

FIELD JOURNAL

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INTRO TO FOOD DESIGN

THE NEW SCHOOL, FALL 18
INSTRUCTOR: CAROLIN MEES



MAN THROWING CAST NET | PHOTO CREDIT TO
CREATIVE COMMONS

Barbados, a Caribbean island, is full of warmth, energy, and love. Fishing is a prominent cultural component of this island. Experiences, the Oistins Fish Festival and the Oistins Fish Fry are held annually and weekly, respectively, to recognize the Barbados culture and its fishing industry. Barbados's most popular dish includes the national fish—Flying Fish and Cou Cou. The Flying Fish uses its wings to propel itself to distances of 30-40 meters at speeds of 55

kmph, giving off illusions of flying. While there are various ways to catch the flying fish, cast nets are most common. They are wide, circular nets with small weights on the edges. When the net sinks, they are hauled back up after the fish are attracted. Fishermen often use flashlights to help attract the fish. The Flying Fish is served steamed with Bajan Seasoning. The Cou Cou is a type of polenta/grit made from corn meal and okras.



UMBRELLA HOUSE COMMUNITY GARDEN | PHOTO CREDIT TO NY TIMES

East Village, once a city of counterculture, is now a city dominated by millennials. It is made up of trendy young adults, health-conscious individuals, creatives, gardening activists, etc. The east village used to be made up of many mom-and-pop shop and be a neighborhood of punk culture. Through gentrification, the originality and culture of the East Village started to shift. Celebrity chef restaurants replaced local pubs and restaurants, a John Varvatos store replaced a local store, etc.

The East Village is a prominent garden neighborhood. There is a strong sense of grassroots activism. There is a largest concentration of community gardens in the East Village, totaling up to 46 today. Many of these community gardens were started on vacant lots by local grassroots activists. Located on Avenue C, The Museum of Reclaimed Urban Space promotes sustainability green design, history of grassroots action and activism, and urban farming techniques through guided visitor tours.



COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER-POTUCK | PHOTO CREDIT TO ALBERTO BOGO

With an addition of new members of different cultural backgrounds and ages, the maintenance of the community garden La Casita could be different. The communal aspect can be exaggerated and heightened due to the variance of groups and tribes. This allows the community to unify and become one. The members can learn about each other's cultures and their foods through bringing food from their cultures to the parties. The different groups of people can teach each other how to prepare and

cook their cultural dishes, alongside eating manners. Through this, the members can apply different integrations into food design. The millennials can teach the older generations English and ways to modernize our food system. Through the recent incentives to be sustainable, millennials can input their thoughts to reduce waste and be resourceful.

Through new members, heads can come together to create a community garden that is inviting, open, and safe.



COMPOSTING FOR COMMUNITY GARDENS | PHOTO CREDIT TO NEYYA (GETTY IMAGES)

Composting is a natural process of recycling organic material into rich soil amendments and/or soil conditioner that promotes soil microbes, which promotes plant growth. Compost is decomposed organic matter. The compost process feeds to the needs of microorganisms; the microorganisms devour the compost waste on cellular levels to produce energy—water, carbon dioxide, and heat. Compost may include natural elements—grass clippings, leaves, vegetable plants after harvest, wood ash and elements from the home—eggshells, coffee

grounds, leftover pasta noodle, rotten fruits, stale bread, produce peelings, etc. The composting process of breaking down materials occurs in three stages. During the first stage, mesophilic stage, the temperature of the core of the compost pile starts to heat up and the microorganisms start to form colonies and multiply. During the second stage, the thermophilic phase, the compost heats up to 140 degrees, killing off weeds and harmful bacteria. The third stage, the cooling and maturing stage, is where the final humus matures and macro organisms break down the coarser elements.



SOLR-POWERED IRRIGATION SYSTEM | PHOTO CREDIT TO MASDAR : FUTRE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Solar-Powered Drip Irrigation is an irrigation system that is powered by solar power. It incorporates the use of rainwater harvesting from neighboring rooftops or rainwater to water the garden based on solar power. The solar power allows the volunteers and the gardeners to use their time to focus on other important systems and byproducts, rather than watering the garden. It promotes a more effective use of hard labor. Solar power uses a natural energy source, providing a sustainable low-maintenance, long term solution. Drip Irrigation is efficient for supplying water and

fertilizer directly to plant roots, the stem of growth. The benefit of this system allows community gardens to grow a variety of crops, even those that are difficult to maintain in geographic locations with minimal rainfall. This sustainable byproduct promotes a cycle and balanced, sustainable agriculture system. This connects to Dr. Rositsa Ilieva lecture on the urban foodscape and urban food planning. Her lecture expresses the connect and cycle of agriculture and consumption in society. Everything is interconnected, stemming from crop growth to consumption.



VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF FOOD INSECURITY
ART BY CASSANDRA STEPHENSON | PHOTO BY TERRA ATWOOD

Food insecurity is the state of not having access to consistent, reliable access to healthy food based on one's economic or social condition. The movie, *Seeds of Hunger*, discusses food and farming on a large industry-level scale. It describes the food system and the concerns of the industry, both financial impacts and farming techniques. If change is not implemented, our world may experience extreme food shortages. Food insecurity is a rising issue that must be fought. Community gardens and urban agriculture attempt to combat issues of food insecurity by creating a network. It brings diverse groups of people together to share food, provide organic food, learn about others' cultures, discuss farming techniques--seed sa-

ving and watering practices, etc. Seed saving combats food insecurity due to the slowing of biocultural diversity loss. The wider variety of produce, which are perceived as too expensive or poor quality, unites the community. Community gardens help provide healthy, organic produce, promoting food security in lower income-neighborhoods. While community gardens are more often built in lower-income neighborhoods, community gardens in urban areas are often linked to reducing crime rates through a ripple effect--people often become more involved in looking out for each other and their properties, transforming the community of a neighborhood. This influences our community garden design proposal by creating an open, safe space for people of all financial and ethnic backgrounds.



STUDENTS EXPLAIN COMPOSTING PROCESS TO MICHELLE OBAMA +SHARING GARDENING PROCESSES| PHOTO BY AMANDA LUCIDON

1) What motivates you to stay connected and continue to run (your) community garden(s) in the city?

2) Why are some community gardens more open to the public, while others are more private and individual?

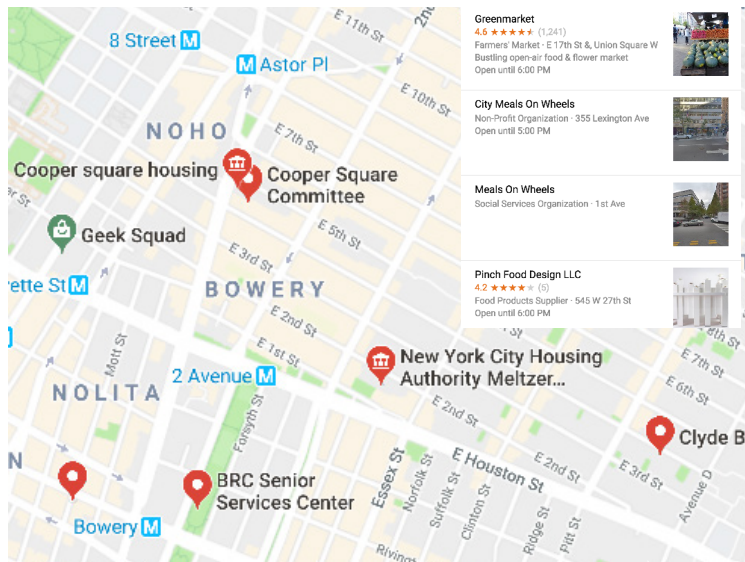
3) In your opinion, What is the main priority and function of a successful community garden? Social communal space? Gardening Space? Learning Space? Etc.?

4)How are the rules and regulations of community gardens determined if many of the gardens are developed on

barren land? What is the deciding factor for the regulations?

5) How can design affect the operation of a community garden? What design element is most important? What type of message are you trying to send for future generations through community gardens?

6) What factor/event invites most people to join/become members of the community garden? What factor/event raises curiosity? Would you prefer a large community or a smaller one?



MAP OF ELDERLY CENTERS IN LOWER MANHATTAN | FOOD DESIGN PROJECTS IN NYC source: GoogleMaps

- 1. Greenmarket Farmers Market** (operated by GrowNYC)
 -Mission: 1) promote regional agriculture by creating a space where small family farms can sell their locally grown products directly to consumers and 2) ensure that NY has access to the freshest, most nutritious locally grown food
- 2. Pinch Food Design**
 -Created a trade school that teaches local high school and college-bound kids how to cook
 -Takes active roles to fight against hunger by donating excess food to 'The Bowery Mission'-serving the homeless and hungry. Pinch will package salvageable foods before donating it.
- 3. City Meals on Wheels**
 -Serves food and warm companionship to the elderly, making sure none of them go hungry on weekends and holidays. They hand-deliver the meals on weekends each week. They also deliver shelf-stable meals on holidays and in advance for harsh-winter weather and have open meal centers on holidays.
- 4. Union Square Composting Site** (operated by LES Ecology Center)
 -Located inside the Union Square farmers market (largest farmer's market in NYC), the composting site offers a location for people to come and compost, recycle, and be sustainable. Being located in the center of the city and one of the busiest

stations, the composting center is designed to be convenient to everyone.

- 5. City Harvest**
 -Food Rescue Organization, who exists to end hunger in NYC Communities through food rescue and distribution, education, and more.
 -Food is picked up from over 2500 donors (restaurants, retailers, etc.) and is delivered to hundreds of soup kitchens, food pantries, and other community food programs across NYC's 5 boroughs.

These projects interest me because they bring attention to important issues that are often forgotten. It is important to recognize the importance and efforts of local farms because today's produce is often dominated by large-scale, mass production farms. The way that GrowNYC has used the Union Square space to hold the largest NYC farmer's market weekly and provide a composting site brings attention to the importance of being sustainable, even in this urbanized area. It is important that the current problem with food insecurity is issued. While many Americans throw away almost 40% of their food, there are hundreds of people that go to sleep without their primary needs-food, water, shelter. This needs to be changed. Many of these organizations and projects highlight these issues. I want to personally highlight the issues of food waste and food security in relation to the education system in my independent project. If people were more educated and knowledgeable regarding the consequences of waste, I believe that food insecurity would decrease.



SELF-TAKEN PHOTOS AT THE UNION SQUARE COMPOSTING SITE

The Union Square Composting site is socially and environmentally sustainable because it provides a public, composting space in a center spot within Manhattan. The Union Square Composting Site is open and held four times a week year-round: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The convenience of the location and the frequent occurrence of the composting site promotes the act of composting to New Yorkers. Even if one is busy and on

the move, there are many opportunities where one can stop by and drop off their waste-compost. This drop off center also promotes social involvement to be mindful about our environment and be eco-friendly. In this densely populated city, it is important that we give back to the soil and farms because all the organisms within our ecosystem is interconnected in a cyclical cycle. When we give back to our environment, our environment gives back to us.