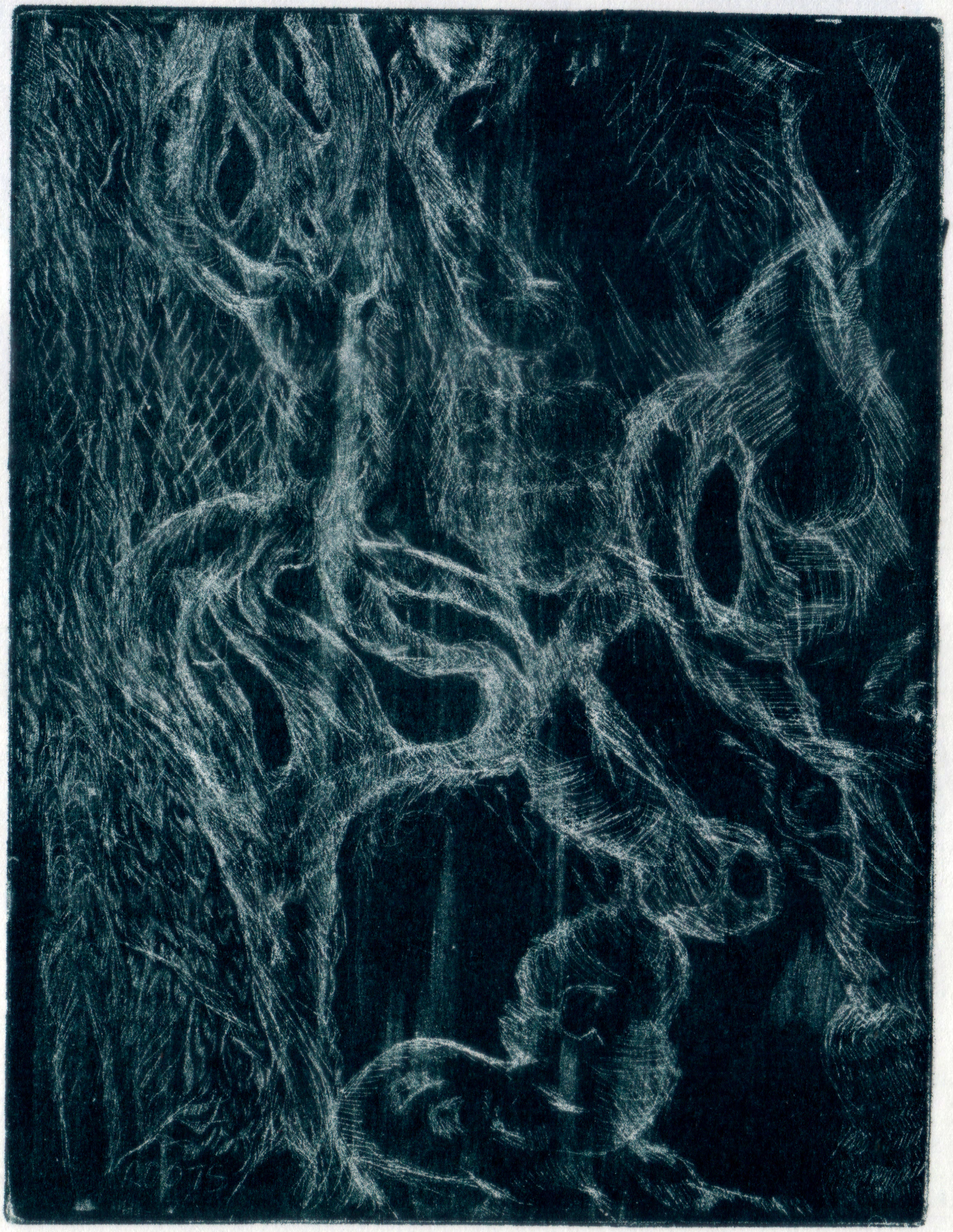
Bergman, Carla & Montgomery, Nick. **'Joyful Militancy: Building Thriving Resistance in Toxic Times'** (2017)

'Eating forest foods
means
acknowledging
that one is also
food for others.
In these mutual chains
of consumption,
humans,
animals
and plants
participate together
in a collective chain of nurture.'

Chao, Sophie. **'In the Shadow of the Palms'** (2022)

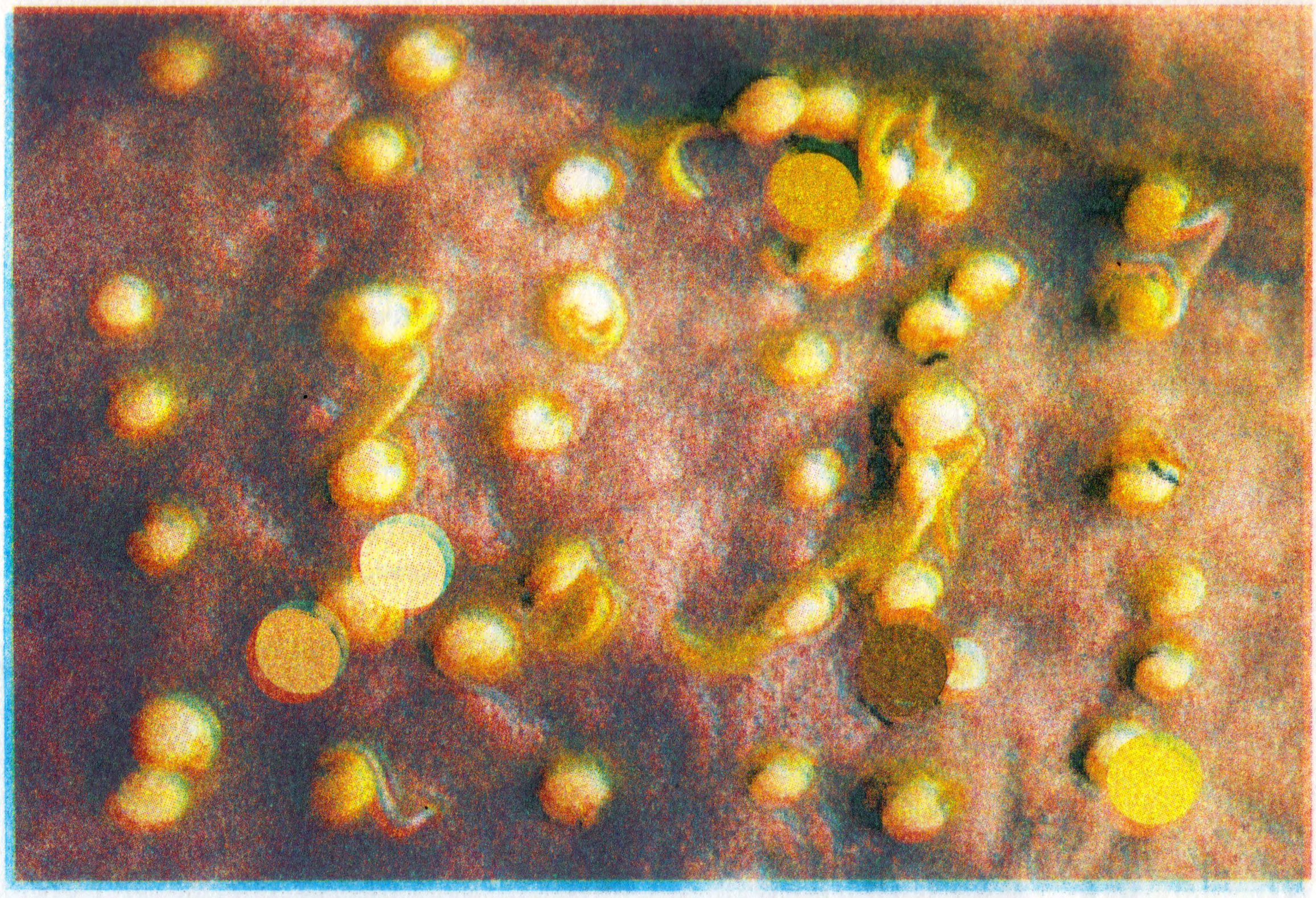
**'This is a story of human sacrifices:
the sacrifice of people and places
made cheap by a system driven
by profit,
a system that seduces
most of us in one way
or another,
as consumers,
as entrepreneurs,
as people just trying to survive.
By following palm oil,
I want us to recognize the way
we are all bound up
in a global paradigm none of us chose,
but that benefits some vastly
more than others, and places so many**

Haiven, Max. **'Palm Oil: The Grease of Empire'** (2022)



The etching on a zinc plate, inspired by the words of Alfred Decker. Tierra Preta was what i was trying to draw, I intuitively etched while listening, I etched the different textures and shapes that I imaged lived inside the soil.

Azul Espirito Santo **'Tierra Preta'** (2023)



A look into **quinoa plant growth**. Creating textiles by copying the characteristics of quinoa to create an indication of nature's patterns. This is sample 2/12 that follows the growth of the plant that is so meaningful to my country, Peru. Using hand spun yarns and hand felted wool dyed with natural dyes.

Azul Espirito Santo **'Quinoa textile'** (2022)

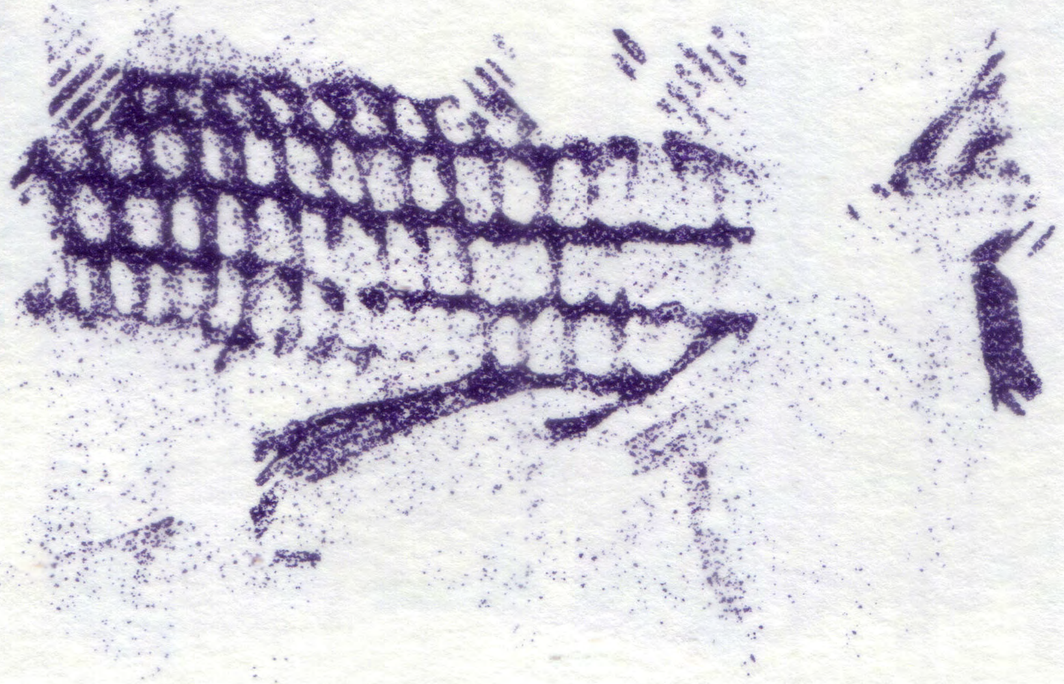
To Live in the Borderlands
Vivir en la frontera

To live in the borderlands means you are neither
hispana india negra Espanola ni gabacha, eres
mestiza, mulata, half-breed caught in the crossfire
between camps while carrying all five races on your
back not knowing which side to turn to run from;

> Vivir en la Frontera significa que tú no eres ni
> hispana india negra española ni gabacha, eres
> mestiza, mulata, híbrida atrapada en el fuego
> cruzado entre los bandos mientras llevas las
> cinco razas sobre tu espalda sin saber para qué
> lado volverte, de cuál correr;

To live in the Borderlands means knowing that the
india in you, betrayed for 500 years,
is no longer speaking to you,
the mexicanas call you rajetas, that denying the
Anglo inside you is as bad as having denied the
Indian or Black;

> Vivir en la Frontera significa saber
> que la india en ti, traicionada por 500 años,
> ya no te está hablando,
> que las mexicanas te llaman rajetas, que negar a la
> Anglo dentro tuyo es tan malo como haber negado
> a la India o a la Negra;



Anzaldúa, Gloria. **'Borderlands/La Frontera'** (1987)

Cuando vives en la frontera
People walk through you,
the wind steals your voice,
voz, you're a burra, buey, scapegoat,
forerunner of a new race,
half and half-both woman and man,
neither -a new gender;

> Cuando vives en la frontera
> la gente camina a través tuyo, el viento roba tu
> eres una burra, buey, un chivo expiatorio,
> anunciadora de una nueva raza,
> mitad y mitad tanto mujer como hombre, ninguno
> un nuevo género;

To live in the Borderlands means to
put chile in the borscht,
eat whole wheat tortillas,
speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent;
be stopped by la migra at the border checkpoints;

> Vivir en la Frontera significa
> poner chile en el borscht,
> comer tortillas de maíz integral,
> hablar Tex-Mex con acento de Brooklyn;
> ser detenida por la migra en los puntos de control
> fronterizos;

Living in the Borderlands means you fight hard to
Resist the gold elixir beckoning from the bottle,
The pull of the gun barrel,
The rope crushing the hollow of your throat;

> Vivir en la Frontera significa
> que luchas duramente para
> resistir el elixir de oro que te llama desde la botella,
> el tirón del cañón de la pistola,
> la soga aplastando el hueco de tu garganta;

In the Borderlands
you are the battle ground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger,
the border disputes have been settled
the volley of shots have scattered the truce
you are wounded, lost in action
dead, fighting back;

> En la Frontera
> tú eres el campo de batalla
> donde los enemigos están emparentados entre sí;
> tú estás en casa, una extraña,
> las disputas de límites han sido dirimidas
> el estampido de los disparos ha hecho trizas la
> tregua estás herida, perdida en acción
> muerta, resistiendo;

To live in the Borderlands means
the mill with the razor white teeth wants to shred off
tiras your olive-red skin, crush out the kernel, your
heartpound you pinch you roll you out smelling like
white bread but dead;

> Vivir en la Frontera significa
> el molino con los blancos dientes de navaja quiere
> arrancar en
> tu piel rojo-oliva, exprimir la pulpa, tu corazón
> pulverizarte apretarte alisarte
> oliendo como pan blanco pero muerta;

To survive the Borderlands you must live sin
fronteras be a crossroads.

> Para sobrevivir en la Frontera
> debes vivir sin fronteras
> ser un cruce de caminos.

"Indigenous like corn, like corn, the mestiza is a product of crossbreeding, designed for preservation under a variety of conditions. Like an ear of corn—a female seed-bearing organ—the mestiza is tenacious, tightly wrapped in the husks of her culture. Like kernels she clings to the cob; with thick stalks and strong brace roots, she holds tight to the earth—she will survive the crossroads."

This land is toiled for these green ones

So it can take seed and bear fruit

The drops of sweat streaming

From those laden shoulders

This land is toiled for you to water

So that it grows from the seeds of prayer within

Sustaining acceptance between hope and effort

Microbes and pesticides labor in love

And a farmer

Opens a field of wisdom

Where he reigns as khalifah

This thawed land

is the mother of your roots

protecting the kernels and futures of your grandchildren

before everything is sown with stone

This toiled land

is the flare of your heart

Never too tired to spread its seedlings

Though the pests keep winning this game of chess

Langkung, Ebi. **'The Ayat Tree and Other Poems'** (2019) www.intersastra.com/puisi-poetry/ebilangkung

*The recipe was taken from our Foodemic series submitted by Khoiriyah (Yaya)

Trancam

Ingredients:

- 150g of yardlong beans
- 150g of cucumber
- 100g of bean sprout
- 75g of lemon basil
- 75g of young papaya leaves
- Other vegetables (according to preferences or availability)
- 175g of grated coconut
- 3pcs of red chili
- 1 clove of garlic
- 2tbsp of brown sugar
- 1/4tsp of salt
- 2pcs of lime leaves
- 2cm of aromatic ginger
- 1tsp of burnt shrimp paste

You can add all or pick whichever available.

How to cook:

① **Wash all vegetables and slice according to preference.**

② **Finely grind the chili, garlic, brown sugar, salt, lime leaves, aromatic ginger, and burnt shrimp paste together.**

③ **Add grated coconut and mix well.**

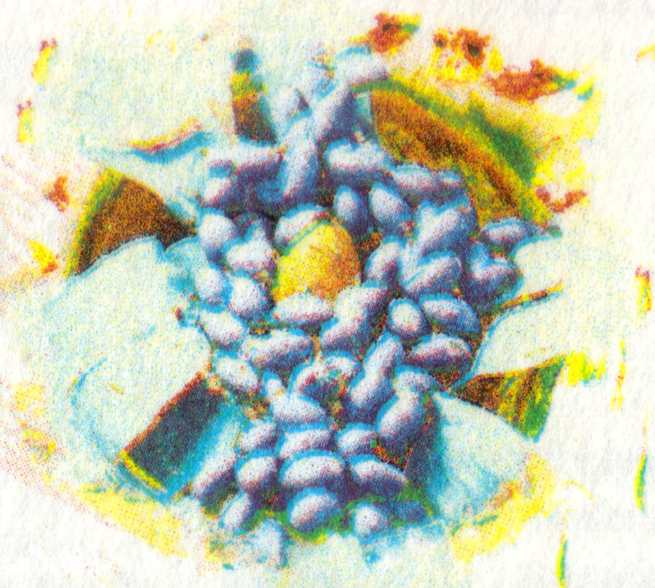
④ **Mix the vegetables with the coconut concoction.**

⑤ **Plate them and enjoy.**

During the early Covid-19 pandemic, food prices were volatile, mobility was limited, and yet we still longed for hassle-free delicious meals. With uncertainties around, home gardening took off. Most of the ingredients that make up Trancam are easily accessible in Indonesia; some can even grow on a small plot or pots. This recipe is cheap, convenient, and can be modified according to one liking.

bakudapan.com/id/resep-trancam-menu-praktis-saat-karantina/

This zine is an informative addition to the virtual program of Studium Generale, Royal Academy of Art. It is a small insight into the borad scope of subject matter, follow @earthcraftkabk on instagram for all practical info, or visit the KABK website.



Spring Sessions '23

30 Mar

[Greyspace in the Middle, Paviljoensgracht 20-24, The Hague]

Kitchen. Table. طاولة المطبخ
عرض أدائي للفنانة سماح حجاوي

17:30 - 20:30 ~ Dinner performance by SAMAH HIJAWI

6 Apr

[Auditorium, KABK, The Hague]

The Wild Seed in your Belly

17:00 - 19:00 — Screenings of JUMANA MANNA'S 'Wild Relatives' and 'Foragers', and short clips of VIVIEN SANSOUR'S work
17:00 - 19:00 — Food hosted by KABK students, under the guidance of SAMAH HIJAWI
19:00 - 20:30 — SAMAH HIJAWI in conversation with JUMANA MANNA and VIVIEN SANSOUR (both on Zoom)

13 Apr

[Auditorium, KABK, The Hague]

Land, Communes, Cooperatives, and Self-Sufficiency

14:00 - 17:00 — Screenings of MARWA ARSANIOS 'Who is Afraid of Ideology?' Part 1, 2, 3 and 4
17:30 - 19:00 — Food hosted by RADICAL ROOTS resonating with SANKRIT KULMANOCHAWONG
19:00 - 20:30 — PATRICIA DE VRIES in conversation with MARWA ARSANIOS

20 Apr

[Auditorium, KABK, The Hague]

Palm oil and the capitalist mode of human sacrifice

17:00 - 18:30 — Food & film hosted by KABK students, under the guidance of ELIA NURVISTA
18:30 - 19:30 — Lecture MAX HAIVEN
19:30 - 20:30 — ELIA NURVISTA in conversation with MAX HAIVEN

11 May

[Auditorium, KABK, The Hague]

Deep Medicine and the Care Revolution

17:00 - 18:30 — Food & film hosted by KABK students, under the guidance of MÜGE YILMAZ
18:30 - 19:30 — Lecture RUPA MARYA (zoom)
19:30 - 20:30 — ILGA MINJON in conversation with RUPA MARYA (zoom)

25 May

[Auditorium & Courtyard, KABK, The Hague]

Bioremediation: Regenerative Remedies for Toxic Realities

17:00 - 18:30 — Food & garden party hosted by KABK students
18:30 - 19:30 — Lecture LEILA DARWISH
19:30 - 20:30 — Victoria McKenzie in conversation with LEILA DARWISH

Accessibility: Every session will be recorded, captioned and archived in our growing vimeo account.
We provide transcripts upon request. Please send an email to: studiumgenerale@kabk.nl.
All locations are wheelchair accessible. Please be aware of the different locations for different sessions.