



AMERICAN  
VISIONARY  
ART MUSEUM  
FOOD / YUMMM!  
22



## FRONT COVER: ARTIST GIL BATLE AND OSTRICH EGG. PHOTO BY NILO BATLE

THE SAME ARTISTIC SKILLS THAT PUT **GIL BATLE** IN PRISON MAY HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE BEHIND BARS. BATLE'S INTRICATE FORGERIES LANDED HIM MORE THAN TWO DECADES IN CALIFORNIA PRISONS, INCLUDING SAN QUENTIN, AFTER SUBSTANCE ABUSE CAUSED HIM TO LOSE HIS JOB, FAMILY, AND CONTROL OF HIS LIFE. "I HAD TO CREATE A WAY OF MAKING MONEY, LITERALLY," HE HAS SAID OF THAT PERIOD. "I WAS MAKING MY OWN TRAVELER'S CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS, FAKE IDS AND EVEN CREDIT CARDS. IN A TWISTED WAY, I SAW IT AS ART."

IN JAIL, BATLE TRANSLATED HIS DRAFTING ABILITIES INTO TATTOOS, PORTRAITS, AND GREETING CARDS FOR FELLOW PRISONERS, WHO, IN RETURN, PROTECTED HIM. "THE PRISON ARTIST WAS A COMMODITY," NOTES BATLE. "HE WAS LIKE A MAGICIAN. EVEN THE TOUGHEST CONVICTS WERE IN AWE AT THE ARTIST'S SKILLS. I WAS THAT COMMODITY." STILL, THAT DIDN'T SHIELD HIM FROM WITNESSING NUMEROUS BEATINGS, STABBINGS, AND RIOTS AND EXPERIENCING, FIRSTHAND, THE PAIN AND SUFFERING OF PRISON LIFE. AFTER SERVING HIS TIME, BATLE MOVED TO THE PHILIPPINES THREE YEARS AGO. THERE, A FRIEND GIFTED HIM A HOLLOWED-OUT OSTRICH EGG, ON WHICH HE FELT COMPELLED TO DEPICT WHAT HE'D SEEN IN PRISON. THE SHELL PROVED SURPRISINGLY STURDY. BATLE, USING A DENTAL DRILL, CARVED METICULOUS SCENES AND INTRICATE DESIGNS INTO ITS SURFACE AND WENT ON TO CREATE NEARLY TWO DOZEN IN ALL. EACH PIECE TAKES HIM ABOUT A MONTH TO CREATE. "I ACTUALLY HAVE TO GO BACK MENTALLY TO PRISON TO CAPTURE THAT FEEL OF BEING INSIDE THAT PLACE," HE SAYS. "IT'S A RELIEF OF GRATITUDE WHEN I LOOK UP FROM THE EGG, AND I'M REMINDED THAT I'M NOT IN THERE ANYMORE."

## THE YUMMM! ARTISTS & FILMMAKERS

**ARTISTS** BOB ADAMS • MANUEL PIÑÓN ALAMILLO • RAMÓN ALEJANDRO • GIL BATLE • JOE BELLO • WENDY BRACKMAN • JEAN-MARC BRUGEILLES • JIM BUHLER • JENNY CAMPBELL • ZANE CAMPBELL • LORING CORNISH • WAYNE COYNE • SAM DROEGE • JOHN ROOT HOPKINS • JOHN KREIDER • PATTY KUZBIDA • JOHN LURIE • MARGARET MUNZ-LOSCH • CRAIG R. NORTON • JILL ORLOV • JOAQUÍN J. POMES • MARY PROCTOR • CHRIS ROBERTS-ANTIEAU • WILL SHANKLIN • PAMELA SMITH • TOM STECK • BERNARD STIEGLER • JUDY TALLWING • CHRISTIAN TWAMLEY • RUBY C. WILLIAMS • PAUL VILJA • JOHN RAYMOND PEPER • WOMEN OF YORK • EDWARD WOLTEMADE, JR. • NANEZBAH (NORA) YAZZIE • **FILMMAKERS** SUGARMAN: BOBBY ADAMS • ZOE MURPHY • STEVE WALKER • LORRIE WALKER ONE PLASTIC BEACH: JUDITH SELBY LANG • RICHARD LANG CAFETERIA MAN: RICHARD CHISOLM • SHEILA KINKADE • DAVID GROSSBACH FOOD PYRAMID: BERNARD STIEGLER • FOOD INC.: ROBERT KENNER • FRAGILE: NILO BATLE

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Open 6 days per week; closed Mondays\*  
10am–6pm Tuesday–Sunday  
Closed: Christmas and Thanksgiving  
\*Open Monday, January 16, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. FREE.

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See WEBSITE: [www.avam.org](http://www.avam.org) for current prices and special discounted group rates.

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### INFORMATION

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LEVEL 1 MAIN BUILDING.  
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Partnering with local ranchers, farmers and watermen, ENCANTADA offers Modern American food using the freshest seasonal products daily. The style of cooking reflects today's sensibility to a 21st century diet, offering more vegetables, grains and fruits in a "starring role."  
All of the animal proteins are carefully chosen, selecting those who have been raised humanely with a GMO free diet, and the seafood reflects what is available locally from some of the best fisherman on the East Coast.  
LEVEL 3, THE MAIN BUILDING  
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NESTLED AT THE BASE OF FEDERAL HILL, American Visionary Art Museum is the perfect spot for small or large events. Weddings, corporate events, bar/bat mitzvahs, holiday parties—you name it!




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# THE HISTORY, FANTASY **YUMMM!** *and* FUTURE OF FOOD

‘THERE IS NO LOVE SINCERER THAN LOVE OF FOOD.’ —GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

## WELCOME DEVOTEES OF DELICIOUSNESS!

 You are now our guests at a visual feast featuring the works of 35 visionary artists in a combo platter with insights from farmers, scientists, environmental activists, moms, poets, and humorists to publicly explore humankind’s complex, multi-layered relationship with food.

Betty Fussell, in her book, *My Kitchen Wars*, put it plainly, “Food, far more than sex, is the great leveler. Just as every king, prophet, warrior, and saint has a mother, so every Napoleon, every Einstein, every Jesus has to eat.”

Every year, our American Visionary Art Museum playfully explores one very serious and timely subject worthy of your focused attention. Most of us have pretty complicated relationships with food, its impact on our health, our memories, and even our budget. Conversely, each of us impacts food, too. Author/farmer activist, Wendell Berry reminds us, “How we eat determines, to a considerable extent, how the world is used.”

Be it sculptures entirely made from marshmallow Peeps, carved burnt toast, or a life-sized Gummy Candy self-portrait, our wide selection of art, film, and food research has been lovingly served up to enlighten, spice and fortify your own personal relationship to food.

YEAR	TOTAL
1800. . . . .	1.0 BILLION
1900.. . . .	1.6 BILLION
2000. . . . .	6.1 BILLION
NOW. . . . .	7.4 BILLION
2050. . . . .	9.5 BILLION

The biggest food story of all is well-evidenced in this Earth population chart (*left*). Best projections indicate in three short decades we will attain a record population of around 9.5 billion—that’s a whole lot of hungry mouths to feed! The visionary and compassionate thinking required to meet this challenge has no precedent. Therefore, we look to the food wisdom of our past and the flights of new possibility that food fantasy permits, to arrive

at a happier, healthier, and kinder food future here on earth.

With hearty delight, *Yummm!* introduces my mentored, first-time guest co-curator, John Lewis. Together, with all our Museum’s Board, staff, and volunteers, we invite you to help toast our American Visionary Art Museum’s 21st Anniversary as a national museum unlike any other. With the wit of famed imbibor, W.C. Fields, let us now ask, “Why limit happy to an hour?” **NUNC EST BIBENDUM!**

Rebecca Alban Hoffberger,  
AVAM Founder/Director



Curators'



RAMON ALEJANDRO, 'L' ORIGINE', 2004. Oil on canvas, commissioned for Rich Shapero's ISLAND FRUIT REMEDY. Courtesy of Rich Shapero. Photo Dan Meyers

REBECCA ALBAN HOFFBERGER & JOHN LEWIS, CO-CURATORS

# notebook



# MOTHERS MILK

## FIRST FOOD

Breast feeding releases oxytocin, calming moms and babies.

Breast feeding saves as much as \$4,000 annually in formula cost, daily burns as many calories as a 7-mile run.

Nursing moms have far less breast and ovarian cancer, heart disease, and osteoporosis later in life

Human milk composition is closest to donkey and mare's milk, *not* cow's.

Mom's milk fights viral, bacterial and parasitic infection and has even been used on wounds.

Breastfed kids grow to have less diabetes, leukemia, asthma, tooth decay and obesity and may even gain up to 8 IQ points.



## FOOD FOR LIFE

Everything that lives—people, plants, animals, birds, fish, insects, even microbial life—“eats” something to sustain its life. Food can be electrons, sunlight, peanut butter, worms, seeds, or other animals. The great satirist Ambrose Bierce put it best in his 1906 humorous work, *The Cynic's Word Book*, later re-titled, *The Devil's Dictionary*:

**Edible**, adj.: *Good to eat, and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.*



**ABUNDANCIA!** So much of what we eat today was wholly unknown to Europeans until after their arrival in North and South America. These New World edible treasures have since revolutionized world cuisine. They include: corn, potato, tomato, bell pepper, chili pepper, vanilla, tobacco, beans, pumpkin, cassava root, avocado, peanut, cashew, pineapple, blueberry, sunflower, wild rice, cacao (chocolate), and squash.

**AMERICANS ARE CORN-FED.** Corn has become so embedded in the U.S. food chain and household products that its distinct carbon footprint turns up in everything from disposable diapers to one-quarter of all supermarket foods. Today, an analysis of an average American's hair protein would reveal that we consume much more corn and corn derivatives than our neighbors in Mexico, where tortillas are a food staple but diets are actually far more healthfully varied!

**"ONLY WHEN THE LAST TREE HAS DIED, THE LAST RIVER POISONED, AND THE LAST FISH CAUGHT  
WILL WE REALIZE WE CANNOT EAT MONEY."—CREE INDIAN PROVERB**

# GLOBAL WARMING

## IMPACT ON FOOD

**IN 136 YEARS OF MODERN RECORD KEEPING, JULY 2016 SET GLOBAL HEAT RECORDS,** surpassing only last July, 2015 for the hottest month ever recorded. May 2016 was the 13th consecutive warmest May on record. Temperatures in Kuwait and Iraq hit a record of 129, with a life-threatening heat index of 164. Scientists now believe that much of the Middle East and parts of Africa will be uninhabitable before the end of this century. The global heating of earth and sea will escalate incidence of violent storms, sea rise, cooling of Gulf Stream from glacier melt, and create radical, climate change. Climate greatly affects our human ability to cultivate food. Great cities of the past have been abandoned when water and food could not sustain their populations. The rapid trajectory of broad geographic climate change will further add to the number of refugees that will flee their home countries in the effort to sustain their lives.

**FOOD & CLIMATE** Food production is greatly influenced by the dance of weather, soil quality, seed stock integrity, and the devotion and know how of the cultivator. Rapid snow cap melt will likely alter the Gulf Stream's ability to effectively heat northern Europe, reducing crop yield and resulting in places like the United Kingdom and Norway losing the window of their viable growing season. Changes in seawater salinity will also threaten ocean fish populations. Within this century,



areas of the Middle East are projected to be uninhabitable after recording the hottest temperatures on earth the last three years in a row.

Global warming causes wild temperature swings, producing both record heat and record cold. The last 13 years have seen the hottest overall mean earth temperatures since modern records have been kept (1880). Each successive year has broken the heat record set by the previous year. The current rate of desertification reduces 25,000+ square acres of farmland

to un-plantable dust each year. Climate change, poor land and water management, and continued bee colony collapse are forces of nature that together will greatly impact our ability to feed the planet's population, just at the time when our numbers will be greater than ever before. This challenge to meet our future food needs equitably and healthfully, while avoiding food and water wars, will require our best visionary minds and the triumph of our most noble, non-exploitative natures.





# MARYLAND & THE GLOBAL BEE CRISIS

## THERE ARE 430+ SPECIES OF MARYLAND BEES.

Bees are known as the “angels of agriculture.” They pollinate 71 of our world’s top 100 food crops. Last year, Maryland beekeepers lost 61% of their hives, the year prior to that nearly 50%—a die-off rate twice the national average. Globally, bees are dying off in record numbers. Responsibly, in 2016, Maryland became the first US state to pass the most hopeful law to curtail domestic use of neonicotinoid pesticides in a sincere effort to protect its star pollinators. Passage of this legislation was in large part due to hero bee activists like Bonnie Raindrop and researcher/author/activist/bee photographer Sam Droege, whose extraordinary bee photographs are shared here.

**BEE PHOTOGRAPH: SAM DROEGE**—profoundest thanks for the importance and beauty of his life’s work.

## KEY BEE FACTS

- Honeybees will fly over 55,000 miles and visit 2 million flowers just to make 1 pound of honey.
- One worker bee will make 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey over its lifetime.
- Out of 20,000 species of bees, only four make honey.
- Kept in sealed, air and moisture tight containers, honey is a miracle food that can uniquely remain edible over thousands of years. The honey found sealed in Egyptian King Tut’s ancient tomb could be safely eaten today.
- Honey has effectively been used to kill many forms of bacteria, even acting as a teenager’s best friend to deeply cleanse skin pores of acne.
- If you enjoy fruits and vegetables, a glass of wine, or even like wearing cotton, you need to work to protect and support our pollinators, chief among them: bees, butterflies, birds (especially hummingbirds), ants, and bats. You can plant bee-friendly flowers, not be so fast to cut down flowering weeds, and stop treating your garden or lawn with chemicals and pesticides that have been implicated in bee kill-offs.



**"AN ARMY MARCHES ON ITS STOMACH."—NAPOLEON BONAPARTE**



JOHN LURIE. THANKSGIVING HAS BEEN CANCELED. BEST WISHES. THE NATIVE AMERICANS, 2008. ink and oil pastel on paper, courtesy of the artist. Photo Dan Meyers

## FOOD AS WEAPON OF WAR

**"THEY TRIED TO BURY US. THEY DIDN'T KNOW WE WERE SEEDS."—MEXICAN PROVERB**

**TODAY, MUCH AS IN BIBLICAL TIMES, STARVATION AND ENFORCED EMBARGO** of food, medicine, and other basic goods essential to life continue to be wielded as a strategy of war. These cruel tactics target civilian families, as well as soldiers. In 2016, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad intensified his program, "starve or kneel," to force towns that had dared oppose his regime into total submission. Any attempt to flee made by desperately hungry citizens was met with arrest or immediate execution. Despite widely accepted international accord that specifically condemns the use of forced starvation in any conflict, this extreme form of hardship continues, mirroring infamous past tragedies in Biafra, Leningrad, and during our own U.S. Civil War.

IF YOU LOOK THE RIGHT WAY YOU CAN SEE THAT THE WHOLE WORLD IS A GARDEN. -FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT



NOTHING IS MORE COMPLETELY THE CHILD OF ART THAN A GARDEN. -SIR WALTER SCOTT



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**Fifi!** the Pink Poodle is an icon of American Visionary Art Museum's annual **KINETIC SCULPTURE RACE**. Made with over 1500 yards of pink tulle and retrofitted with a recumbent bicycle, inflatable pontoons, and a strong cycling team, Fifi participates in this annual event of creative sport and artistic engineering. Part Huck Finn, part Rube Goldberg, with a dash of Amelia Earhart, the Kinetic Sculpture Race promotes creative thinking and grassroots ingenuity. The Race clearly supports AVAM's educational mission to uncover, encourage, and empower ordinary (actually, extraordinary) amateurs and skilled engineers, adventurers, and problem-solvers who will create imaginative, 100% human-powered works of art designed to travel 15 miles on land, through mud and sand, and over deep Baltimore Inner Harbor waters. The Kinetic Sculpture Race takes place each year on the first Saturday of May. When she's not racing, Fifi is on view in the museum's Jim Rouse Visionary Center. For more info about the race: [www.kineticbaltimore.com](http://www.kineticbaltimore.com).

**FREE! 10am–2pm.** Now an AVAM holiday tradition for friends and families—making your own sock monkey! A great last minute gift and more importantly a day of creative family fun. **FREE**, but you must bring 2 pairs of (clean) socks and your own scissors to get in! Instructions, stuffing, needles, thread, visionary baubles, and camaraderie provided.

**FREE! Outdoor family films on Federal Hill screened under AVAM's Golden Hand at The Hughes Family Outdoor Movie Theater. Museum is open & free 5-9 pm on flicks nights with pre-flicks activities!**

AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM extends sincerest thanks to all—individuals, foundations, and corporations—who have made generous financial and in-kind contributions throughout the year. Kindness, innovation, sharing new creative visions, and harmoniously connecting across creative disciplines and cultures . . . all of it would be diminished without the security of continued stabilizing commitment of many! Contributed funds enable AVAM to maintain and grow our exhibitions and programming for visitors from around the world.

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Assorted paintings  
Courtesy of Tom Hall and Linell Smith  
Courtesy of Bobby Savinis  
Courtesy of Holly Urritia



GIL BATLE, 50/51 DREAMS, carved ostrich eggshell, 2015, private collection courtesy of the Ricco Maresca Gallery

A BOX WITHOUT HINGES, KEY OR LID, YET GOLDEN TREASURE INSIDE IS HID.

-J.R.R. TOLKIEN, THE HOBBIT