



News Release

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## CONTEMPORARY CRAFT EXPLORES ISSUES AROUND FOOD SECURITY IN NEW EXHIBITION

*The fourth exhibition in a series of socially engaged art experiences – free admission*

### EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS:

Free admission

Free hands-on making activity in the Drop-in Studio

15 artists

18 works of art

Companion exhibitions and programs

More than 16 Community Partners

Studio Workshops

### EXHIBITION DETAILS:

DATES: September 10, 2021-March 19, 2022

PLACE: Contemporary Craft

5645 Butler Street

Pittsburgh, PA 15201

TIME: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 AM - 4 PM

ADMISSION: Free

WEBSITE: [www.exploremindfulart.com](http://www.exploremindfulart.com)

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/SCCPgh](https://facebook.com/SCCPgh)

TWITTER: @SCCPgh

INSTAGRAM: @SCCPgh

HASHTAG: CCFoodJustice

**PITTSBURGH, PA, July 2021** - More than 35 million people in the United States are food insecure, but contemporary issues preventing equitable access to food are extremely complex. *Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community through Art*, Contemporary Craft's (CC) latest socially-engaged art experience, will critically explore the human issues that can shape and influence positive change in food security. The exhibition will open on September 10, 2021 and be on view through March 19, 2022.

Featuring 18 works by 15 contemporary craft artists, *Food Justice* offers the opportunity to visualize and explore the dimensions of national and regional food systems and the advocacy critically important for social change and community well-being. Because of the visionary, poetic, and transformative potential of art, visitors will see, feel, and understand the issues of food insecurity in new and meaningful ways and be moved to become part of the solution.

"I am humbled by the artist narratives and community partners that have come together to create the exhibition *Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community Through Art*," said Executive Director Rachel Saul Rearick. "And while it is not presumed that looking at art alone will make a difference in the economic inequities and systemic practices that contribute to growing food resource disparities, we believe that this exhibition will serve as a catalyst-bringing people together in dialogue while offering opportunities to become part of a collective solution."

The show highlights a variety of techniques and forms that include innovative art expressions rooted in traditional craft materials, such as glass, wood, fiber, clay and metals, while exploring relationships with photography, installation art, print making, sculpture and plants. Participating artists include Gavin Benjamin, Jason Forck, George Bowes, Joan Iversen Goswell, Holly Hanessian, Michael Austin Diaz, Stefanie Herr, Amos Kennedy, Patty Kennedy-Zafred, Anna Metcalfe, Xena Ni, Mollie Ruskin, Jeff Schmuki, Wendy Deschene and Michael Logan Woodle.

## Opening Weekend Celebration & Related Events

CC will mark the opening of *Food Justice*, with a free, public reception on Friday, September 10, from 5:30-8:00 PM. Community partner 412 Food Rescue will provide light bites for the reception, created from rescued food.

Events will continue on Saturday, September 11 with an Artist Dialogue from 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM and a Hydroponic Garden Workshop, led by artist Jeff Schmuki from 2:00-4:00 PM. The Stickler's Ice Pops food truck will also be on hand selling all-natural popsicles.

The Artist Dialogue is free and open to the public. The Hydroponic Garden Workshop is \$55, with all materials included. To register for the workshop, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grow-with-hydroponics-with-visiting-artist-jeff-schmuki-registration-155855452855>.

Events will continue throughout the exhibition. For a full list of events and programming, visit [exploremindfulart.org](http://exploremindfulart.org).

## Companion Exhibitions

In addition to the main show at CC's new location in Pittsburgh's Upper Lawrenceville neighborhood, there will be two companion exhibitions at CC's BNY Mellon Center Satellite Gallery (500 Grant Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219). The first of these is *Prepping Pittsburgh: Art Sustaining Community*, an exhibition that showcases the collaborative project between artist George Bowes, 10 nationally recognized ceramicists, and Community Kitchen Pittsburgh (CKP). The exhibition will be on view at CC's BNY Mellon Satellite Gallery from August 7 through November 29, 2021.

The second companion show will be fiber artist Patty Kennedy-Zafred's solo exhibition, *American Portraits: The Family Farm*. On view from December 4, 2021 through April 4, 2022, *American Portraits* speaks to the rich history of American family farming and its rapid decline in modern time

## Support for *Food Justice*

Support for *Food Justice: Growing a Healthier Community through Art* is provided in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, and JENDOCO Construction Corporation. Media sponsors for this exhibition are NEXTpittsburgh, 90.5 WESA, and 91.3 WYEP. General operating support for Contemporary Craft is provided by Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Heinz Endowments, Henry L. Hillman Foundation, Opportunity Fund, the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the Elizabeth R. Raphael Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Jack Buncher Foundation, The Fine Foundation, Giant Eagle Foundation, Anonymous foundation, and by members of the Heart of Craft circle of donors. (As of June 2021)

## About Contemporary Craft

Celebrating its 50th anniversary year, Contemporary Craft presents contemporary art in craft media by regional, national, and international artists. Contemporary Craft offers cutting edge exhibitions focusing on multicultural diversity and contemporary art, as well as a range of artist-led studio workshops, community outreach programs, and a store. Located at 5645 Butler Street in the Upper Lawrenceville neighborhood of Pittsburgh, PA, Contemporary Craft's exhibition and Drop-In Studio art activity are always free to the public. For questions related to accessible accommodations, please contact us at [info@contemporarycraft.org](mailto:info@contemporarycraft.org) or visit [www.contemporarycraft.org](http://www.contemporarycraft.org).

# FOOD JUSTICE

## Why Food Justice?

Because food justice is social justice.

Over the past year, many food inequalities and racial injustices were brought to light due to the COVID-19 crisis. The need to overcome these challenges is greater than ever. We are sharing this show through the understanding that issues such as food apartheid and hunger are symptoms of poverty, and that poverty is the product of social and economic injustice.

Through this show, we aim to encourage and foster a deeper understanding of the food injustices that face people and the environment, not only all over the US, but within our community. We aim to share the ideals of food sovereignty, defined as people's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sustainable systems, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

Read on for more information, definitions, and statistics about the issues that face not just America, but those within our community of Pittsburgh.

## Components of Food Justice:

### Food Access:

Food insecurity refers to the lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. The effects of food insecurity have a wide impact. Lack of food access can cause serious physical and mental health problems. It can inhibit a child's development and force seniors living on a fixed income to choose between food and health care.

1 in 5 Pittsburgh residents live with food insecurity.

In 2019, approximately 63,000 Pittsburgh residents were 'food insecure,' and limited by economic and social conditions which affected their consistent access to adequate food. One study estimated that in the United States, 45 million people, including 15 million children, may have experienced food insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020.

"Significant racial disparities in food insecurity which existed before COVID-19 remain in the wake of the pandemic. Feeding America projects that 21% of Black individuals (1 in 5) may experience food insecurity in 2021, compared to 11% of white individuals (1 in 9)." - *Feeding America*, March 2021

### Food Apartheid:

While food desert has become a commonly-used term to describe an urban area where much of the population lives at least one mile (or 10 in rural areas) from the nearest large grocery store, food justice organizers prefer to use food apartheid. The term food apartheid recognizes that the lack of access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food results from structural inequities including systemic racism and classism

that exclude communities of color and poor communities. Food apartheid is an attempt to acknowledge the disparity of communities that are and are not affected by food access and healthy equity.

### **Food Utilization:**

The two main issues around food utilization are food loss and food waste. Food loss comprises any edible food that goes uneaten at any stage. This includes food that's uneaten in homes and stores, crops left in the field, food that spoils in transportation, and all other food that doesn't make it to a store. Food waste, more specifically, is any food discarded by retailers and consumers. Food waste affects environmental wellness, food insecurity, global hunger, and natural resources.

When we waste food, we also waste the water, energy, and physical labor it took to produce, package, and ship this food. We waste the fuel that was used to transport this food from one part of the country to another. When we waste food, it's not just the food itself that is being wasted.

The environmental impact of food waste in America also can't be overlooked. Food in a landfill emits methane as it rots, a greenhouse gas 28 to 36 times more potent than the carbon that comes out of passenger vehicles.

The United States produced an average of 4,000 calories per person per day in 2010, which is double a person's average daily dietary needs. This abundance of calories however is not equally distributed, with some of it being lost in production and unavailable to communities with low food access.

"America wastes roughly 40 percent of its food. It is estimated that 125 to 160 billion pounds of food goes to waste every year, much of which is perfectly edible and nutritious." - *Food Print*, 2020

### **Resources:**

Allegheny County Food Insecurity. Feeding America. (2021).  
Cambridge, Mass. Cultivating food justice : race, class, and sustainability. Internet Archive.  
Danko, S. (n.d.). FeedPGH: Understanding Food Insecurity in the City of Pittsburgh.  
Food Waste in America: Facts and Statistics (2021 Update). Rubicon. (2021, March 1).  
Food Waste Is a Massive Problem-Here's Why. FoodPrint. (2021, February 4).  
The Impact of the Coronavirus on Food Insecurity in 2020 & 2021. Feeding America. (2021).  
What Is Food Justice and Why Is It Necessary? FoodPrint. (2021, March 11).  
What is Food Justice. Food Forward. (2019.).

# FOOD JUSTICE

## Artists

### **GAVIN BENJAMIN** *gavinbenjamin.com @gavinbenjamin*

Born in Georgetown, Guyana, Gavin Benjamin lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA as a multifaceted artist with backgrounds in commercial photography, painting, printmaking, and interior and product design.

His work combines original analog photography and appropriated images with collage, paint, varnish, and Swarovski crystals to create a mash-up of couture art. Benjamin is highly influenced by the way culture, media, politics, fashion, and design intersect, and his work asks questions that continue to confront a man of color in America today.

### **JASON FORCK** *jasonforck.com @jasforck*

Jason Forck is a Pittsburgh-based artist working primarily in glass. Raised on a small Kansas farm, his work explores the often understated and overlooked beauty of the rural Americana landscape.

Forck currently works as Creative Projects Director at Pittsburgh Glass Center where he designs functional tableware as well as custom lighting for architectural projects. His past exhibitions include the Westmoreland Museum of Art, Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, SOFA Chicago, and The Muskegon Museum of Art.

### **GEORGE BOWES** *georgebowes.com*

Ceramic artist George Bowes was born in Toledo, OH, and currently lives in Galveston, TX. Bowes imbues both functional vessels and sculptural objects with bold pronouncements on the many ironies of humanity, society, and politics. Occasionally biting, endlessly quick-witted, the sentiments always elicit lively reactions. His distinctive use of bold color and vivid pattern on vessels for home use speak of his ideas of beauty and vitality and live as a refreshing island in the landscape of functional art.

Bowes graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Art with a B.F.A. (1984) and the University of California, Davis with an M.F.A. (2001). He has received multiple Individual Artist Fellowships from the Ohio Arts Council and an Arts Midwest/NEA Regional Visual Arts Fellowship Award. His works reside in public and private collections that include the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute, Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, and the Alfred Ceramic Art Museum.

George Bowes is one of the exhibiting artists featured at Contemporary Craft's Satellite Gallery, BNY Mellon Center, downtown Pittsburgh.

### **JOAN IVERSON GOSWELL**

Joan Iversen Goswell is a book artist living in Valencia, PA. She studied calligraphy with Elizabeth Houston at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and classic hand bookbinding with Jean Gunner at Hunt Library, Carnegie-Mellon University.

Her artwork is unique, running from traditional leather bindings to contemporary bindings of diverse materials. Lettering and many of her images are created from hand-cut eraser stamps. Goswell also incorporates digital representations, collage, odd materials such as feathers, wood, wire, beads, brass strips, pellet guns, horsehair, and in the case of one series of books -- pebbles, seashells, and a tiny skeletal remain. Her books have been exhibited internationally in Austria, United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, and Switzerland and

regionally at the Andy Warhol Museum and Carnegie Museum of Art.

Goswell's works are in important collections including The Sackner Archive, Miami Beach, FL; The Yves Klein Archive, Paris, France; The Arthur Jaffe Collection, Boca Raton, FL and the Jack Ginsburg Collection, Johannesburg, South Africa.

**HOLLY HANESSIAN** *hollyhanessian.com @hahaworks*

Holly Hanessian is a Professor of Art at Florida State University where she is the area head of ceramics. Her artwork and studio practice is tied to systems and the human experience, our senses, social strata structures, and historical repeated actions that systemically (like genocide) tie us together. Projects vary from our social behavior and need to touch, to how food insecurity is propagated by inequity in farming systems, how genocide has been repeated throughout the beginning of human history, and how the pharmaceutical industry has whetted our appetite for prescription pills for physical discomfort.

Hanessian has shown her artwork extensively in the US and internationally in Italy, China, Taiwan, New Zealand, England, and Canada. Residencies include the Archie Bray Foundation and the International Ceramic Research Center: Guldagageraand among others. Hanessian is a member of the Socially Engaged Craft Collective, Artaxis.org, and the International Academy of Ceramics.

**MICHAEL AUSTIN DIAZ** *michaelaustindiaz.com*

Michael Austin Diaz is an interdisciplinary artist and designer from the US. His practice explores landscape and local identity through social engagement, fieldwork, and material culture. His individual and collaborative projects are realized through public interventions and gallery installations, and utilize the disciplines of art and design to generate meaningful dialogue and community development.

**STEPHANIE HERR** *stephanieherr.com @influenceherr*

Stefanie Herr was born in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, and is currently based in Barcelona, Spain. A visual artist, Herr is best known for her intricately hand-crafted photo sculptures. Having graduated in Architecture from Technische Universität Berlin in 2001, she initially worked as an architect and passionate model maker until she decided to change career paths in 2007.

Herr's experimental art practice oscillates between the domains of photography and sculpture. Leaving clear hints of her architectural background, the artist takes a precise and labor-intensive approach in her making. Drawing inspiration from maps, charts, and graphs, her cardboard constructions are accurate topographic representations of the underlying data. The topographic condition of her artworks reflects the artist's continuing preoccupation with environmental and landscape change. The appropriation and commodification of nature are recurring themes encountered in her artistic creations.

Herr's delicate handiwork has been featured in numerous group and solo shows across Europe. She was shortlisted for the 2017 ArtFAD Contemporary Art and Craft Awards and for the 2015 Fundació Vila Casas Sculpture Award, amongst others

**AMOS KENNEDY** *kennedyprints.com @kennedyprints*

Amos Paul Kennedy Jr. is a letterpress printer, papermaker, and builder of artist's books currently based in Detroit, MI. Kennedy uses the early technology of the letterpress printer to produce works reflecting contemporary social concerns. His chipboard posters with messages reflect his views on issues of community health, power, race, and identity. Emotionally resonant, Kennedy's work embodies the passion and encourages people to think in previously unexplored ways.

Kennedy earned his MFA in graphic design from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1997 and has gone on to lecture and teach around the world. In 2015, Kennedy has named a United States Artist Glasgow Fellow; recognition as one of America's most accomplished and innovative artists.

**PATTY KENNEDY-ZAFRED** *pattykz.com @pattykz1*

As a storyteller, Patty Kennedy-Zafred creates thought-provoking narratives using fabric, dyes, silkscreens, and ink to develop a visual dialogue with the viewer. Each piece is conceived through the lens of individual experiences, memories, or perspectives. Her quilts marry a lifelong fascination with photography, history, and stitch, often reflecting faces of pride and dignity, sometimes under challenging circumstances. The intent is that the technical and physical demand creating them is lost on the audience, as they focus entirely on the nuance or intrigue of the story, transported to another time or place.

Educated in journalism and photography, the making of art has been a prolonged exercise in trial and error, self-teaching, and study. The stories expressed, whether historical or personal, reflect upon our diverse American fabric, possibly reminding the viewer of someone or something they may have forgotten, compelling them to linger, just a moment longer.

Kennedy-Zafred is one of the exhibiting artists featured at Contemporary Craft's Satellite Gallery, BNY Mellon Center, downtown Pittsburgh.

**ANNA METCALFE** *annametcalfe.com @annavmetcalfe*

Anna Metcalfe stayed to live and work in Minneapolis, MN after receiving her MFA from the University of Minnesota in 2009. Interested in the junction of public art and craft, Metcalfe's work is inspired by water, agriculture, food, and community. As a teaching artist, Metcalfe promotes collaboration and interdisciplinary learning environments between communities, artists, and scientists.

Metcalfe is a recipient of a Jerome Foundation Emerging Artists Project Grant for Public Art in 2009, a Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant, a Jerome Foundation Study and Travel Grant in 2013, and most recently, an FY 2015 Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant.

**XENA NI** *madebyxena.com @msknee*

Xena Ni is a designer, organizer, and artist who believes in public institutions that work for everybody. To that end, she has spent the majority of her 10-year design career transforming public services.

As Director of Design at Alloy, a tech start-up, she led the design and research team behind election protection and voter registration services for progressive campaigns and causes. While a Design Manager at Nava PBC, she launched improvements to HealthCare.gov and simplified public benefit applications with the state of Vermont. Before that, Ni served as a Code for America Fellow after co-founding Propel, a civic technology start-up. Throughout all of this, she makes art to advocate for equitable public policy. Ni's installations have been written up in CityLab, the Washingtonian, and the Washington Post.

**MOLLIE RUSKIN** *ru-design.org @mollieru*

Mollie Ruskin is a multi-media artist and an independent designer with roots in activism and social justice movements. Sometimes with paint, sometimes with a pen, sometimes with big elaborate multi-media installations, her creative work is ever unfolding. Ruskin seeks to use her art to bring nuance and new perspectives to conversations around freedom and justice.

A founding member of the United States Digital Service in the Obama White House, Ruskin has a rich background in civic tech and design, with the aim of improving the government's ability to deliver human-centered services for the American people. Her design work ranges from deep qualitative user research to creative direction and visual design to user experience, product, and service design. Ruskin serves on the board of the Alliance for Youth Action, a national network of organizations building the political power of young people in the U.S, and is a co-founder of Design Gigs for Good, a job board for designers looking to put their skills to work for world betterment.

**JEFF SCHMUKI AND WENDY DESCHENE** *monsantra.com*

Artists Jeff Schmuki (USA) and Wendy DesChene (Canada) operate under the guise of PlantBot Genetics Inc., a parody of Big Agricultural Firms who skillfully manipulate current food production and distribution systems. Each has prior experience and awards as solo artists before forming their collaboration and both were raised with strong connections to the land around them.

PlantBot Genetics has exhibited and/or completed projects at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, PA; the Pulitzer Foundation for Art in St Louis, MO; and the Goethe Institute of Cairo, Egypt. Recent exhibitions include *Biophillia* at the Ballator-Thompson Gallery of the Eleanor D. Wilson Museum at Hollins University in Hollins, VA. *Foodture* at the Elaine L Jacob Gallery of Wayne State University in Detroit, MI; the Moth Project at the Augustana Teaching Museum of Art in Rock Island, IL; and artist lectures and studio visits at Long Island University in Brookville, NY.

**MICHAEL LOGAN WOODLE** *loganwoodle.com @loganwoodlemetalsmith*

Michael Logan Woodle is a silversmith and educator who is the 7th generation to live on a family farm in Conway, SC. He earned a B.F.A. in sculpture from Winthrop University in 2009 and an M.F.A. in Jewelry and Metalsmithing from the Edinboro University of Pennsylvania in 2012.

Today you can find Woodle teaching all things three-dimensional at Coastal Carolina University. His work deals with the relationship between identity, property, and generational wealth and has been featured in galleries and museums across the country. He is also an avid hunter, farmer, and father.