

# Buttery Spread

**CURATED BY EMMA HONCHARSKI AND CHAS WAGNER**  
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**Brew House Arts Staff:**

Natalie Sweet, *Executive Director*

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**About Brew House Arts:**

Brew House Arts (BHA) is a non-profit art center that provides creative space and support for people to connect and expand their relationship with the arts. Founded in the early 1990s in the former Duquesne Brewing Company facility by a community of artists committed to social awareness, BHA carries these ideals forward in its programming today. BHA helps artists grow professionally and creatively by connecting them to audiences, professional resources, and other arts organizations throughout the region and beyond. Housed in a 14,000 sq. ft. facility, BHA has the space, elements, and tools to support the imaginative work of a wide spectrum of creatives. [Brewhousearts.org](http://Brewhousearts.org)

*Buttery Spread* was produced through the Prospectus program of BHA, which provides emerging curators with the support necessary to bring their curatorial visions to life. To learn more visit [brewhousearts.org/prospectus](http://brewhousearts.org/prospectus)

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Gallery guide edited and designed by  
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Prospectus 2023

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# Buttery Spread

**WE WANT TO INVITE YOU IN; WE WANT YOU TO GET COMFORTABLE; WE WANT YOU TO MELT INTO THE SPACE.**

The artists and authors in *Buttery Spread* use food as a starting point, in one way or another. They explore form and materiality, pleasure, craft, labor, identity, desire, wonder, queerness, and our relationships to the earth and each other. Many of these pieces present evolving disciplines and share how what we consume is a part of what we create.

In the reading room, you'll find publications that are creative in their approach to presenting food. These artists' books, zines, magazines, and alternatively published printed materials expand the functional notion of a cookbook or recipe book. A book about walking, shoemaking, and bread making; a collection of writing and art on agriculture, the earth, and queerness; a zine published in the depths of COVID on the illicit exchange of toilet paper for dried beans, posh chocolate for home-made hand sanitizer, and other non-market-based transactions centered on the human experience.

At present, there is no space in Pittsburgh where these publications would find a home, all together. What does it mean for these pieces to occupy a single place? How can we engage with and occupy gallery spaces alternatively? How can we learn to stay a while?

The visual art in *Buttery Spread* presents familiar food objects with a playful twist, a sense of whimsy. A fish sandwich takes a fantastical shape, an ear of corn becomes a boat, potatoes are presented in all of their holiness. We want you to remain curious.

**FOOD AND BOOKS NOURISH  
US WITH NUTRITION AND  
KNOWLEDGE, GIVING US ACCESS  
TO NEW EXPERIENCES AND  
STORIES. LIKE A LONG DINING  
TABLE AT A POTLUCK, THIS  
ARRAY OF PUBLICATIONS AND  
ARTWORKS CREATES A SPREAD  
THAT IS ENTICING, INSPIRING,  
AND SUSTAINING.**



*Fruits, Vania Evangelique, 2023*





Self Portrait as Sinless Spuds, Rosabel Rosalind, 2019



# MEET THE CURATORS

*Buttery Spread* was curated by Emma Honcharski and Chas Wagner, who first connected in September 2022 when Chas invited Emma to speak on behalf of *Dinner Bell Mag* for a speaker series he created through his project Print Party. They stayed in touch over a shared interest in independent and artist publishing, and a desire for non-digital spaces that foster connection over printed material in Pittsburgh. After a few conversations about creating an art book fair in Pittsburgh, they connected with Caroline Kern, Mary Tremonte, and Jacquelyn Johnson, and the team of five organized the inaugural Pittsburgh Art Book Fair at Carnegie Museum of Art in September 2023. They are the first collaborative duo to participate in the Prospectus Residency.

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**EMMA HONCHARSKI** is an artist, writer, and media strategist from Ossining, New York, and has lived in Pittsburgh since 2014. She has collaboratively published a food writing and art publication (*Dinner Bell Mag*) since 2019, and is a co-director for the Pittsburgh Art Book Fair. Currently, Emma is the Engagement Manager at NEXTPittsburgh and Executive Assistant at Benci Productions. She joined the board of Bunker Projects in 2023. She is also working towards an MBA and MA in Food Studies at Chatham University with a thesis project focused on alternative spaces for food and togetherness.

**CHAS WAGNER** is a curator and community organizer living in the North Hills of Pittsburgh. In 2020 he started The Print Party—a curatorial platform for independent magazines, showcasing titles across sport, design, art, and fashion. He is involved in work with local organizations such as PA Master Naturalist of Allegheny County, East End Food Co-Op, Tissue Farm, Pittsburgh Bibliophiles, and Bike Pittsburgh, and he is a founder of the Allegheny Sport & Outdoor Film Festival and co-director of the Pittsburgh Art Book Fair. His projects gravitate toward large community gatherings inspired by his time living in Boston, Brooklyn, and Upstate New York.



SALSA

by the seasons

LA  
CREATIVITY

SALSA





Snack Landscape, Gabrielle (Gabe) Wolfe



*Radish Jogakbo (small)*, Jennifer Shin (above) & *I Like it Here Better*, Book Series, Lauren McCoy, 2023 (p.13)

# SAVORING RECIPROCITY

EMMA HONCHARSKI

Consider the reciprocity of fungi delivering nutrients to soil and that soil becoming a home for plants to take root, or pollinators fertilizing flowers and those flowers bearing fruit and seeds. Consider what these relationships and systems make possible through their collaborations. Consider the many hands that our food passes through before it reaches us.

Now consider sharing a book with a friend, sharing a meal with a neighbor, sharing an experience with whomever is in this room with you right now.

Food can provide a sense of belonging, an entry point into new relationships, a connection to powers greater than us. Food is a way that I find narrative structure in my daily life, a way to see the threads that run through us all.

With food as a subject and a medium, less context is needed to

make sense of what we're seeing and sensing. The entry point of understanding shifts and questions of meaning-making can come from a shared place of knowing. For example, Sarah LaPonte's *Corn Boat* is a boat that looks like an ear of corn. This playfulness and whimsy creates clarity that can lower apprehensions about engaging with a piece of art. With *Corn Boat*, LaPonte creates something that makes people stop and wonder, disrupting space the way performance art might, without requiring active engagement. (LaPonte has also created a baked potato boat and a lobster boat, but neither were seaworthy.)

The romance, magic, and harsh realities of the restaurant industry come up in much of LaPonte's work, offering outsiders new ways in and insiders new ways through. Her work in the reading room reminds me of how friendship manifests

itself through writing, and how our practices are a part of our lived experiences.

All of our experiences of eating are possible because of a long chain of labor, almost always underpaid and incredibly skilled. May all of the time we spend engaging with art and media about food bring us closer to an understanding of the people who do this work, the immediacy of the climate crisis, the ways we are all harmed by late stage capitalism, and the ways we can eat with intention. May we be kind to all service workers and buy food from our neighbors instead of Jeff Bezos, whenever possible.

Labor is also present in Steph Neary's work, which connects us through time and space to women's work and crafts of the past. Her pieces bring folkloric magic to the space with storytelling through soft sculpture. Using reclaimed materials, she bridges fine art and craftwork to share a playful world with us.

Neary is the director of VaultArt Studio, a progressive art studio and project of Achieva, which advocates for, empowers, and supports people with disabilities and their families throughout their lives. Neary's own art practice is separate from her work with VaultArt, as was the curatorial decision to include work from artists that use that studio. Still, this connectivity shows how systems of artists come together to create the show as we experience it.

*Buttery Spread* features a bounty of artists' books and publications, objects that don't always find a home in gallery shows. Believing in the

power of printed material means creating space for artists' books in galleries as a way to continue legitimizing this art form as its own medium. Accessible in function, form, and price, the artist book is a primary practice for many artists and a way for a greater number of people to engage with their work. I'm interested in engaging with galleries as third places, the way we spend time in public libraries or glorify European-style cafes. Who inhabits galleries comfortably, and how can we explore new ways to engage with artists' many offerings? Incorporating books into gallery shows means seeing writers as artists and artists as writers, and recognizing the full range of ecosystems present in our practices.

A few months before the Pittsburgh Art Book Fair (which Chas and I co-directed, along with Caroline Kern, Mary Tremonte, and Jacquelyn Johnson), Pat McArdle, a local art collector, showed me one of his recent acquisitions: a book with the pages painted shut, which

he had purchased from Lauren McCoy, also an artist at Pittsburgh's VaultArt Studio. McCoy's

series of painted-shut books present a different mode of storytelling than the rest of the publications in the reading room. These works can shift our perspective on what books can be, asking us to think twice, but not too hard.

Just across the street from VaultArt Studio, in Pittsburgh's Garfield neighborhood, JR Holtz's mixed media works—which often include ladies in bikinis, athletes,





and Pittsburgh cityscapes—have activated the walls at Spak Brothers for years. I became familiar with Holtz through this association with a food landmark in Garfield; Holtz's paintings on glass feel like a living part of Pittsburgh. They resemble Howard Finster's works, if Finster were a secular Steelers fan.

I am grateful to Josh Rievel for the work he does in sharing Holtz's work with new audiences and making it possible for Holtz's work to be in this show. Relationships that uplift and support others' practices are as necessary as the balance of salt, acid, fat, and heat in any meal.

The Prospectus residency program has created an opportunity for me to reconsider a curator's role, especially in a time when many people identify with the title. I believe that being a curator has to do with building relationships, creating connections, seeing threads of commonality, making meaning in patterns, valuing narratives, and finding ways to share with others the things that move us.

This sense of connection and understanding create ease that can be truly delightful. Familiarity comes in many forms, and Imin Yeh's sculpture plays with this through a 1:1 ratio. How does it feel to see a triangular risograph-printed piece of paper and know that it is emulating a Cool Ranch Dorito? May we enjoy this creativity in form and materiality, this playful dance between edible and inedible, and this willingness to expand our horizons on what both food and art may be.

Isn't it great not to worry if we've missed the point? May this food help us feel secure, tuned in, joyful.





Corn Boat, Sarah Laporte





WOULD YOU LIKE SOME????, JR Holtz, 2003



*Fish Sandwich*, Darian Johnson, 2023

# LOOK, TOUCH, EAT

CHAS WAGNER

In the spirit of the Slow Food movement, *Buttery Spread* proposes a slower experience, here through simple acts of sitting and flipping through books in a gallery. Having the opportunity to linger longer in the Brew House Arts space—without pressure to commercially transact—evokes the feeling of a home-cooked meal; savoring time spent in the gallery.

The caressing, fingering, sniffing, manipulating, and digesting of both food and physical books are what make these consumptive behaviors a multi-sensory experience.

With more haptic encounters than a traditional gallery setting—through the touching of hefty, material objects—our hope is to provide the viewer a feeling of satiation. In contrast, when viewing artwork is the only form of engagement, one feels starved for more direct contact with the works.

While searching for these unique, one-of-a-kind, small-editioned books and publications, a new question about artist books surfaced: *Is an artist book any book not available on Amazon?*

This hunt for a rare, material object elicited a desirability one cannot experience on Amazon, which lacks the nooks and crannies, the imperfect stacks, and oddball collections unique to an independent, brick-and-mortar bookstore. Many of these esoteric books never appear

online, never becoming subsumed in Google's SEO surveillance and commerce machine.

Tracking down a copy of Dorothy Ionnone's *A Cookbook* was one such journey into rare book dealing and food-specific bookstores. After calling several cookbook stores in the US—Bold Fork Books in Washington, DC, Now Serving in Los Angeles, Book Larder in Seattle, Bonnie Slotnick Cookbooks in the East Village, Kitchen Arts and Letters on the Upper East Side, and Omnivore Books in San Francisco—Jane Cookshop in the East Village was the unlikely source for *Buttery Spread's* copy. Because Jane is known more as a cooking and kitchen specialty store, it's not on the radar of New York's dedicated book collector community.

Initially published in 1969 as a love letter to cooking and eroticism, *A Cookbook* is a union of gender, feeling, and pleasure through densely decorated pages of patterned designs, packed text, and vibrant colors. An un-commodified book, both in its production quality and distribution approach, is similar to food that is not-commodified, that of place and of season. It cannot be replicated and squeezed for efficiency's sake by a machine.

Heavily inspired by her Korean heritage and reverence for kimchi, Jennifer Shin began playing with the traditional patch-working technique

of Jogakbo after realizing there was an abundance of radishes (beyond the conventional Daikon radish) upon her many visits to the Bloomfield Saturday Farmer's Market. *The Vegetable Jogakbo* is a large-scale stitching of these radish discoveries, coupled with papers of rutabaga, carrot, zucchini, and golden beet, delicately held together by rice glue; just like the ephemerality of an unforgettable dish, the fragile nature of Jennifer's hanging piece only enhances its soft beauty.

Vania Evangelique's paper-mache fruits encourage the act of touch and object engagement missing from the traditional gallery space. Her childhood memory of visiting street markets in New York with her grandma comes to life with bright lemons, oranges, bananas, and other inviting fruits.

Another invitation to not only use but delight your hands is in Gabrielle (Gabe) Wolfe's *Snack Landscape*. As routines, schedules, and lives have been upended by the pandemic, so too has traditional meal time. Snacking, grazing, and constant nibbling is how our reptilian, digital, hungry brains and bellies operate

now. Are we ever not thinking about the next meal or, at the very least, the next scoop?

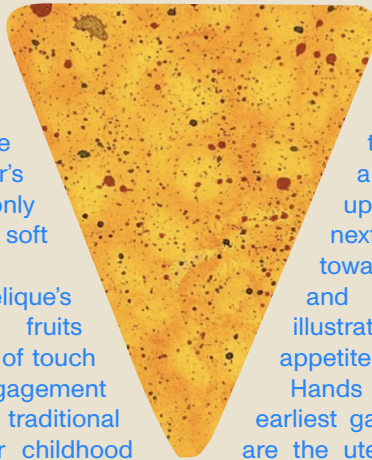
Sophia Marie Pappas creates a tango and meal scene with *The Immorals*, comprised of five overlapping fabric panels. Hands, yet again, play a role in *The Immorals*. The yin and yang of hands

are delicate and loving but also primal and raw. Gently holding onto one's dancing partner one minute to violently squeezing a live chicken for an upcoming meal in the next. We claw our way toward human intimacy and nourishment. Pappas illustrates our voracious appetite for human connection.

Hands have always been our earliest gathering tools. Fingers are the utensils and cutlery we use to knife and cut through the pages and manipulate the various aspects of a book. The legendary American chef Alice Waters enjoyed eating salad with her fingers. When questioned about this, her answer was sensual, practical, and thought-provoking:

*"The fork and the machine separate you from your senses. When you use your hands, you're really engaged. You are using your senses."*

*House of Chips, Imin Yeh, 2023*



***“THE FORK AND THE  
MACHINE SEPARATE YOU  
FROM YOUR SENSES.  
WHEN YOU USE YOUR  
HANDS, YOU’RE REALLY  
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USING YOUR SENSES.”  
ALICE WATERS***





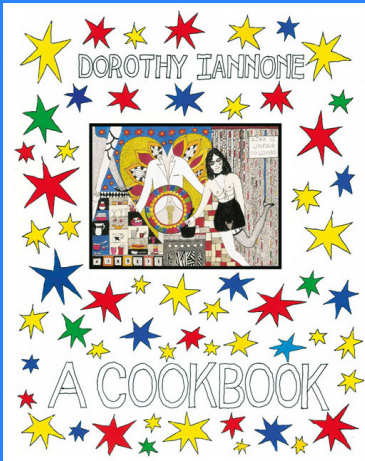
*Vegetable Jogakbo, Jennifer Shin*

**THIS COOKBOOK IS MADE FOR THE FIFTH DIMENSION**



Susan Cianciolo, Lumber Room, 2021, 200 pages, Edition of 500

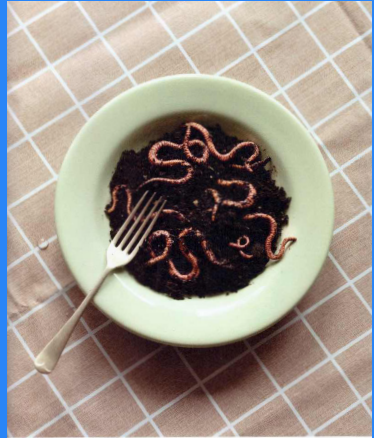
**A COOKBOOK**



Dorothy Iannone, JRP Editions, 2019, 60 pages, ISBN 978-3-03764-488-1



## WORMS FOR LUNCHEON

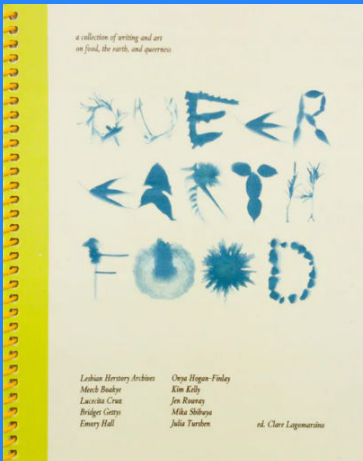


PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNIE COLLINGS, 2022

## WORMS FOR LUNCHEON

Worms for Luncheon, Worms Publishing & Luncheon Editions, 2022, 88 pages, ISBN 978-1-3999-4255-3

## QUEER EARTH FOOD #1



Clare Lagomarsino, Combos Press, 2022, 66 pages, Edition of 300

## QUEER EARTH FOOD #2



Clare Lagomarsino, Combos Press, 2023, 96 pages, Edition of 300

