

# In Context:public.art.ecology - Food Edition I

residency and exhibition at Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (India) – march/april 2012







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While food composed the central theme of Caretto and Spagna's project only one dimension of their multifaceted work related to its consumption. Instead, materials as cow dung, gold, silver, water, "super-grains", soap and a street vendor's cart became the ingredients of their concept, each representing a separate experience relating to food in a broader sense. These materials were transformed into individual art pieces which were utilized together in two public interventions. Caretto and Spagna's project illustrated the complex interrelations between people, materials, organisms, ecosystems and society, pulling together all of the themes of the residency in a wonderfully understated way.

Caretto and Spagna's vending cart became the stage for their project, serving as menagerie to their crafted objects, mediator of commerce, and centrepiece to their performance. It also played into the social realities of street vendors by becoming like them, however, the individualisation of their cart made gesture to the fact that they were playful visitors in a world that they ultimately would not become a part of. The objects that Caretto and Spagna crafted included:

- Cow dung casts of their bodies - in India, the valued commodity of cow dung is used as a cleaning agent<sup>2</sup>, fuel for cooking fires, a building material and soil fertiliser (among other uses).

- "Silver Soap" –hand made soap with Neem Oil and real Silver Flakes, reference to the edible silver used in Indian sweets as well as the necessity for habitual hand-washing (silver has antiseptic properties)

- "Golden Laddu", gold-plated super-grains sweets- reference to the wealth of varieties of grains available in India which are little-known in other parts of the world, as well as to the edible gold used in Indian sweets.

The use of pure gold and silver was also a way for giving back these metals to the earth (in reference with the performance Zone de Sensibilité Picturale Immatérielle of Yves Klein) though the bodies of people.

- "Questions to the Yamuna River" - Drawings, dye on paper - highlighted the importance of the river in social and ecological systems by engaging it as a living organism. The 'conversation' began by clearing a passageway through the waste that encrusts the river's banks in order to scatter organic dyes over the water. Questions were then asked to the river, such as "What is most disturbing for you amongst all that floats over the surface of your water?" They then harvested the dyes patterns, which floated a reply, on sheets of paper.

These crafted objects were then placed into the cart and wheeled into a nearby street market where the artists engaged the public by bartering their artworks in exchange for fruits and vegetables. On the night of the exhibition the cart was placed into KHOJ's central courtyard where Caretto and Spagna transformed the food items that they had acquired from the trade of their artwork into a meal which was served to guests ...

Ryan Bromley

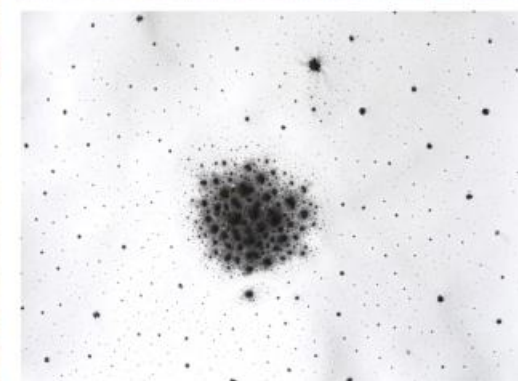
*top* > view of the exhibition

*center left* > Golden Laddu, 2012 - production of typical indian sweets (laddu), made with popped amaranth and sugar cane, covered with real gold leaves

*bottom left* > Silver Soap, 2012, production of soaps made with Neem Oil and real Silver Flakes

*bottom right* > Cow dung Bodies, 2012, we used cow dung as sculptural raw matter for making reproductions of parts of our bodies (face, shoulder, feet, etc.).



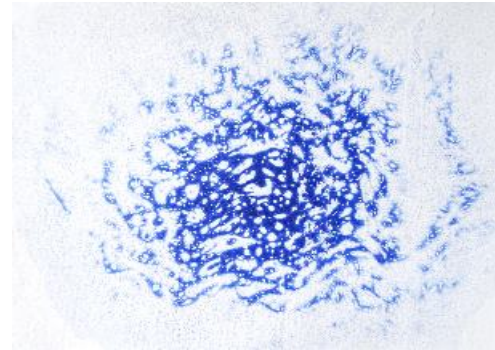
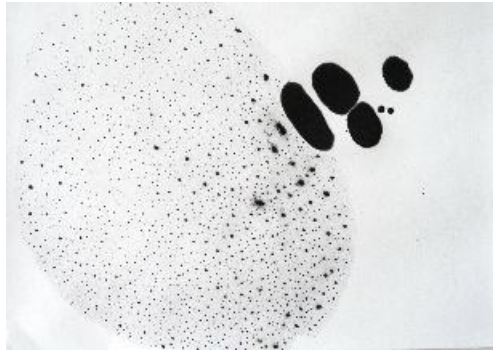
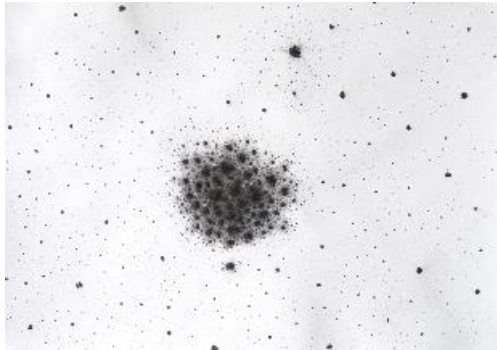


Questions to the Yamuna River, 2012 - Performance on the occasion of «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition I», artist residency and exhibition at Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (India)

Performance that took place along the Yamuna river in New Delhi, one of the most polluted river in the world. During the performance we asked 42 questions to the river pouring, for each question, a spoon of natural pigments mixed with essential oils and linseed oil. With the floating color technique we produced 42 drawings, made by the river, that corresponded to the answers to our questions.







Some of the 42 drawings from the series Questions to the Yamuna River, 2012 deriving from the performance on the Yamuna River on the occasion of «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition I», artist residency and exhibition at Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (India)



Questions to the Yamuna River, 2012 - Performance on the Yamuna river on the occasion of «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition I», artist residency and exhibition at Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (India)





Cow dung Bodies, 2012, *cow dung*,  
We used cow dung as sculptural raw matter for making reproductions of parts of our bodies (face, shoulder, feet, etc.).





Delhi Hand Cart, 2012, performance in the streets of New Delhi, on the occasion of «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition I», artist residency and exhibition at Khoj International Artists' Association, New Delhi (India).

We bought and modified an hand cart, and then we used it in the street of Delhi to barter the artworks we produced during the residency with food (fruits and vegetable). On the night of the opening the cart was placed into KHOJ's central courtyard and we transformed the food items that we had acquired from the trade of our artwork into a meal which was served to guests.



Delhi Hand Cart, 2012, performance in the streets of New Delhi, on the occasion of «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition I»  
One of the drawing from the series «Question to the Yamuna river» bartered with food in the streets of New Delhi.











Delhi Hand Cart, 2012, performance in the Khoj courtyard, on the occasion of the opening «In Context: public.art.ecology - Food Edition»

On the night of the opening of the exhibition the cart we used it in the street of Delhi to barter the artworks we produced during the residency with food (fruits and vegetable) was placed into KHOJ's central courtyard. There, we transformed the food items that we had acquired from the trade of our artwork into a meal which was served to guests.