

The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

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The Value of Food: Sustaining a Green Planet
The Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York
October 6, 2015–April 3, 2016

New York (August 31, 2015)—The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is proud to present *The Value of Food: Sustaining a Green Planet*, an art exhibition and Cathedral-wide initiative addressing the issues of food security, hunger, access to healthy food, local and urban farming, factory farming, diet, and the cultural and spiritual meanings of food. It follows the Cathedral's ongoing tradition of visual arts exhibitions, including, most recently, *Phoenix: Xu Bing at the Cathedral*; *Jane Alexander: Surveys (from the Cape of Good Hope)*, in collaboration with The Africa Center (formerly the Museum of African Art); and the 2011–2012 exhibition *The Value of Water*. In addition to the Cathedral's longstanding art programming, *The Value of Food* also draws upon the Cathedral's social justice initiatives spotlighting issues of hunger and human dignity, including the World Hunger Clock and the advocacy work of Cathedral Community Cares, including the Sunday Soup Kitchen, which has been a fixture of the neighborhood for decades.

The Very Reverend Dr. James A. Kowalski, Dean of the Cathedral, wrote recently, “Whenever we put a great conversation of our day under the roof of this Cathedral, we endeavor to use liturgy and art—and other forms of discourse—to invite people into conversation. We not only want those conversations to be transformational to them, but also to call all of us into advocacy. We will use a food justice framework to engage people across faiths and cultures in an exploration of the benefits and risks of how food is grown and processed, transported, distributed, and consumed—asking also about how equitably all of that takes place.”

The exhibition is guest curated by Kirby Gookin and Robin Kahn, who described the installation as follows:

The Value of Food explores the dynamic and organic materiality of food and its integral role in sustaining human life. The artists in this exhibition work with food as a form of social engagement. Although their subjects and methodology vary, they each explore the

intersection of food, art, commerce and community in order to engage the exhibition's unifying theme: food justice.

Installed in a circular path within the Cathedral's 14 bays and 7 chapels, as well as throughout its gardens, the exhibition is divided into seven thematic sections: Water, Soil, Seed, Farm, Market, Meal and Waste, each representing a spoke of the cycle of food production.

The Value of Food is premised on an egalitarian ideal promulgated by a growing number of artists in the aftermath of World War II that recognizes that the materials of everyday life—a burlap sack, a candy wrapper, or detritus found in the street—are equally suitable ingredients of the artist's palette as a tube of paint. Since the 1960s, an international coterie of artists has expanded this principle to explore the representation and material use of food. Regardless of their method, they typically worked with food within the limited confines of a formal art gallery setting. Alison Knowles is a pioneer in this tradition, known for serving soups and salads to an art viewing audience since 1962. Daniel Spoerri, another innovative practitioner, opened up a functioning restaurant in a Parisian art gallery in 1963. It wasn't until the 1970s that artists brought food back outside into the world, as when Carol Gooden and Gordon Matta-Clark opened Food, a cooperative restaurant formed as a "social sculpture" that employed and fed local artists in downtown Manhattan.

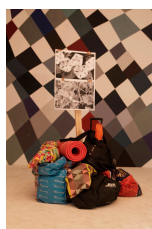
The artists in this exhibition have been inspired to expand the possible uses of food as an art medium. They are employing a variety of inventive strategies—seed banking, urban foraging, rooftop farming, composting, cooking and sharing meals—to further explore how food defines the quality of our physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Pull up a seat and join us at Tom Otterness' Tables. Food becomes a meal only when it is shared.

The Cathedral will also be presenting a range of workshops and evening programs for *The Value of Food*, some offered by staff, some by the artists, and some by guest speakers. The opening event on October 6th offers an evening discussion curated by *Mother Jones*, featuring renowned food writer and activist Tom Philpott, who writes the magazine's "Food for Thought" blog; Tom Colicchio, co-founder of the Gramercy Tavern, founder of Craft and Colicchio & Sons restaurants and head judge on *Top Chef*; and Karen Washington, urban farmer, New York Botanical Garden board member and winner of a 2014 James Beard Foundation Leadership award. The panel will explore where we are now, who the food movement is leaving out, how it can broaden, how it impacts farmers, and what comes next.

For additional selected programming throughout *The Value of Food*, please visit [this page](#).

Selected Exhibition Highlights

Ines Doujak
Land Grab, 2015.



Vik Muniz
Milan (Last Supper), After Andy Warhol, 1997.



Alison Knowles
A Bean Retrospective, 1962–2015.



Tom Otterness
The Tables, 1986–1987.



List of Artists

Suzanne Anker

Stefani Bardin

Anna-Sophie Berger

Pascal Bernier

Mike Bidlo

Matt Black

Mel Chin

Ines Doujak

Eating in Public

Coleen Fitzgibbon

Fallen Fruit

Fredericka Foster

Hunger Through My Lens

Nancy Hwang

Christian Jankowski

Robin Kahn

Alison Knowles

Larry Miller

Vik Muniz

Jan Mun

Peter Nadin

Naoto Nakagawa

Tom Otterness

Claire Pentecost

Alexis Rockman

Christy Rupp

Laura Stein

Tattfoo Tan

Nigel Van Wieck

Kara Walker

Linda Weintraub

Peter Lamborn Wilson

The exhibition will also feature documentation and ephemera by additional artists of historical importance who have been involved in these many issues, including: Agnes Denes, Carol Gooden and Gordon Matta-Clark, Dieter Roth, and Daniel Spoerri, amongst others. Portraits by photojournalist Matt Black, depicting food workers and the ecological ravages of climate change, will be displayed on the Cathedral's exterior fence—an installation curated by Magnum Foundation.

About the Art

For information about the pieces featured in the installation, please visit valueoffood.org. Select images will be made available upon request.

About the Curators

Kirby Gookin is a writer, curator, public artist, and professor of critical studies in the Department of Art and Art Professions at NYU, and the Department of Art History at The School of Visual Arts, where he teaches, among other courses, *Avant-Gardening: Art, Food and Agriculture*. He has contributed to *Artforum* (as staff critic), *Artscribe*, *Arts Magazine*, *Interview*, and *Parkett*, as well as written essays for several publications including *Creative Time: 33 Years* (Princeton Architectural Press). Robin Kahn is an artist, curator, author of self-published books, and a member of several public art collectives. In 2012, she created an interactive installation “The Art of Sahrawi Cooking” at dOCUMENTA (13) inspired by her cookbook *Dining in Refugee Camps* (Autonomedia). Kahn’s work has been collected and exhibited internationally. She is the recipient of several awards including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. As curators, Gookin and Kahn create projects which empower artists and communities.

About Magnum Foundation

Magnum Foundation, a non-profit organization championing in-depth, independent documentary photography in the public interest, is presenting a powerful series of photographs by current Magnum Foundation grantee Matt Black, which will be displayed along the exterior fence. Black is a winner of the World Press Photo Award and the Robert F. Kennedy Award for Excellence in Journalism and was named Time Magazine’s Instagram Photographer of the Year in 2014. His series, *The Geography of Poverty*, surveys the places in America where 20 percent or more of residents live in poverty. Made during a cross-country trip over the summer of 2015, this work is an extension of a project he began in California, shedding light on issues of migration, farming, and environmental degradation as related to modern poverty.

About Mother Jones

Mother Jones, headquartered in San Francisco, Washington, DC, and New York City, is a nonprofit news outlet that delivers 24/7 reporting online and produces a bimonthly print magazine to 8 million monthly readers. Their bold and original award-winning reporting covers the urgent issues of our day, from politics and climate change to education and the food we eat.

About The Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership. People from many faiths and communities worship together in services held more than 30 times a week; the soup kitchen serves roughly 23,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; the renowned after school and summer program offers nurturing activities; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.

The Cathedral is open 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. There is a suggested admission of \$10.00 per person. Please visit valueoffood.org for more information on the exhibition’s events and stjohndivine.org for more about the Cathedral and a schedule of public programs.

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