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Re-Rooting/ Re-Routing

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Bard College

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Re-Rooting/ Re-Routing

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts and Social Studies
of Bard College

by

Elisabeth Sundberg

Annandale-on-Hudson, NY

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Index of Events

Vinyl Table event in Kline Tent	November 5, 2021	Vinyl table buttoned together, meal cooked with ingredients from Bard farm served
Plywood Table event in Bard Pool	December 8, 2021	Plywood table floated in the Bard pool, foraged sumac lemonade served
Dish-making event in Kline	March 16, 2022	Dishes made of of Bard Farm clay, question asked about memories generated by clay
Week of mural painting in Stevenson Athletic Center outside of the food pantry	March 28- April 3, 2022	Mural design was gridded into 100 squares which Bard faculty, staff, students and outside community members helped paint
Opening event for week of exhibition in Stevenson Athletic center in-front of the pool	April 16, 2022	Meal served cooked with ingredients from Kline from recipes in radical nutrition EBT cookbook, mural and student athlete art show opening
Foraging walk on Bard campus	April 23, 2022	Gathered Spring plants for meal later on in the day.
Closing event for week of exhibition in Stevenson Athletic center in-front of the pool	April 23, 2022	Meal served cooked with both foraged and Kline ingredients from recipes in foraging cookbooks.

Oral History Artist's Statement: given by Elisabeth Sundberg on May 26, 2022 outside the Bard pool in the Stevenson Athletic Center around a table cloth set with dishes for a meal to the Studio Arts Senior Seminar class, who were sitting on seats.

- Ok, so, as part of this senior project I made a conscious decision not to document it with photos and instead now I am going to give an oral history. So, I've handed out some questions to members of the audience and when I prompt you, please ask your question in numerical order. Um, so, this project, the story of this project begins with a table and ends with a tablecloth. Okay I'm ready for the first question.
- What offers support?
- So, a big part of this project, kind of like the foundation, was thought about local and non-local food and the role that they play in food access efforts and so I spent, I've spent, a lot of time thinking about that, um, and just like within, it's, it's, kind of like built a foundation for this project and I've also thought a lot about, kind of, my location at Bard as someone who is not local to this area and what my community at Bard is and what my support structure is, and so, it's really, kind of, all of these ideas have, kind of like, woven to create this support structure that's laid the groundwork for the rest of my project. Next question.
- How do things transform?
- So, my original idea, um, for this, wh-, project as a whole was to build a series of tables and host events with them and the tables were going to be, like, different pieces that could be assembled because I was thinking about, like, democratic shapes and how to engage people in, like, constructing the place where they would be eating a meal or communicating or collaborating, um so, I did do that I made two versions of the table one out of vinyl that was buttoned together and I had an event with it in the Kline tent, um, and I cooked a meal with food I sourced from the Bard farm and it was a really nice event, um, and the second version of the table I made was out of plywood and we floated it actually in the Bard pool and the water acted as, kind of, the support for the table and with that event I served sumac lemonade that I foraged from Red Hook, um but, ultimately I, kind of, had a shift in what I wanted my focus for the project to be so I actually transformed both of those tables into the seats that you all are sitting on, um, and these seats have, kind of, I've intentionally left them as a, kind of, unresolved part of my project because I think that they do have, like, more potential and, I, I, they're, kind of, like my future question to take with me beyond this project about how to get, how to facilitate collaboration and how to engage people. Next question.
- Where do we find duality?
- So, over winter break as I, kind of, mentioned before I had this big shift in what I wanted to do with my project away from the table idea, um, and, kind of, towards, the, the mural project and

so I spent a lot of time, um, in, at the beginning of the spring semester, kind of, cementing the space figuring out the location which is in front of the food pantry which is also relevant to my, like, thoughts about food, um, and, kind of, just like laying the groundwork for this project, um, but I also have been thinking a lot just about, like, the in-between because I think just with, like, local and non-local food I've, kind of, come to the realization that it's not entirely realistic to always only eat local foods and, so, I think there is an in-between there, um, I think of this space in general as, kind of, an in-between because it's a meeting point between the Bard community and the, like, wider community as you can even see right now with the community using the swimming pool and also the design of the mural is centered on the Loop-C bus line which is this through-line through, um, the, through, from Tivoli to Poughkeepsie and connecting all the towns along the Hudson river, um, between those two places and it, kind of, is also a resource that, like, both Bard students and, um, community members can use, so, there's a, there's a lot of in-betweens with this project and dualities. Next question.

- Who do we collaborate with?
- So, the mural project was a huge collaboration because a hundred people came and helped paint this mural within a week which I am very proud of because it was an amazing feat and I think something that I've just been thinking about this, for the span of this whole project is how to engage, how to make something that's interesting to people so that they will want to come and participate and I think that this mural project was a really really good way of engaging people because it allowed people to inter-, either interact with a new space or interact with a familiar space in a new way and it really, like, just brought out everyone's artistic talent which was super super cool and it also, I mean, it, kind of, ties in with the student athlete art show which is part of this exhibit, um, and it, kind of, its leading the way to the mural from this space, um, because it's, like, it was, honestly the mural, this mural is a showcase of student athlete talent because that was, like, the majority of the people who came to help and I just think it's really cool because I know when I was on the cross-country team for a brief period that I wasn't entirely sure of my identity within the Athletic Department and I've talked with other student athletes who feel the same way, so, I think this was a super cool collaboration effort both among the, within the Bard community and then also with people from outside the Bard community who came to help paint. Next question.
- Why is location important?
- So, um, the bowls that you see in front of you were made with clay I dug up from the Bard Farm at an event in Kline about a month ago and another, kind of, question I've been thinking about during this project is the role of local and non-local materials, um, just like in the spaces that we're interacting with and honestly the layers of history within the Bard land that we now,

kind of, exist on and contribute to, so, I wanted this event to, with the Bard clay, to be, kind of like, this direct engagement with a very local material and a way for people to, kind of, both realize, like, both engage with the material but also, like, think of memories that it may bring up and so I think just location I mean the location of the mural is also super important in-front of the food pantry in the gym and as I mentioned before it's also something I've been thinking about myself as I'm, like, getting ready to leave this area, like, what the the location, this location means to me and how I've contributed to it and interacted with it. Uh, next question.

- Was that the last question? Oh, uh
- When is food love?
- So, one of the through-lines that I wanted to keep from my original thoughts about the tables, um, was the idea of feeding people because I really see food just in general as a big connector because sharing food is really important and it helps facilitate friendship and community and family and, so, I knew that I wanted that to be still a big part of my project, and so, the last two events that I've hosted which were, happened last week, both were, kind of, centered around meals and I have some of, like, some examples of what I served at those, so, the first meal was with produce supplied from Kline and I cooked meals from this cookbook, um, which is, like, a radical guide to nutrition using food stamps, um, so, it was, kind of, an exploration of food that's accessible to all but through a, like, a government supplied system and then the second meal was with mostly foraged foods and I led, or I helped lead a foraging walk, before that, kind of, we gathered the ingredients for the meal and I used these two cookbooks as inspiration and the idea behind that meal was, like, food that's accessible to all, um, but from the land, but also with, kind of, the knowledge that foraging is, like, a very, kind of, specific thing and not everyone has that knowledge, so, it's not necessarily accessible to everyone and also that meal did include some of the produce from Kline because I do recognize that it's not necessarily, or that it's not always realistic to, like, only eat local food especially when it's technically part of a capitalist system still because it is still an exchange of goods within a market setting, but, that's just my opinion, um, and so I really, the table cloth, um, is kind of like the setting for the food and the dishes to be laid upon and it's was attracts people to the table to come and eat the food and I made this table cloth because I wanted to take the mural that's on the wall and translate it from, like, this static thing that people can enjoy into something that can be used in a more wider context and in a more, or, like, various ways. Ok, that's it.



Abstract (how this paper is a table set for a meal)

This paper is the story of a community art project with the goal of thinking through the two questions: How can an understanding of land, specifically the colonial and indigenous histories layered within it, facilitate acknowledgement of the relationship of local and non-local food to food access efforts? How does acknowledgement of the roles of local and non-local food in food access efforts, facilitate understanding of times when it is productive to gather as a community? The text is organized as components of a set table: the table supports, the seats, the table top, the table cloth, the dishes, and the meal. The first two sections, the table supports and the seats, are broad discussions of non-local food and material. The middle section, the table top, is an exploration of in-betweenness and how it is realized through non-local entities, local entities, community, and land. This section distinguishes the two sections preceding it from the two sections following it. The table cloth and the dishes sections are specific to Bard campus and the surrounding area. They contain the story of a collaborative mural project and discussion of local materials. The epilogue, the meal, is an exploration of local foods and the food system at Bard. It concludes by circling back to all the previously mentioned topics, to tie them together.

Prologue (definition of food sovereignty, food security, and food access efforts)

The Vía Campesina created the term food sovereignty for the World Food Summit in 1996.¹ The group defines food sovereignty as: "...the right of each nation to maintain and develop its own capacity to produce its basic foods respecting cultural and productivity

¹ The Vía Campesina is an international peasant and farm movement which emerged in 1993 in response to attempted exclusion of farmworkers and farm owners from policy development and decision-making surrounding agriculture. The organization's purpose is defending peasant agriculture for food sovereignty.

diversity”.² Food sovereignty, looking at the way food is produced and distributed, lays the foundation for food security, the recognition of food as a basic right, which results in efforts to ensure everyone has access to food. Food security, “...exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food...”.³ Food security is only possible if food sovereignty has already been realized. An example of an organization adjacent to the Via Campesina, which is taking food sovereignty into account through its advocacy for farmworker rights is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers.⁴ Food access efforts originated with The Agricultural Act of 1949, which made commodities available for distribution to needy people through school lunch programs, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and public welfare organizations. This Act fell within same the range of time, 1942-1964, that the Bracero Program between the US and Mexico brought in more than 4 million Mexican farm laborers, allowing for continued mass production of food during World War II and beyond.^{5 6} This mass production of food resulted in food access efforts which is, “The mobilization of community resources to

² A-A Desmarais, “Peasants Speak - the Via Campesina: Consolidating an International Peasant Movement,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 29, no. 2 (2002): 104.

³ Definition of food security by the Food And Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at the 1996 and 2009 World food Summits. Quoted in Danielle Gallegos, Kai W Ong, Rebecca Ramsey, “Food insecurity: is it an issue among tertiary students?” *Higher Education* 67, no. 5 (May 2014): 497.

⁴ The **Coalition of Immokalee Workers** (CIW) is a worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in fighting human trafficking and gender-based violence at work. The CIW is also recognized for pioneering the design and development of the Worker-driven Social Responsibility paradigm, a worker-led, market-enforced approach to the protection of human rights in corporate supply chain. For more information please refer to: “About,” Coalition of Immokalee Workers, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://ciw-online.org/about/>.

⁵ Robert Longley, “The Bracero Program: When the U.S. Looked to Mexico for Labor,” ThoughtCo., updated May 9, 2021, <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-bracero-program-4175798>.

⁶ R. Pirog, C. Miller, L. Way, C. Hazekamp, and E. Kim, “The local food movement: setting the stage for good food,” MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, published May 2014, https://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/local_food_movement.pdf, Figure 1.

collect and redistribute ‘surplus’ food [food that cannot be sold through regular market channels] to feed the hungry”.⁷ Currently food access efforts are working towards food security and food sovereignty.

Discussion of food sovereignty and how it relates to food security and food access efforts is a foundational part of this project, which looks at both ends of the spectrum of food production in the US, industrial farms producing non-local foods and small-scale farms producing local foods. Community interaction and the histories layered within land, the other topics I explore later on in this writing, are interconnected with food sovereignty, food security, and food access efforts because the land is where the food is produced and community is what facilitates the distribution of food and the knowledge of how to produce food. However, to fully understand food access efforts, which will reinforce understanding of all the aforementioned topics, it is necessary that I dig into some non-local food.

Table Supports (the ground, the legs, and non-local food)

This section focuses on structures of support, using the function of table supports, both legs and the ground, or just the ground (in terms of a picnic blanket), as an example to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the non-local foods, which are currently integral to food access systems, and how these non-local foods have become the cornerstone of food access efforts. The question of non-local food and its role is the supporting material to this project because it lays the foundation for the later discussions, just as a table’s supports create a strong foundation for the table to exist upon. A table is supported from below and without a

⁷ Valerie Tarasuk, Joan M. Eakin, “Charitable food assistance as symbolic gesture: an ethnographic study of food banks in Ontario,” *Social Science and Medicine* 56, (2003): 1506.

sturdy foundation, a table collapses. I am constructing a basis for my thoughts about the histories layered within land, food access efforts, and community through my examination of why non-local foods are a foundation for food access efforts. My first exploration is the role of Dollar Generals and gas stations in perpetuating the sale of non-local foods through the industrialized national food system.

The food in a Dollar General or a gas station is anything but local. Items range from bags of chips to candy to cans of soup and there is nary a hint of a fresh fruit or vegetable anywhere, besides those depicted on packaging. People shop at these stores because they accept SNAP and EBT and if one lives in a rural area, are sometimes the only affordable option within a ten-mile radius. The lack of local and fresh food products in Dollar Generals and gas stations is a direct result of a capitalist world food system, where the ingredients themselves have become a fraction of the already low prices packaged foods are sold for.⁸ For example, wheat farmers are paid 25 cents for the grain in a 12 oz, \$3.50, box of cereal meaning that after the price of transport, processing, packaging, and retailing, a sizable profit goes to the corporation selling it. It is in this way of using branding to gain customer loyalty; sugar, salt, and fat to create addictive products; and exploitation of farmers and farmworkers to maintain an exponential profit margin that the foods found in a Dollar General or a gas station are directly linked to the corporate-ruled, anti-local, agricultural system.

Why do stores like Dollar General which sell only packaged, processed, and non-local food exist? It is because, “By turning everything it touches into commodities, biotechnology also

⁸ Albritton, Robert, “Between Obesity and Hunger”, in *Food and Culture Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterick (New York: Routledge, 2013), 344.

has the effect of making products and processes that fit more easily into the global market”.⁹ Meaning, these foods are easily marketed and sold to both national and international consumers. This non-local and industrially grown food is a product of biotechnology, hybridization, and genetic modification perpetuated by corporations. It is not only an issue of cheaply produced, unhealthy foods, but also the ways in which they are produced especially in terms of the how land and food production plants have been agglomerated and homogenized. The paper, “Where have all the packing plants gone? The New Meat Geography in Rural America” cited in *The Local Food Movement: Setting the Stage for Good Food*, states, “Consolidation [of production] and focus on efficiency, profit, and food safety regulation in food and meat processing, coupled with increasing size of operations, have made it harder for smaller farm and food businesses to compete”.¹⁰ This consolidation of production allowed for large-scale food operations to outcompete small farms, food businesses and grocery stores leaving both urban and rural low-income communities unable to access affordable fresh food. Corporations, such as Monsanto, are part of a long history of a transformed agricultural practice, from small household-owned farms to large agglomerated corporate controlled farms. Steven Stoll writes, “The brutality of enclosure will only cease when we cease to regard people and landscapes as instruments of wealth”.^{11 12} The term enclosure references the seizure of land from peasants, campesinos, and small-land-holders, an extractive practice which favored the consolidation of land into the hands of large

⁹ Vandana Shiva, *Seed Sovereignty, Food Security* (California:North Atlantic Books, 2016), 58.

¹⁰ R. Pirog, C. Miller, L. Way, C. Hazekamp, and E. Kim, “The local food movement: setting the stage for good food,” MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, published May 2014, https://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/local_food_movement.pdf, 2.

¹¹ An environmental historian who studies how people think about land and capital and extractive nature of “the economy” in ecological communities.

¹² Steven Stoll, *Ramp Hollow* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2017) 288.

agricultural companies. The historic winnowing of land into fewer hands has had a similar effect on the crops grown, a decrease in the diversity of crops grown through intentional hybridization and genetic modification of seeds.

A reduced variety of crops means a more homogenized food scape, so that mass production of certain crops means mass production of certain types of foods which contain those crops in their ingredient lists. These mass-produced foods, are the ones found in stores such as Dollar General and are widely prevalent in food access efforts. Because of the low cost of production of this food, it can be sold cheaply or given away while corporations justify their mass production as creating accessible food from agricultural practices which, "...[occur] in the context of a community and ought to be subject to that community's standards".¹³ The word community in this quote is defined by Monsanto Corporation and therefore, is much different from any definition any person who lives anywhere would have of how they interact with their neighbors and what the standards of their community are.¹⁴ Likewise, how they would define the types of foods they would consume if given a choice. People getting groceries from food pantries, as opposed to a Dollar General or gas station, have even less of a choice about what kind of food they are getting because they are limited to what is available and don't have enough privilege to be picky. The foods that are stocked in food pantries are a combination of government supplied foods, donations of extra stock that didn't sell from grocery stores or wholesale stores, and in some cases leftover local produce if the pantry is connected with local farms. These food items have mostly been mass produced within an industrial system and are

¹³ Shiva, *Seed Sovereignty, Food Security*, 48.

¹⁴ The worlds largest agricultural biotechnology company.

being posited as viable options when in reality they usually aren't because they are made with mass-produced foods, grown in poor soil, which have low nutritional values.

The customer shopping at a Dollar General or a gas station for groceries is neither to blame for the quality of food they are consuming, nor for any health problems consumption of this food may cause. The reason that these chains, such as Dollar Generals, exist as the sole grocery stores in many rural areas is directly related to the profitability of non-local foods within the wider scope of the country's homogenized and corporatized agricultural system. Likewise, "Market research [by the food industry] that concludes poor people 'prefer' Doritos and soda to organic lettuce allows the food industry to justify providing poor quality food in disadvantaged [areas]".¹⁵ It needs to be emphasized that food scarcity and ignorance about what foods are nutritious are not the real issues. Instead it is a lack of access to "healthy foods", which disproportionately effects the working class who don't have the time, energy, or financial resources to travel to the closest grocery store which is sometimes 30 minutes away in both rural and city settings. 61% of SNAP participants reported that the most common barrier to achieving a "healthy diet", was the affordability of "healthy food".¹⁶ Not to mention the fact that even if people have access to a grocery store, most of the food is also conventionally grown and shipped from far away. The corporate agricultural industry profits off scarcity mentalities which call for the production of more and more food, an excessive food supply which, "...has become a health

¹⁵ Alice Julier, "Between Obesity and Hunger," in *Food and Culture Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterick (New York: Routledge, 2013), 552.

¹⁶ For more information please refer to: "Barriers that Constrain the Adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Allotments," USDA Food and Nutrition Service, published June 2021, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/barriers-constrain-adequacy-snap-allotments>.

hazard for roughly half the world's people"¹⁷ because there is no emphasis on quality. In this scenario, like the customer, the non-local food is not to blame, it is the responsibility of the system through which it was produced. However, because these non-local foods are so prevalent, whether they are coming from from a grocery store, a Dollar General, a gas station or a food pantry, they are still feeding someone.

A big part of the reason corporate agriculture is so prevalent, despite widespread knowledge that it is not a sustainable, healthy, or viable practice is because at the end of the day it does provide food for people. The saying goes: beggars can't be choosers, and the industrial agricultural system relies on this mentality, which doesn't leave any room for questioning their practices. However, some people have found a way around relying on this industrialized agricultural system. An argument can be made that it is currently possible to feed everyone in the world with small-scale farms, as proven by the half a billion dozen small-scale farms currently doing just that, reported by the UN Environment Program.¹⁸ Not to mention that, "... more than 85 percent of the world's food is consumed in the country where it is grown..." and sold unofficially in the same region as production¹⁹. Since 2008, community food project programs, such as "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food", have been implemented by the USDA across the country which allows those eligible for SNAP and EBT to purchase foods and produce from farm-stands and farmers markets.²⁰ These programs have been big steps in opting out of solely

¹⁷ Shiva, *Seed Sovereignty, Food Security*, 5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ For more information please refer to: "SNAP Benefit Redemptions through Farmers and Farmers Markets Show Sharp Increase," USDA Food and Nutrition Service, published 2015, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2015/fns-0007-15>.

purchasing non-local foods by allowing everyone access to purchase local food items, , as well as de-stigmatizing the use of food stamps.

Sprouting Farms is part of the Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective (a food hub connecting 100+ farmers across West Virginia).^{21 22} The farm-stand at Sprouting Farms accepts SNAP and EBT and offers discounts which stretches SNAP and EBT dollars, meaning that people can buy more produce for less while using these programs. The integration of SNAP, EBT, and SNAP Stretch into the farm-stand has created a comfortable and affordable environment for customers using food stamps to shop.²³ The farm as a food producer, plays a major role in strengthening the local community with the availability of their produce at their farm stand and as an incubator farm and education site. Through their apprentice program, Sprouting Farms teaches locals how to farm by having them assist with production procedures on the farm, as well as giving them a high tunnel to grow their own vegetables and a spot on the online market place to sell their produce. Sprouting Farms is committed to reversing the extractive practices based in West Virginia through coal mining, pipelines, etc, by investing money back into the local economy. Likewise, they focus on tapping into the state's tradition of self-sufficiency and small-scale food production through their education programs. While industrial agriculture is the main agricultural practice in the US, many people in rural areas grow their own gardens and hunt their own meat and forage, practices which are supplemental but

²¹ For more information please refer to: "Home page," Sprouting Farms, accessed April 5, 2022, <https://www.sproutingfarms.org/>.

²² For more information please refer to: "Home Page," Turnrow Appalachian Farm Collective, accessed April 5, 2022, <http://www.turnrowfarms.org/about.html>.

²³ For more information please refer to: "How it works," SNAP Stretch, accessed April 25, 2022, <https://www.snapstretch.com/how-it-works>.

necessary in creating a hybridized diet of local and non-local foods when the closest grocery store is the aforementioned Dollar General or gas station.

It isn't realistic to get all the foods we may want locally. In places where there are seasons, during the winter many crops cannot be grown, limiting the variety of food available. It can be argued that the diets of people in those regions should shift during the different seasons, however it is tricky if one has dietary restrictions or allergies, or is an immigrant from a country where the cuisine doesn't include the produce grown in the winter. I'm not advocating for only eating local foods or only eating non-local foods but I am interested in understanding how they have become such a big part of the food system and food access efforts. I simply want to point out that there are more layers to consider about non-local food than solely its negative association with the industrial agricultural system because of the ways in which this food fills in the gaps which can't always be filled by local food. This multi-faceted discussion of non-local food builds an understanding of how these foods act as a support system for food access efforts and provides the beginning of a continued discussion about the role of the non-local.

The Seats (sitting and non-local materials)

This section is dedicated to understanding non-local materials, their faults, their advantages, and the ways we interact with them in our day to day lives. I chronicle the two events I held in the Fall semester; locally-sourced, communal meal and table building in Kline; floating table and sumac lemonade in the Bard pool; and explain how they resulted in an exploration of the non-local materials, vinyl and plywood, because I used these materials as tables, and have now recycled them to become seats. The purpose of this narrative is to reflect on

the story of the materials before they were used in this project, how they have been used in this project, and how they can be used past the conclusion of this project. Also, how these materials relate to our position within the Hudson River Valley: specifically the juxtaposition between these materials and the natural landscape. These seats are objects with which we interact, spaces where interact with others who are also sitting, and objects through which we are conveying our emotions and thoughts. They are a through-line of my thought process from the beginning of this project to the conclusion because, as relics of the first events I hosted, they represent the ideas about community, collaboration, and making a low environmental impact that were relevant from the beginning to the end of this project.

The original plan of this project was to have a series of events, each with its own associated multi-pieced table, where individuals from the Bard community would gather, choose the shape of the table, construct it with the pieces provided and engage in an activity, such as eating a meal or building bowls out of clay, in an effort to create spaces for members of the Bard community to converge. The project has since transformed to become a communal mural project painted outside of the on-campus food pantry located in Stevenson gym. The mural design, printed onto billboard fabric will be turned into a table when it is placed on the ground. Seats repurposed from the vinyl and the plywood of the previous tables will be pulled up to it. The mural table and the vinyl plywood seats are a juxtaposition of Western table traditions and non-Western table traditions, such as Japanese, Indian, African or Chinese traditions of sitting on the floor, and are mere symbols for any other table or set of chairs. This section is a guide for thinking about the origins of non-local materials that we interact with and how they can connect us to others.

First, I want to tell the stories of the non-local materials, the vinyl and the plywood and then the two previous events which were centered around these materials. The vinyl and plywood pieces serve as signifiers of these two previous events and table tops, and as is the nature of repurposed materials, they are being recycled again as seats. The vinyl is from Fabscrap, a textile recycling organization in NYC, and the plywood is repurposed scaffolding.²⁴ In 2018 the Environmental Protection Agency reported the generation of 292.4 million tons of waste in the US.²⁵ The mindless consumption taught through capitalism in the US is a great contributor to the immensity of this number. As Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing quotes in *Mushroom at the End of the World*, "... utopian imagination is trapped, like capitalism and industrialism and the human population, in a one-way figure consisting only of growth".²⁶ Tsing goes on to say that ending a story with decay doesn't leave any room for hope, instead she recommends finding hope through narratives of what emerges in damaged landscapes. Hope is realized through awareness of surroundings. In a conscious effort to be aware of what I am contributing to my surroundings, Bard college, through my artistic practice, a non-negotiable part of this project is to evade being a contributor to this year's waste statistic. The combination of the vinyl and plywood to make a set of chairs for the span of this project is part of this intent to reuse the materials, vinyl and plywood, that I had previously used in my project.

²⁴ A New York City based transparent recycling and reuse service for fabric, with the goal of ending commercial textile "waste" and maximizing the value of unused fabric. For more information please refer to: "Home page," Fab Scrap, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://fabscrap.org/>.

²⁵ "National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes, and Recycling," United States Environmental Protection Agency, last updated July 14, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>.

²⁶ Anna Tsing Lowenhaupt, *Mushroom at the End of the World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 17.

I chose the vinyl fabric from Fabscrap, because it is flexible while also being very structured.²⁷ I wanted to use recycled vinyl for this project because the US textile industry is, “... one of the biggest parts of the manufacturing industry” and also an industry where a large amount of the material being produced every years ends up in a landfill.^{28 29} The production of vinyl, similarly, is associated with, “... health related concerns for workers during the manufacturing phase of the products...” and “...environmental release of toxins during production”.³⁰ These downsides to vinyl are still embedded in the fabric, but by recycling this fabric extra harm was not committed. In terms of recyclability, vinyl is a much more durable material and can be recycled more easily than other fabrics, meaning that it also has a longer use potential. All of these factors, such as the disadvantages of manufacturing vinyl, the ethical implications of using vinyl, and its ability to be recycled easily are important to acknowledge when considering this material. While this vinyl does not directly relate to Bard’s natural landscape because it is industrially produced plastic, it will become another layer of Bard history in my mind and in the minds of those who participated in the event using it as a cloth table, which happened on November 5, 2021 in the Kline dining tent.³¹

²⁸ “Top Textile Manufacturing Companies in the USA,” Thomas A Xometry Company, last modified April 26, 2022, <https://www.thomasnet.com/articles/top-suppliers/textile-manufacturing-companies/>.

²⁹ The EPA reports that in 2018, 11.3 million tons out of the 17 million tons produced were sent to landfills. For more information please refer to: “Textiles: Material - Specific Data,” United States Environmental Protection Agency, last updated July 2, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/textiles-material-specific-data>.

³⁰ Sue Norman, “Vinyl in a nutshell,” *easy to be green*, published February 2008, <http://easytobegreen.com/Preview/vinylP.shtm>.

³¹ Unless you count the plastic pieces of trash which can be found around Bard’s natural spaces that I consider to be a part of the natural landscape.

The first people to arrive converge around the pot containing squash-apple soup sending up plumes of steam. A bowl containing, turnips, radishes, and apples glistening with oil and seasonings, a cast iron dutch oven over flowing with fragrant freshly baked bread, and there is a neat stack of 32 cloth table pieces each outfitted with four button holes and cloth buttons. We arrange and attach the pieces on the ground in a ring, serve ourselves food, sit, and talk. Each new arrival prompts a rearrangement of the table until it has expanded to include everyone present. On November 5, this table was presented in the Kline dining tent alongside a community meal hosted in collaboration with Bard Farm and Bard Eats. The ingredients were sourced from Bard Farm and Montgomery Place, the recipes were from the *Sioux Chef* cookbook and my grandma, Carol Sundberg, so that both indigenous and the farm's use of the land Bard resides on was acknowledged, as well as my own lineage, which is Scandinavian. This event was a meeting place for both students and faculty with the objective of creating a space for people to share a meal. In the following semester, I repurposed the vinyl table as the cushion of a seat filling it with polyfill and shoddy and stapling it to plywood.³²

The plywood I used is Baltic Birch, most likely harvested from trees in the Eastern European Baltic sea region, and a part of the \$4.5 billion worth of softwood the US imports every year.³³ ³⁴ There's a reason that the US imports a majority of our plywood every year, these imports can be explained in an economic sense as meeting the high demand for lumber.

³² Recycled mixed fiber stuffing.

³³ "All About Baltic Birch Plywood," Forest Plywood, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://forestplywood.com/blog/about-plywood/all-about-baltic-birch/>.

³⁴ For more information please refer to: Anderson, Nate, "Where did your house grow?" SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://www.esf.edu/pubprog/house/default.htm>.

Similarly, it can be explained in an environmentalist sense as an attempt to preserve the beauty of our natural landscape.³⁵ While non-local plywood isn't inherently good, as an import it is not directly impacting the natural landscape of where it is sold. In the landscapes where it is manufactured, though, plywood production has many impacts such as air, water, soil and noise pollution. Plywood had a, "...medium lifetime of 1-20 years...", and cannot be composted because it contains organic chemicals. It requires, "...specialised arrangements not available in normal waste management...", for its disposal.³⁶ There are clear benefits and disadvantages to the production and use of non-local plywood which are important to acknowledge. For this project, plywood was a readily available material which I was recycling from its previous use, as scaffolding, and therefore made the most sense as something for me to build with. This material, unlike the vinyl, has a clearer relationship to the natural landscape of Bard because it was cut from a tree, a prevalent aspect of Bard's natural landscape, and still resembles the wood it was constructed from. It is also a part of Bard's history, like the vinyl, because of its use as a floating table in the Bard pool on December 8, 2021.

Sun glints off the surface of the water, rocking gently as two women swim. We prop the pool door open to carry in 32 pieces of plywood, two cases of aluminum reusable water bottles, three house plants, two bottles of seltzer, and a large pot of sumac lemonade. We empty the 23 water from the aluminum bottles into the houseplants, to avoid wasting water, and fill them with

³⁵ Within the Hudson valley, there is an organization, Scenic Hudson, which is dedicated to preserving the nature of the area. For more information please refer to: "Home Page," Scenic Hudson, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://www.scenichudson.org/>.

³⁶ For more information please refer to: Plywood Indian, "Plywood, Plain Facts," blogspot, accessed February 28, 2022, <https://plywoodplainfacts.blogspot.com/p/environmental-issues.html>.

sumac lemonade spritzers.³⁷ We slip the plywood pieces into the pool and submerge our bodies among them. Once they are all placed we play, laugh, talk, sip, rearrange. The pieces are the tables and the chairs as we balance our drinks on some and sit on others. On December 8, the second event using the plywood table pieces, took place in the Bard pool, in collaboration with the Bard Swim Team, alongside a foraged sumac lemonade spritzer. This event was an exploration of a different element, water, with the idea of utilizing a new support for the table than that of the ground. Also, with the interest of seeing how participants interacted with a table in a non-conventional and slightly uncomfortable setting. It is a lot to ask of someone to get into a bathing suit and then a semi-warm pool in the middle of winter. This event was a learning moment in the progress of this project about what can be expected of the audience, that an audience cannot be expected to perform, and the variability of setting in the outcome of an art piece. It also was an exploration of plywood as a material which is very rigid but becomes more fluid once it is placed into water. The semester following this event, the plywood table pieces became the bases of the seats.

Seats, range between chairs, the floor, and facilitate different ways of sitting. I am specifically interested in how sitting down at a table or in a gathering invokes a sharing of the self with the others present. It is important to first understand the context of sitting and the moment in history when chairs were introduced as an alternative to sitting on the floor. Similarly, how some cultures have adopted chairs more readily than others.

Sitting on the floor of Thorne studio, I watch as Souleyman Bodolo, my African Dance teacher demonstrates the different ways of sitting to eat a meal, which he grew up practicing in

³⁷ foraged from Red Hook

Burkina Faso. His demonstration reiterates that using the floor as a seat continues to be an integral part of many cultures, as Witold Rybeznyski says close to a fourth of the world's population, "...[sit] crosslegged on the floor..." during rest or activity.³⁸ The alternative, the chair, evolved from the folding stool of the pharaonic age in Egypt and is now seen in the wide variety of chair designs today. The chair and sitting on the floor must be understood as parallel histories of resting, eating, communing, etc. While neither method is seemingly superior to the other, sitting on the ground and sitting on a chair, each carries its own cultural contexts. In the case of a chair, which aligns with Western "postural attributes", it is unclear what came first, supported sitting postures or sitting furniture.³⁹ In other words, it is unclear whether Western cultures first appropriated furniture designs or upright sitting postures from another country, such as China. Whereas, sitting on the floor is a common practice in Japan, Africa, Asia, etc and even appears in Eastern European folklore and myth through the figure of the polaznik, a divine guest and source of fertility for humans, livestock and fields. This folklore states that having a guest sit in one's house, "... will bind the guest to the house in which he was sitting".⁴⁰ While binding a guest to a space in which they sit, either in a chair or on the floor, seems very permanent, it speaks to the idea that our emotions extend to the objects and space around us around us.

The action of sitting is a commitment to the space of the gathering, even if not as a recurrent practice and only for one period of time, such as a meal. Just as Frederick Matthias Alexander said in "... observing his [own] body in motion...[he] uncovered his mind in action",

³⁸ Witold Rybeznyski, *Now I Sit Me Down* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 2016), 60.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 75.

⁴⁰ Veselin Cajkanovic, "Magical Sitting," *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 14 (Spring 1996).

sitting together can forge new thoughts and connections with others. The way we perceive is, "... not possible without sensate content... We pay attention because we become interested in our external surroundings or something we ourselves are doing as we move, work, play".^{41 42} As we sit, chairs become activated through our movements, as well as when a chair is pulled to the table at the beginning of the meal and pushed back at the end. The seats I designed to be used in my week of exhibition are made plywood and vinyl and rest on the floor. The low seat design, is intentional in the hope that those who sit on them will through close proximity feel a sense of connectedness to the land. I am invoking the Shakers' belief that 'beauty arises from practicality' and 'form follows function'.⁴³ In the case of this project, the functionality of a seat takes precedence over the beauty of its form and even the necessity of a uniform form. Places to sit are adaptable to multiple uses, meaning they also are mirrors upon which we, "...project our moods and personalities".⁴⁴ If the seat is thought of as a place to sit, an individual's commitment to sit there imbues how we are first contributing our personal histories to the material of the chair and then to others who are seated with us.

The seats I have constructed using vinyl and plywood are receptors of the personal histories of those who use them. I didn't use them in the first half of my week of exhibition, see the meal section for further explanation, because my plan was to play a collaborative game with them, which would visualize the role in community building and gathering, and

⁴¹ Missy Vineyard, *How You Stand, How You Move, How You Live: Learning the Alexander Technique to Explore Your Mind-Body Connection and Achieve Self-Mastery* (New York: Hachette Books, 2008), 12.

⁴² Sondra Fraleigh, "Why Consciousness Matters," in *Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations through Dance, Yoga, and Touch* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press), 4-5.

⁴³ Yoshimune Ishikawa, "The Three Phases in the Development of Shaker Furniture in America, Europe, and Japan," published May 19, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3833926>.

⁴⁴ Witold Rybeznyski, *Now I Sit Me Down* (New York: Firar, Straus, 2016), 35.

acknowledgement of location that I see them playing. The collaborative game was set up at my closing event, but required a large volume of people to be there all at once, which didn't happen because people were passing in and out. The seats themselves can be placed on the ground or in a chair for people to sit on and can be realized in many other uses, I spoke with the Wellness club, which will help me repurpose the seats for use on campus in community spaces. I have consciously left question of the role the seats I made play in facilitating community engagement undefined, because I see them as a continuing question for myself to explore beyond this project about the role of sitting in helping to locate oneself, uncover memory, and facilitate interaction. I want to apply this question in a broader scope to my artistic career and specifically to the community mural projects I will be facilitating in West Virginia this summer.

The Table Top (the in-between)

This section is the middle point of this narrative, just as the table top is the middle point between a place and a meal. It divides the broader discussions of the two sections preceding it, which address general ideas about non-local materials, community, and food access, and the two sections following it, which address local materials, communities, and food access specific to Bard College and the area surrounding. There are many in-betweens explored in this project, the in-between of table legs and the ground in supporting a table, the in-between of sitting in chairs and sitting on the floor, the in-between of individual and community, the in-between of local and non-local food, and the in-between of past and future uses of land. This section takes a different form than the previous and following sections; it is three close readings of quotes from *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Places* by John Logan and Harvey Molotch, *Beyond the*

Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice by Rupa Marya and Raj Patel, and *Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism* by Silvia Federici. The quotes I chose from these texts outline different viewpoints about the relationship between humans and land, in order to think through what it means to find a compromise between these viewpoints and how an understanding of existing in in-betweenness demonstrates interaction between self and place.

Logan and Moltoch's book *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Places*, is a sociological look at urban spaces. The quote I chose demonstrates the view of land being defined by the people who inhabit it and their social interactions.

We see that the attributes of place are achieved through social action rather than through the qualities inherent in a piece of land, and that places are defined through social relationships, not through nature, autonomous markets, or spatial geometry. Such factors as topography and mineral resources do matter, but they interact with social organization; the social and physical worlds mutually determine the reality of one another.⁴⁵

John Logan and Harvey Moltoch make a direct statement when they observe that the qualities of land arise from the social interaction that exists upon it. In the first line of this quote, the key words are place, social action, land, and social relationships, because they contain the meat of the argument, that the actions of humans determines whether or not a piece of land is significant. The line assumes that the reader has a clear definition of these key words, despite these words being very general and could be speaking of any place, any social action, any land,

⁴⁵ John Logan, Harvey Moltoch, "Places as Commodities," in *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*, (California: University of California Press, 1987), 45.

or any social relationships. However, the authors do specify that place is being thought of as a piece of land. It is clear that the emphasis is not on the land, but on what or who inhabits the land, which is specified to land inhabitants that can interact socially. The implication of this quote is that it is speaking about humans, when referring to social action of social relationships, because of the distinction between these interactions and nature. By precipitating that the relationship between humans and land is hierarchical, one can bestow attributes upon the other, Logan and Moltoch are distinguishing between the entity bestowing qualities and the entity giving qualities. The next line carries out this idea by highlighting features of land, but returning to the importance of social interaction. The aspects of land they do highlight, topography and mineral resources, are aspects which have been defined by humans as being useful, signifying a human-centric idea of the aforementioned terms. The discernment between social and physical worlds points to the human tendency to define and distinguish. In fact, all the significant terms in this text contribute to this characterization and categorization. By outlining these two land features, topography and mineral resources, which would be useful in evaluating the makeup of a piece of land, the mutual determination of reality between social and physical worlds takes on a commodity-based association with the assumption that humans have more power in determining land than land has in determining humans.

This next quote from an interview of Corrina Gould, a woman indigenous to East Oakland, CA, by Marya Rupa and Raj Patel in their book *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice*, which inspects colonial and capitalist influences in the medical industry and encourages a rethinking of these systems. This quote challenges the hierarchy of humans

over land by looking at the in-between of the relationship amongst humans and land, where humans and land have a collaborative relationship.

Sacred is about more than just sacred places and sacred sites. It is about who we are as human beings. It's the waters. It's the plant life. It's about being in a relationship again with everything that's alive.⁴⁶

Gould uses “sacred” as the first word to emphasize that the sacredness of land is the main point that they are making. The word sacred is transcendental and brings her discussion beyond the designation of places or sites. The first line goes above the physicality of the Earth, and the following three lines bring focus back to specifics of the Earth: human beings, waters, and plant life. These three specific aspects of the land, by being listed together, are connected, a connection that is reaffirmed by the use of “relationship” in the final line. Instead of defining the land with human-centric terms, Gould uses the divine to create connections between the inhabitants of the land. She, like Harvey and Moltoch, includes the reader in the mutual connection between land and life with the use of the word “we”. This line is the most specific of the quote because it is directed at the reader. Gould progresses from a generalized idea of the divine, to a specific definition including humans, the land, and water, and then returns to a more general idea of interaction with the inclusion of “everything that’s alive”. The generalized idea of the divine is the whole, and everything named after the sacred are its parts. The concluding line ties the individual parts back into the whole, “everything that’s alive” affirms that the afore-listed words are all living, which transcends colonial ideas of the land being less alive than human beings.

The word relationship indicates a mutualism between the Earth and its inhabitants. Instead of

⁴⁶ Rupa Marya, Raj Patel, *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2021), 186.

differentiating by defining sacredness as one specific idea, the quote uses its definition of the sacred to encompass all.

In contrast, this quote by Silvia Federici from her book *Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism*, which examines the transformation of the body into a work-machine and how the body can be conceived in the collective radical imagination, focuses on separation of our bodies from land.

What we have not always seen [from the birth of capitalism] is what the separation from land and nature has meant for our body, which has been pauperized and stripped of the powers that precapitalist populations attributed to it.⁴⁷

Federici specifies the “birth of capitalism” as the reason for separation between us and the natural world. She uses words with negative connotations, such as “separation”, “pauperized”, and “stripped”, as the basis of her argument, reflecting her disappointment at this “separation”. The beginning of the quote is not a direct statement because of the use of the word “always”, which diffuses the argument. However, the end of the quote is very certain in the ways that the body has been wronged by capitalism through its severance from the land. Federici does not depict humans influencing the land, nor a mutualist relationship with the land. She does depict pain at this definite distinction between land and body. She maintains the shroud of capitalism throughout beginning with blame directed towards the birth of capitalism and concluding with a definition of indigenous peoples that connects to capitalism through the word “precapitalist”. It is also very human-centric, leaving the defining of the land and the body to

⁴⁷ Silvia Federici, *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking, and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism* (New York: PM Press, 2020), 120.

humans. Federici's use of "attributed" is similar to Harvey and Molotch's use of "attributes". The word "attributed" demonstrates that the "precapitalist populations" had the agency to define how the body interacted with the land, which has been lost as capitalism perpetuates. Federici does not leave room for the divine in this argument, but looks at the present body through its past of fragmentation, which arises from the severing of the body from the land. This quote, like the previous two addresses the audience but less from the stance of a collective and more as an addressal of individual suffering through capitalism's grip. Federici's quote is in direct opposition to Logan and Molotch's stance, with Gould's quote falling somewhere in-between the two on the spectrum of ideas about self and land, which encompasses place.

Federici's quote is on the opposite end of the spectrum from Logan and Molotch's quote because instead of reveling in the interconnectedness of beings and land, she highlights separation between these two entities as the way deep rooted systems, like colonialism and capitalism, have redefined the relationship between the body and the land. Gould's quote sits in the middle of the spectrum because it argues that the relationship between all alive beings on Earth is transcendental of what can be defined by humans. The five authors implicate the reader and themselves as part of their argument by using pronouns, such as we, us, our, to make their statements. A wide array of viewpoints are made available, which surround the relationship between the self and the land and give an inclusive picture of what has been argued about this topic. I am most interested in the in-between approach, a way to accept that there is and will always be a connection between myself and the land, while acknowledging that many human-made systems, such as capitalism, have caused a major shift in how we interact with nature. Most of all, what I want to demonstrate with this discussion of the in-between is that there is no

one answer to any question. Space can always be created for a new thought, opinion, or demonstration. Every living entity on this planet, human beings, the water, plant life, the land is individual, but also a part of the whole that is the web of life. A major goal of this paper as a whole is to look specifically at pairings of ideas, like local food and non-local food, local materials and non-local materials, and the Bard community and the communities of the wider Hudson valley, which are polarized and find a collaboration, a mutualism, an in-between.

The Table Cloth (the Bard community and collaboration)

This section is about collaboration. It begins with the story of a community mural painted outside the Bard food pantry, located in the Stevenson Athletic Center at Bard college, which was the collaborative effort of 100 Bard students, faculty, staff, and community members from the wider Hudson valley. The process of painting the mural was like a quilting bee because all the individual contributions became a whole. Each person who participated painted a square, which fit together to create the design. This community mural was printed onto billboard fabric and turned into a table cloth/ picnic blanket to be used by the Bard community for meals, events, etc. This transformation of the mural into a table cloth reformats the piece into an object which can be used in the future. It is taking the mural, something that is site-specific, and transforming it into a table cloth which is dynamic because it can be used in a multitude of ways, table cloth, picnic blanket, or wall hanging. This section contains a discussion of a table cloth to understand collaboration among people and the relationship between the Bard community and the communities of the Hudson valley, specifically the ways in which we do or do not intersect, which spaces are communal and separate, and how we interact with each other.

The story of the mural starts on September 4, 2021 at Club Head day for the Fall semester when I heard that the Stevenson Athletic center wanted a mural to be painted on one of their walls. After a process spanning the entire Fall semester and half of the Spring semester, with many meetings, a budget proposal, a mural design, and two paint pickups, the mural was painted the week of March 28 - April 3, 2022. I picked the Dutchess County Loop-C bus line as the central focus of the mural, because this bus line is a public resource which runs from Tivoli to Poughkeepsie, through Bard College, and connects the towns in-between along the Hudson River.^{48 49} The Loop-C is accessible to both Bard students and community members and is a way for people to travel between these many places. The mural was painted in the hallway outside the food pantry and extends up the walls and across the ceiling of the hallway creating a colorful beacon. Within the hallway, the Loop-C bus line runs across the ceiling, while the walls on either side depict studies of the waters of the Hudson river and the land in this area. The black and white mural design was gridded off into 100 squares. As people were painting, they had to follow the shapes in their squares, but beyond that each person was allowed to add anything they wanted. This creative freedom was intentional so that the painting process was collaborative. Every person who participated in the project, chose to participate and had the choice of what to add into their square beyond the underlying framework. Each person translated a part of themselves and their personal history onto the wall because each square reflects the person who painted it through the content they included and the colors they used. This project gave a creative outlet to a broad array of expertise: people who don't have many opportunities to create

⁴⁸ For more information please refer to: "Dutchess County Public Transit Route C [map]," Dutchess County New York Department of Public Transportation, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.dutchessny.gov/Departments/Public-Transit/Docs/Public-Transit-Route-C.pdf>.

⁴⁹ In order: Tivoli, Annandale-on-Hudson, Red Hook, Rhinebeck, Staatsburg, Hyde Park, Poughkeepsie.

art, people who have never painted before, and people who make art all the time. It also provide opportunity for people who have never been in the Stevenson Athletic Center to experience a new space on campus and for those who use the gym to experience a familiar space in a new way. The experiences people had while participating in the mural is important to the project because it is a very successful example of community interaction both inside and outside of Bard, acknowledgement of Bard land, and celebration of the food pantry.

From speaking with Jacqueline Renaud-Rivera I learned that when attempting to engage with one's community, initiating conversation is an important first step.^{50 51} Without building a sense of care and comfortability with the people you are speaking to, it is hard for conversations to progress beyond surface-level. However, if one is able to speak with people about their interests or topics that are relevant in their lives, then these conversations can transition to discussions of how to enact change. The mural was my way of initiating a conversation with the Bard community and the communities of the wider Hudson valley about collaboration, creation, and acknowledging the shared space we occupy and what this shared space means for us as overlapping but separate communities. The site of the mural, Stevenson Athletic Center, is traditionally a space and resource used both by Bard students, faculty, and staff, and by community members and represents overlap between these communities. The location of the mural within Stevenson, the food pantry represents the separation of Bard from the outside community because it is a space and resource that exists in the outside community, in Red Hook,

⁵⁰ Jacqueline Renaud-Rivera, "Community Conversations with Peacemakers Event [conversation]," Pioneer Works, Red Hook, Brooklyn, Oct 10, 2021.

⁵¹ Program manager of Red Hook Community Justice, the nation's first multi-jurisdictional community court, which seeks to solve neighborhood problems is southwest Brooklyn. For more information please refer to: "Home Page," Red Hook Community Justice Center, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.courtinnovation.org/programs/red-hook-community-justice-center>.

but isn't necessarily accessible to students which is why Bard observed a need on campus and brought the pantry into fruition. The design, the Loop C bus line, is another symbol of a space and resource that is accessible to both the Bard community and communities of the surrounding area because it is a connector between campus and many towns along the Hudson river. By concentrating these spaces at the site of the mural project, acknowledgement is constructed of the overlaps and separations between these communities and the resources that are available specifically for certain communities and for all. I translated the mural into a table cloth to contribute more sites — adding complexity to the work. The table cloth is one of my artifacts, others include the seats and the dishes, that can be used past the finalization of my project.

I have put a lot of thought into collaborative art practices and a source that has helped me think through working with others as artistic practice is the RAQS media collective, an artist collective founded in 1992 in New Delhi which produces art, films, curates exhibitions, edits books, stages events, and collaborates with numerous thinkers and creators in a variety of fields.⁵² In their book *How To Be An Artist By Night*, they outline the idea of *riyaaz*, RAQS explanation of *riyaaz* #2, Unintended Consequences, is that, "... the circumference of a work is always larger than the boundedness of its nominated authorship. The work of art is never done, and so there is always room for another author. And then another. Contexts gather people".^{53 54}

This idea that the work of art extends before and after the intervention of the artist creates a new

⁵² Raqs is a Persian, Arabic, and Urdu word which can be translated as the state the "whirling dervishes" enter into when they whirl; it can also be used synonymously with dance or as an acronym for "rarely asked questions...!" "Home Page," RAQS Media Collective, accessed April 27, 2022, <https://www.raqsmediacollective.net/>.

⁵³ *Riyaaz* is defined by RAQS as the everyday cultivation of a set of attitudes or sensibilities as well as the honing of a skill.

⁵⁴ Raqs Media Collective, "How to be an Artist by Night," *Art School: (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 78.

perspective on the role of the artist in creating art. A perspective I think is very important because it dislocates the individual from the artwork in a way that leaves space for others to contribute thoughts, ideas, and new uses. This idea is interesting because in my senior project I have been thinking a lot about how the objects I have constructed for my project can be used without me.

My mom, Ann Sundberg, has been a huge inspiration in this thought process about the extension of art beyond the artist as an individual. She is in the process of finalizing an eighteen-year-long art project which began as boxed sets of artwork she made to process metaphysical experiences from her life. She then transformed this artwork into a deck of 78 cards and developed a participatory method of divination to engage with the audience that attended the performance curated by the Institute for Psychogeographic Adventure at the Ringling Museum.⁵⁵ Ultimately this deck of cards was developed into a board game called 78 Revolutions®.⁵⁶ My mom's work is a good example of the disconnection of an artist from a piece of work because through the transformation of her autobiographical art into a board game, she has successfully turned her art object, the deck of cards that could be configured into different schematics, into a participatory tool to give people a chance to share their stories and in the process of these conversations to question old ways of thinking and imagine new ways of being. The mural and printing it into a table cloth are my way of removing myself from the artwork because it is both a process of reducing site specificity and of leaving behind a participatory artifact which can

⁵⁵ For further information about the artist collective and performance please refer to: Philip Lederer, "Meet the Institute for Psychogeographic Adventure," SRQ Daily, published March 10, 2017, https://www.srqmagazine.com/srq-daily/2017-03-10/5862_Meet-the-Institute-for-Psychogeographic-Adventure.

⁵⁶ The game "78 revolutions" opens a space for conversations rooted in personal stories. Our stories are the building blocks of both our identity and our perception of the world around us. By discussing our experiences with each other, we construct meaning. This creative process is a tool to question old ways of thinking and rehearse new ways of being. Ann Sundberg, Description of 78 Revolutions, May 2, 2022.

continually be used and re-interpreted. This section of writing, and the writing as a whole, is documentation of my personal connection to the project, which is relevant now but may not be relevant in the future which I am at peace with.⁵⁷ While my intent is to encourage acknowledgement of interaction between the Bard community and the communities of the wider Hudson valley, specifically spaces or resources that are separate and shared, as well as jump start an ongoing collaborative process, starting with the mural and extending to the table cloth, once I leave Bard, the table cloth will take on uses of its own, depending on the ways in which people interpret and interact with them. The mural, will also be interpreted differently in the future because everyone will view it with different perspectives about its meaning and role in the space.

While the mural is an artifact of this project that has a fixed location, the table cloth is more dynamic and mobile; it can be used as a table cloth, a picnic blanket, or a wall hanging. As part of my week of exhibition, I moved the table cloth to different locations on Bard campus — the library, Kline, the Fisher Center, and one location off campus, the Red Hook Community center — to further extend the mural to a wider audience and create new interpretations and situational experience of the art, all while encouraging people to go look at the actual mural. In each space I placed the table cloth differently, I put it on tables in the library and in Kline, I hung it over a railing in the Fisher center and Campus center, and I displayed it on the stairs of the recreation room in the Red Hook Community center. I began my senior project knowing that I didn't want to make objects that were static, but instead objects that could engage people. The

⁵⁷ I recognize that this project is very personal to me. However, one of my main intentions is that the products of this project: the mural, the seats, the table cloth, and the dishes, can be reinterpreted and integrated into Bard or Red Hook community spaces for further use. My oral history artist statement and this writing are the documentation of my process and uses of these objects. This reinterpretation and integration does not include my involvement or the original uses of these objects and it is my hope that they can be as useful to others as they were useful to me.

table cloth is representative of setting a table, decorating a table, distinguishing a table, and inviting people to a table, all which can be collaborative or individual acts. This section embodies these symbols by asking the reader to consider how they perceive individuality and collaboration and how these perceptions can be used in future acts both individual and collaborative. The table cloth, comprised of individual squares, is a collection of many pieces that form a whole. The table cloth is an artifact of this process of gathering, creating, and collaborating, which has transformed the mural into an object for people to gather around which is more continuous because it can be used in an ongoing way at other tables, events, collaborations, and meals.

The Dishes (location and local materials)

This section discusses the final artifact of the project the dishes set upon the table, which are the vessels to serve the meal. To make the dishes, I hosted a campus community event on March 16 in Kline dining hall on Bard campus, where I brought clay I dug and processed from the Bard Farm. I provided elements of the Bard natural landscape, such as sticks, leaves, pinecones, or pieces of trash, for students, faculty, and staff to press into their dishes.⁵⁸ As people worked, I asked them if any memories of working with clay came to mind and invited them to share their memories with me and the other people working alongside them. I asked for memories associated with clay because I wanted to know how people relate to this material, and through that relationship create associations between memory and the land at Bard, where clay is

⁵⁸ As I was walking in the woods to gather the natural materials, I found a lot of trash and decided that the trash has become a part of the Bard natural landscape.

a very prevalent material. The purpose of this event was to give Bard students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to engage with the clay that is very local to Bard as a way to reflect about how we are interacting with land and how these interactions are both inspired by memory and inspire memories. Interacting with the clay, making a dish out of it that celebrates the natural landscape, and thinking about memories associated with clay, are all ways of realizing how the memories, the material, and the land are all interconnected and layered. This writing represents an exploration of the layers of history, embedded within Bard land and the role local materials play in the Bard natural landscape, as well as how these materials, when shaped into dishes, are a conduit for food, which when shared creates interpersonal connection.

I want to outline a brief history of the land at Bard college, its formation and its previous use to provide context for thinking about local materials, specifically those found at Bard college, and how the natural landscape can be acknowledged as a space embedded with many histories, which we presently are contributing our own histories to. This historical account of Bard College's land begins 1,300 million years ago with metamorphic rocks.⁵⁹ Metamorphic rocks form the basement of New York state and are a result of the middle Proterozoic Eon (1,300 - 800 Ma).⁶⁰ During the Cambrian period (543 - 490 Ma), The Hudson Valley region, then a continental shelf, accumulated sands, clays, and carbonate muds which resulted in the formation of sedimentary rocks, sandstone, shale, and limestone. The Silurian period (443 - 417 Ma) saw the building and erosion of the Taconic mountains. During the Triassic period (248 - 206 Ma), as Pangea began to split apart forming rift valleys, coarse terrestrial sediments containing oxidized

⁵⁹ Rocks which transform from one type of rock to another after being subjected to high heat, high pressure, hot mineral-rich fluids, or a combination of these factors. "What are metamorphic rocks?" USGS, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-are-metamorphic-rocks>.

⁶⁰ Ma refers to "million years ago".

iron washed into the rifts staining them red and forming redbeds. These redbeds can be witnessed along the Thruway between Suffern and the Tappan Zee bridge. The Pliocene period (1.8 Ma - 10 ka) saw the great ice age, which included four major glacial advancements and retreats, which were instrumental in carving out the Hudson valley. Finally during the Quaternary period (10 ka - present) glacial lakes were formed from the previous deglaciation. The glacial lakes formed clay deposits along the Hudson river.^{61 62}

The clay deposits provided material for people of the Munsee and Mohican tribes to make pottery, an example of an extensive tradition of items crafted from natural resources, such as furs, carved utensils and vessels, woven baskets, etc. The Munsee and Mohican tribes lived in the Mahicannituck valley, the land that is now Bard was formerly part of the two tribes' overlapping territories, without disruption until 1609 when, Dutchman, Henry Hudson began exploring the region and colonized it by imbuing his own name upon it.⁶³ Not long after, in 1614, the first Dutch trading post was established, "Thus began an infiltration of European culture that slowly eroded the cultural practices of the Mohican tribe".^{64 65} At the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War in 1783, which the Mohican and Munsee tribes fought in

⁶¹ ka refers to "thousand years ago"

⁶² For more information refer to: "A Brief Geologic History of the Hudson Valley," Columbia Edu, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/edu/k12/snapshotday/Geology%20Workshop/GeologicHistory.pdf>, 1.

⁶³ The two tribes became affiliated when the Mohicans began extending their territory along the Eastern seaboard

⁶⁴ For more information refer to: "Brief History," Stockbridge-Munsee Community, published 2021, <https://www.mohican.com/brief-history/>.

⁶⁵ The name given to the Hudson river by the Mohican and Munsee peoples. Mahicannituk is translated to: The Waters that Are Never Still. "Home Page," Forge Project, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://forgeproject.com/news/forge-project-launches-with-indigenous-fellowship-program>.

alongside the colonists, a large portion of Mohican and Munsee land had been encroached upon by white settlers, which was followed by a ruling in 1832, where Congress decided to enact President Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act. In the late 1800s, most of the Native Nations in the United States had been assigned reservations, the Mohican and Munsee reservation is located in Wisconsin. The land the Mohican and Munsee peoples were forced off of was extensively colonized by Dutch settlers, most of whom were likely slave owners.⁶⁶ Settlers, whose descendants were the old-money landowners⁶⁷ who built on the land or sold it to others to build structures, such as Bartlett, Blithewood, Ward Manor, and Sands still seen at Bard College today.

The rise of Romanticism at the end of the 18th century influenced the ways the educated elite, who were the main landowners in the Hudson Valley at the time, viewed the natural imagery of the area⁶⁸. The Hudson Valley School was America's first art movement and saw painters such as, Thomas Cole, Frederic Church, Asher Durand, Jasper Cropsey, and Sanford Gifford, paint monumental landscapes of the American wilderness. These landscapes were representative of the view of the natural scenery in America as a source of national identity and pride.⁶⁹ This very specific interpretation of the landscape created separation between the landowners and the land they were inhabiting and building upon because the aesthetic was

⁶⁶ In 1785, around 19,000 slaves were living in New York state. Renate Bartl, "*We People: Multi-Ethnic Indigenous Nations and Multi-Ethnic Groups Claiming Indian Ancestry in the Eastern United States*" (PhD diss., LMU München: Faculty for Languages and Literatures, 2018), 119.

⁶⁷ "Annandale-on-Hudson, NY," WikiMili, last updated November 20, 2021, https://wikimili.com/en/Annandale-on-Hudson,_New_York#History.

⁶⁸ For more information refer to: "Romanticism in the Hudson Valley," Stevenson Library Digital Commons, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://omekalib.bard.edu/exhibits/show/scenery/romanticism-hudson-valley>.

⁶⁹ For more information please refer to: "Hudson River School," Albany Institute of History & Art, accessed April 30, 2022, <https://www.albanyinstitute.org/hudson-river-school.html>.

centered on the visual interpretation of nature as opposed to direct engagement with it. The idea of constructing a narrative inspired by naturally occurring features and building monumental structures to embody these narratives is a very different interpretation and use of the land compared to that of the Munsee and Mohican tribes, who used the natural landscape as resources within their day to day lives. As Rupa Marya and Raj Patel write, “When Europe began its pillage of the Western Hemisphere in 1492, Indigenous cosmologies of reciprocity, relationships with and duties of care for water, land and living beings were uprooted, replaced with a worldview animated by domination, exploitation, and profit”.⁷⁰ The Romantic period and its colonial ideologies of nature, defined the basis for the way the natural imagery of the Hudson valley is viewed today, because of the continued presence of the aforementioned Romantic period buildings on Bard campus. The historic buildings at Bard, were built as monuments to reflect the aesthetic perception of the nature surrounding them. They highlight views of the Hudson river and the Catskill mountains as part of the structure, encouraging an appreciation of nature from afar because the Romantic idea of nature was for humans to appreciate it and invoke it, but not actually interact too intimately with it. A similar example of separation between natural landscape and building structure is John Cruger’s arrangement of Mayan architectural artifacts on Cruger island in an, “...archeological folly - a construction of stylistically vague archways that emulated ancient ruins - and thus [were] re-contextualized within the landscape of the Hudson valley”.⁷¹ The Mayan ruins, constructed from materials local to where they originated, were stolen from their natural landscape and used to build a structure entirely outside

⁷⁰ Rupa Marya, Raj Patel, *Inflamed: Deep Medicine and the Anatomy of Injustice* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2021), 15.

⁷¹ For more information please refer to: Paulina A. Fuentes, “Uxmal-on-Hudson,” (Center for Curatorial Studies Thesis Exhibition, April 2021), <https://ccs.bard.edu/museum/exhibitions/625-uxmal-on-hudson>.

of this landscape and outside of the context within which they were constructed. The false ruins remain of Cruger island as an existing example of their appropriation and re-contextualization. The false ruins join the Romanticism period buildings as existing artifacts of this continuing mindset about the nature of the Hudson Valley, as a way to acknowledge their history as significant to the land they are layered within but also as something that can be further re-contextualized through the present uses of these spaces by the college.

Present uses of Bard land are certainly more informed than its most recent colonial past. The resident archeologist at Bard, Chris Lindner, has done extensive research and taught classes about the history of Bard land. Patricia Kaishian, a mycologist, teaches a class about Hudson Valley natural history and leads foraging walks so students can become more in-tune with our environment. BardEats, the Environmental and Urban Studies department, the Studio Arts Department, and the Center for Curatorial Studies have hosted talks by indigenous speakers in order to create a more widespread acknowledgement of the historical past of Bard land among students, faculty, and staff.⁷² The Bard farm, the farm-stand, and the use of produce in Kline dining hall, is an effort to engage the campus with local foods and an understanding of the process necessary to grow these foods. Similarly, the Tivoli Bays hiking paths allow for members of the Bard community, as well as members of surrounding communities, to be immersed in the natural landscape.

Most Bard students, including myself, are not from this area and only reside on Bard land, and the land surrounding, for a fleeting four years. We are able to be on this land because of deep-rooted colonial control of land, however a preliminary step in acknowledging our position

⁷² For more information please visit: "Home Page," BardEats, accessed April 15, 2022, <https://www.bard.edu/bardeats/>.

is to engage with the natural landscape we are situated within. The use of Bard clay, a local material specific to campus, to make bowls which can be used by myself and the Bard community to nourish ourselves, is my way of using my senior project to encourage acknowledgement of positionality within the Hudson valley, both for myself and the Bard community. Although many members of the Bard community are non-local, we, through our residence on Bard land are inevitably contributing our personal histories to the land, as well as creating new histories specific to the campus and surrounding area. Engagement with the clay, recollection of memories tied to clay, and the sculpting of bowls by the participants of this event helped to position us in this environment and realize what we embed in the land. As contributors to the history of Bard land, it is our responsibility to live an informed existence in this area and reflect on how we fit into the ecosystems, both natural and manmade, Bard college, which are present.

Epilogue (the Bard College food system, the meal, and local food)

This section dives into local food, its benefits and its limitations, and seeks to understand the food access system on Bard campus between the Bard farm/ farm-stand, food pantry, and dining hall and how it is similar and different to food access systems off campus in the Hudson valley. I have laid out the table supports, seats, tabletop, tablecloth, and dishes of the previous five sections before us and would like to use this final section to serve a meal. This section aligns with two meals I served for my week of exhibition, April 16-23: one meal was cooked using ingredients from Kline and recipes from *My Food Stamps Cookbook: EBT priced radical nutrition*. I made a build-your-own salad, inspired by Rachel Bolden-Kramer's many salad

recipes, with celery, carrot, bell pepper, tomato, onion, and parsley-cilantro-lemon-garlic-eggplant dressing as possible toppings. I also cooked her “struggle potatoes” recipe: potatoes, bell peppers, and onions slow cooked with olive oil, salt, pepper, and Garam Masala (which I substituted for Curry Powder). The other meal was cooked using recipes inspired by *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen* and *Foraging & Feasting: A Field Guide And Wild Food Cookbook* from foods foraged on Bard campus.^{73 74 75} I made Sean Sherman’s “wild greens pesto” with garlic mustard, wild chives, ramps, catnip, dandelion greens and flowers, chickweed, almonds and olive oil. I was inspired by Diana Falconi’s ice cream recipes to make magnolia blossom sorbet sweetened with maple syrup from the Bard farm. I also had celery, carrots, peppers, and the salad dressing, to dip them in, from the first meal. I cooked these foods to explore the ways in which local and non-local foods from the food landscape of Bard college can be utilized and understood by the Bard community and applied to similar food landscapes of the wider Hudson Valley.⁷⁶ The first meal represents foods accessible to all through a government subsidized program, EBT, and the second meal represents foods accessible to all directly from the natural landscape. Both these meals were cooked with the knowledge that there can be an in-between of local and non-local foods that are accessible. I use this section as a way to understand how we, at

⁷³ Rachel Bolden-Kramer, *My Food Stamps Cookbook: EBT priced radical nutrition* (California: Hip Dharma, 2017).

⁷⁴ Sean Sherman, Beth Dooley, *The Sioux Chef’s Indigenous Kitchen* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

⁷⁵ Diana Falconi, *Foraging & Feasting: A Field Guide And Wild Food Cookbook* (New York: Botanical Arts Press LLC, 2013).

⁷⁶ A food landscape is the food available to be purchased and consumed in a specific area, it is characterized by both local foods grown in an area and non-local foods which are imported. Bard campus is an example of a food landscape that uses both local produce from the Bard Farm, when it is in season, and non-local food ordered from Red Barn, a food supply company in the dining hall.

Bard college, are supported by the land we live upon during the four to five years of our college careers and how this use of land is characterized by the foods accessible to our college's community.

The food pantry on campus is an integral part of Bard's food landscape because it supplements the food served in the dining hall; it is a resource for students to get extra food, snacks, and toiletries beyond the food offered through the meal plan. The food pantry, which is located in the Stevenson Athletic center, has a budget allocated through the Wellness Club on campus and uses it to buy items from Sams Club to stock the pantry, and occasionally receives supplemental items from the regional food bank and others from Red Hook Responds.^{77 78} The Center for Civic Engagement and Bard Farm are partners with Red Hook Responds. Students are also able to take one Bard Farm farm-stand voucher per visit to the food pantry to get fresh vegetables when the farm-stand is open, during the first half of the Fall semester. These vouchers are the only fresh produce available to students who visit the food pantry.

The food pantry in Red Hook has a slightly different approach to food access. It is run by Red Hook Responds — a local food exchange connecting food suppliers with non-profits to help feed people— and receives food from the regional food bank and donations from local businesses, including Bread Alone. It is also partnered with Four Corners Farm in Red Hook,

⁷⁷ The Bard Health and Wellness Education Department coordinates diverse opportunities for students to succeed, increase their health, and achieve balance while being in college and beyond. Wellness Education offers resources, education, support, and information to help students be resilient and create their best life. For more information please refer to: "Home Page," Bard Wellness, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://hcw.bard.edu/wellness/>.

⁷⁸ An organization local to Red Hook created to support the Red Hook local community by organizing volunteers and supporting resources to those in need. For more information please refer to: 1 "RHR Report," Red Hook Responds, published June 30, 2021, <https://redhookresponds.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RHR-Report.pdf>, 1.

which supplies fresh produce to the pantry. In 2020/2021, they distributed 7,001 items from the farm.⁷⁹ Other produce items are supplied through the Dutchess County headquarters of the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York, based in Poughkeepsie.⁸⁰ Owing to the fact that fresh items can only be picked up at the headquarters, these items appear infrequently in the pantry because it is farther to travel to them. In both cases, the local produce is more readily available to the people who visit these food pantries than non-local produce.

Outside the context of these two food pantries, local food is promoted extensively throughout the Hudson Valley because of the prevalence of farmers markets and farm stands. The abundant farms in this region supply the food for the markets and stands. The US Congress in the 2008 Food, Conservation, and Energy Act defines local food as food which is produced within less than 400 miles or in the State from where it is sold.⁸¹ Philip Ackerman-Leist challenges this assertion by asking how one defines “local food”?⁸² ⁸³ He goes on to say, “The ultimate goal [in thinking about the role of local foods in our daily lives and our communities] is for us as individuals and as communities to think more complexly about community-based food *systems*”.⁸⁴ This idea of community-based food systems extends beyond the food itself to

⁷⁹ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁰ The only organization of its kind in northeastern New York, which was started in 1982 and collects large donations of food from the food industry and distributes it to charitable agencies serving hungry and disadvantaged people in 23 counties.

⁸¹ Steve Martinez, et. all, “Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues,” *USDA Economic Research Service*, Economic Research Report, no. 97, May 2010.

⁸² A professor at Green Mountain College, whose work centers on examining and reshaping local and regional food systems.

⁸³ Philip Ackerman-Leist, *Rebuilding the foodshed: how to create local, sustainable, and secure food systems* (Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2013), 49.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 51.

include thought of where the food is produced, how it is produced, to whom it is being distributed, when it is being distributed, why community plays a role in this production and distribution, and what the role of food is in facilitating community. The abundance of local food in the Hudson Valley is an indicator of the beginning steps of community-based food systems because it emphasizes the awareness people have about the food they are consuming, where it is coming from and a desire for it to be produced ethically and sustainably. A 2018 survey of 1,009 Americans, ages 18 to 80, found that 60 percent of participants considered it important that the food they purchase or consume is produced in a sustainable manner.⁸⁵ Local food is a very relevant topic in our time because of a shifting in consciousness, amongst those who want to be aware of where their food is coming from, about our long history with corporate-run industrial agricultural operations.

However, while local foods are heralded by the US Local Food Movement, The Kellogg Foundation, and The National Good Food Network as “good foods” because they are fresher, closer to a farmer who is also your friend, or at least within a 400 mile radius, and aren’t processed through the machines of corporations, their conflation with “the ethical consumer” allows the capitalist food systems implemented by corporate agriculture to remain in place.⁸⁶ The idea of the ethical consumer is “...organized around the idea that shopping, and particularly food shopping, is a way to create progressive social change”.⁸⁷ The rallying cry by the USDA, co-ops,

⁸⁵ Michael Carolan, *A Decent Meal* (California: Stanford University Press, 2021), 12.

⁸⁶ R. Pirog, C. Miller, L. Way, C. Hazekamp, and E. Kim, “The local food movement: setting the stage for good food,” MSU Center for Regional Food Systems, published May 2014, https://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/local_food_movement.pdf, Figure 1.

⁸⁷ Josée Johnston, “The citizen-consumer hybrid: ideological tensions and the case of Whole Foods Market,” *Theory and Society* 37, no. 3 (June 2008): 229.

farmer's markets, small farms, and environmental activists, to eat local has reinforced the idea that by consuming local products, one can do their due diligence to save the planet without even leaving the comfortable ten-mile radius of their community. It is my argument that the perpetuation of the term 'local food', and the association that someone who buys 'local food' cares about their farmers, their communities, and their planet is tied up far too neatly with a bow. The reality is that while local, small-scale farm operations are doing a lot of good by providing people with nutritious food that they can happily consume, they are ultimately a green washed extension of capitalist roots. Michael Mikulak puts it eloquently when he states, "Local food, whether seen as... 'edible patriotism,' or in the form of local economic development, agrotourism, or farmer's markets, is popular precisely because it works so well within the logic of capitalism".⁸⁸ This string of thought is not meant to dissuade anyone from buying local or to invalidate the efforts of countless farmers across the US to provide their communities with small-scale sourced produce. Instead, it intends to understand to understand the full scope of what it means to eat local food by shedding a light on contexts other than those most widely portrayed.

As I apply these thoughts about the pros and cons of local food back to the food access system at Bard college, an important aspect to consider is scale, specifically the difference between the ease of a household purchasing local foods as opposed to an institution. The Bard undergraduate student population is 2,465 students, around 85% of which live on campus and eat at the dining facilities on campus. The Bard Farm supplies more than 20,000 lbs of produce every year, approximately 70% of the total produce harvest is given to Kline to cook for the students each year. The other 30% of the produce is used to stock the Bard farm-stand and any

⁸⁸ Michael Mikulak, *The Politics of the Pantry*, Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 14

left-over produce from the farm-stand is given to Kline each week. Any produce which is served in the dining hall and not sourced from the Bard farm, instead, Parkhurst orders from Red Barn Produce.⁸⁹ ⁹⁰ To give an idea of the ratio of Bard Farm produce to produce sourced from the surrounding Hudson Valley and beyond: during the winter, Parkhurst spent \$25,439 on Bard Farm produce, \$288 on Montgomery Place apples and \$102,428 on Red Barn Produce products.⁹¹ The scale of the campus farm production does not match the scale of what the dining services provides for students, and the farm is only in production from late spring to mid-fall, which is why Parkhurst orders from an outside source. This look into where the produce served on Bard campus is sourced from is indicative of a food system which combines local and non-local foods. The land of the Bard farm is a resource which supplies the dining hall and is supplemented with food distributed from a Hudson Valley supplier to make fresh produce accessible to the students of Bard college. Ackerman- Leist says, “Food and energy are virtually synonymous”,⁹² the food supplied, eaten, and digested creates the energy to communicate and connect as a community. This energy, which has circulated through the Bard food system fuels my artistic practice.

I began this project to think about food access. I ended this project with a greater understanding of my situation on the land of Annandale-on-Hudson, how the food system at Bard operates, and how the campus community interacts with the communities of the wider

⁸⁹ For more information on Bard’s dining service please refer to: “Home Page,” Parkhurst Dining, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.parkhurstdining.com/>.

⁹⁰ A wholesale food distributor in Ulster County, NY. For more information please refer to: “Home Page,” Red Barn Produce, accessed April 14, 2022, <https://www.redbarnproduceny.com/>.

⁹¹ Parkhurst Spending Report, 2020.

⁹² Philip Ackerman-Leist, *Rebuilding the foodshed: how to create local, sustainable, and secure food systems* (Vermont: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2013), 123.

Hudson Valley. The art projects described by this writing were all steps along the way to apply what I was researching to my artistic practice. My interest in understanding the history of the land Bard resides on tied into questions of what materials, non-local and local, I was using to make the seats and bowls, which as objects, contribute to the landscape. My interest in food access translated into the mural project, and resulting tablecloth, which emphasize the pantry, acknowledgement of the natural landscape of the campus, and the Loop-C bus route. The meals I served on the tablecloth with food cooked with ingredients from Kline and foraged ingredients, demonstrated ways to cook with accessible foods, which can be found at Bard, and contributed to the recognition that both local and non-local foods play significant roles in food access efforts. My strive to understand the overlaps and separation within the Bard community itself and between the Bard community and the communities of the surrounding area meant including local community members in the mural project, and curating the student athlete art show in the Stevenson Athletic Center to showcase the duality of student athletes who also make artwork. Finding duality between local and non-local, the food system at Bard and the food systems of the wider Hudson Valley, and the interactions of our communities, was the main motivation of this project, which began with a table and ended with a meal.

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