

Hey, everyone. This is Asunción Molinos Gordo, and for me, it's a real pleasure to take part in the program, On The Table, following the invitation by Emily Garner. The menu I am proposing for the fifth iteration of On The Table is based on an art project that I did back in 2019, beginning of 2020, called In Transit-- Botany of a Journey. The project took place in the city of Dubai at Jameel Arts Centre, following Antonia Carver and Dawn Ross invitation to the Sina garden at their premises, as part of their Artist's Garden program.

The project I have proposed was a site-specific installation consisting of a garden grown from the seeds that have traveled inside the intestines of Dubai's diverse population. In the process of eating, we are swallowing the seeds containing the raw veggies and fruits. Most of the seeds are capable of surviving the process of human digestion, and they leave our bodies almost intact. In this manner, human feces can be considered some form of seed vessels.

Back in 2019 in pre-pandemic times, Dubai airport was the busiest airport in the world, connecting East and West, offering an extraordinary array of flight connections and transiting options. Those passengers then use the toilet facilities, left a sample of the food they ate at the countries of origin, and the seeds contained in those foods travel in their feces. In my attempt to create a garden from the seeds that survive the digestive system, it was very important to have access to the broader food habits and geographies.

Therefore, to have access to the airport is large, as well as this large coming from Dubai residential area, was an amazing opportunity to explore the global food intake and the seeds diversity contained in it. Thanks to the support of Dubai's municipality we got granted access to a local treatment plant, which serves the airport and the city residents. The mechanics were pretty straightforward. With the help of the treatment plant experts, we collected 2 cubic meters of solid sludge and brought it outside the city into an experimental farm called Al-Zahra Farm.

We place the solid sludge inside one of the farm's greenhouses on the soil, along six irrigation lines, and we water it frequently for 15 consecutive days until the seeds start germinating. Very soon, the brown mother turned completely green. Thousands and thousands of plants were growing from this sludge. With the support of Nadine El Khoury, assistant curator of the project, we found Kumar Palanisamy, a plant expert from India who helped us identify all the seedlings

All kinds of food plants were growing from this sludge. we had tomatoes, cucumber, courgette, pumpkin, mustard, pepper, chilis, amaranth, citrus, pomegranate, sunflower, among many others. A selection of those plants were brought into the garden premises at Jameel Arts Center and were cultivated in a terraced garden using companion planting techniques, until we managed to harvest the crops of all of those plants. The project main idea was to prove that we, the people, are literally seed dispersers, and our guts are gateways for other lifeforms to travel throughout the planet.

In this manner, the garden materializes on the infinite connections between humans and other plant species. And it aims to decentralize the place that humans occupy within terrestrial dynamics. In Transit: Botany of a Journey, It's a project conceived to reflect on ideas of globality, interconnectivity, mobility, cohabitation, and survival.

Now my question to you is, would you like to imagine what kind of food garden could grow from the seeds contained in your gut? Then join us in this imagination exercise, through which we are going to envision the ingredients of your personal excreted menu. Feel free to start with the suggested prompts.