

Bobrikova & de Carmen

1 July to 27 August 2017
Agrikultura Triennial, Hyllie, Malmö

OUTSIDER



AGRIKULTURA TRIENNIAL

1 July – 27 August 2017

Agrikultura was an exhibition of public artworks, installations, meals, performances, urban interventions, and events that took place outdoors on 8 hectares of the future “English Park” in Hyllie, Malmö, in July/August 2017.

Unlike a conventional exhibition, Agrikultura did not take place indoors, but rather installations, land art projects, performances, mobile kitchens, formal and informal gatherings took place in fields and in public space. The work range from a robot that grows hedgerows as a large landscape “painting”, to a floating food forest; from participatory performances that imagine the future of our food systems to projection mapping projects that re-imagine agricultural landscapes; from bioremediation gardens, to hybridized fruit trees that grow stone fruit that blossom in variegated tones, bear a multitude of fruit, and preserve heirloom varieties that are no longer commercially available.

A key goal for Agrikultura is to imagine sustainable solutions to food in cities. It explored permacultural solutions - systems of agricultural and social design principles centered on simulating or utilizing patterns and features observed in Swedish ecosystems. Artists worked with city gardeners, youth groups, and citizens to reimagine urban landscapes taking into account ecological design and engineering, integrated water resource management, and sustainable landscape design to develop regenerative and self-maintaining habitats.

Agrikultura was organized by Kulturföreningen Triennial, and curated by Marek Walczak and Amanda McDonald Crowley.

Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen

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Causes & Consequences

The signs of gentrification should now be easily recognizable to any artist who has lived or worked in one of the now many “resurgent” cities of Europe and the Americas in recent years; the signs are recognizable in the photos of glossy travel magazines beneath headlines of “renaissance” or “revival”. They’re recognizable in the condo conversions of former studio buildings (or should I say former industrial buildings?). They’re recognizable in the price list at the local coffee shop. But more common than anything, they’re apparent in the changing faces of the people that inhabit one particular building, neighborhood, or borough.

Artists should be familiar with these signifiers because we, and the institutions we populate, are part of their definition. Although gentrification is directly driven by capital, culture—and more specifically the arts—is one of the most common catalysts for the gentrification process, due to its history of attracting what Richard Florida defined as the “Creative Class.”

With *Outsider*, a site-specific intervention as part of Malmö’s 2017 Agrikultura Triennial, the collective Bobrikova and de Carmen reconsider this artist-as-catalyst role by taking advantage of their insider status as a cultural producer in order to call into question the gentrifying effects of the future construction of the English Park on Malmö’s heavily immigrant-populated Hyllie district. There is much divisive discussion surrounding the economic consequences of urban gentrification. This familiarity allows Bobrikova and de Carmen to not even mention the word and yet their project is steeped in the subject, albeit via a proxy discussion about its consequences on botanical life.

The type of eco-gentrification at play in Malmö is a common, historic occurrence in cities: parks are created, surrounding land values increase, and pre-existing local populations are forced out, by pressures both social and economic. Sometimes eco-gentrification takes an opposite form in later stages: empty lots in disinvested neighborhoods are turned into thriving community green spaces, only to be reclaimed by the same cities and landowners those greening communities had compensated for through many lean years.

Outsider consists of a literal inhabiting of the landscape among more than two dozen other artistic interventions in order to create a platform designed

for humans, plants and other species to engage in a “discussion” around the processes and ethics of displacement as they relate to interspecies relationships, and specifically the rights of plants. Here the action of human gentrification is ironically repurposed as a tool to question botanical displacement and segregation in urban areas, appropriating a rustic man made shelter to serve as a meeting place for the coexistence and confluence of visitors and Triennial artists, who found there a place to meet and develop community. During its duration it was common to find fellow artists, visitors, or organizers gathering to share a meal, a drink, to dance or just to share their experiences about what it was a surviving exercise of the arts.

Outsider's shelter called back to humans' first futile attempts at permanency, a rupture, an irreversible change and occupation of the landscape. And though it's function was more symbolic, it likewise built community out of a more primal need, as visitors and artist were forced within it by the weather of southern Sweden, not your usual environment for the consumption of the arts.

But as humans were housed beneath its roof out of necessity, *Outsider* was also serving as a mirror to reflect the parallelism between plants and humans designated as undesirable, as well as the desired ones in controlled/ gentrified areas. Hydrangeas as Starbucks. In the horticultural sphere, parks and gardens are perhaps the most comparable exercise of gentrification, preparing the land to meet the perfect conditions for a predetermined list of plants that are mostly inutile but beautiful and resilient.

In human society, gentrifying neighborhoods quickly go from undesirable to essential, a reflection of changing land and cultural values. But, what about the inhabitants of those spaces? Just like undesirable plants pruned away from a park or garden, human residents seem to quickly metamorph from ignored (purposefully or not) background scenery to weedy obstructions that need to be cast out. But of course those outsiders—the poor, the immigrants, or even the artists—still need to participate in the system to survive.

Outsider forces us to think one step ahead, to consider the consequence has its own cause, its own impact. While plants, community members and artists sheltered under a common roof, meanwhile a plague of rabbits literally invaded on the land of the future English Park and it's mowed fields soon devoid of biodiversity. Hopefully both the human and botanical community built by Martinka and Oscar in summer 2017 is more resilient.

Juanli Carrión
Summer 2018













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Martinka Bobrikova & Oscar de Carmen have been working together as an artistic duo since 2005. They have participated in several residencies such as Sweet Home / Hablar en Art in Madrid, Arctic Art Institute in Arkhangelsk, Seoul Art Space_Geumcheon, HomeBase Saitama, KulturKontakt Austria, Nida art Colony or MeetFactory. Their works have been presented in venues and projects such as Galerie 35M2 in Prague, Oksasenkatu 11 in Helsinki and Galleri BOA in Oslo (2018), Gallery RAM in Oslo, 5th Odessa Biennale, Fotogalleriet in Oslo, Agrikultura Triennial in Malmo, Seoul Art Space Geumcheon (2017); the Saitama Triennial, Nitra Gallery, Akershus Kunstnersenter, Tranzit.sk (2016); 2nd Tbilisi Triennial, Prague Quadrennial, Babel Art Space, Entrance Gallery (2015); Centre Contemporary Art in Singapore, Høstutstillingen, Kunstnerneshus, ANX/ Atelier Nord, Skånes Konstforening, City Gallery Bratislava (2014); Karlin Studio, Rake (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art Roskilde, KURANT, (2012); Singuhr (2011); Center of Contemporary Art-Tbilisi, Röda Sten, City Museum of Gothenburg, Space Gallery (2010).



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