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EUROPEAN MISSION SOIL WEEK

How can artistic research play a role in understanding human-soil relations?

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But first: what is artistic research?

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Artistic Research

- Research 1) **about** art and design, 2) **for** art and design, 3) **through** art and design (Christopher Frayling, 1993)
- Original investigation **undertaken to gain new knowledge or understanding** partly by means of artistic practice and the outcomes of that practice. (Linda Candy, 2006)
- Artistic work that meets criteria outlined in the OECD's **Frascati Manual** (Vienna Declaration, 2020):
 1. novel (i.e. is original, creates new knowledge)
 2. creative (i.e. shows innovation, imagination, conceptual flexibility)
 3. uncertain (i.e. takes risks, experimental, outcomes not known a priori)
 4. systematic (i.e. clear use of methods,)
 5. transferable and/or reproducible (citable)



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**Art is not a mouthpiece for science.
Artistic research brings ideas, innovations and
new ways of understanding and experiencing soil
beyond illustrating or translating scientific facts
to non-scientific audiences.**

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How can artistic research play a role in understanding human-soil relations?

Offering new
ways of seeing
and sensing

Facilitating
participation &
action

Developing
creative
methodologies



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1. Seeing and sensing soil



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“As place is sensed, senses are placed; as place makes sense, senses make a place.”

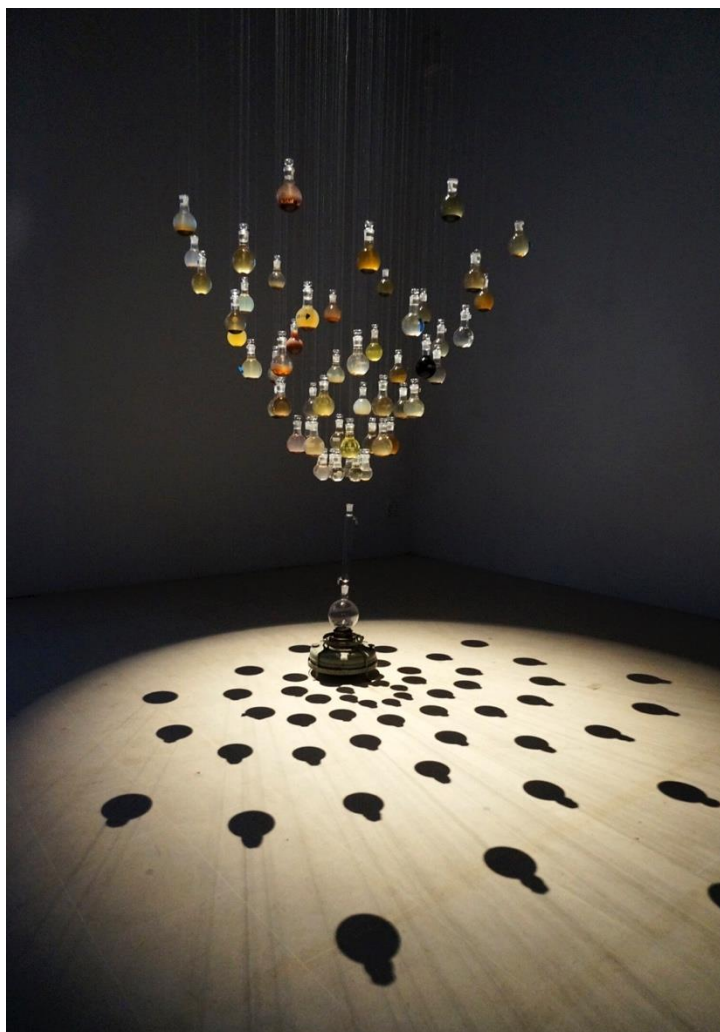
Feld, Steven (2005). Places Sensed, Senses Placed.
Toward a Sensuous Epistemology of Environments.
In: David Howes (Ed.) Empire of the Senses.
The Sensual Culture Reader. Bloomsbury.

Sounding soil



Marcus Maeder, Sounding Soil, 2018- ongoing
Video Documentation of exhibition kickoff at Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern

Smelling soil



Petrichor: Anaïs Tondeur, in collaboration with Nathlaie Blanc, anthropologists Marine Legrand and Germain Meulemans, ecologist Alan Vergnes, designer Yesenia Thibault-Picazo (2016)
Soil distillates collection, Montreuil France,
Installation view, Soils fictions, at COAL, Orangerie, Chamarande, France.

Tasting soil





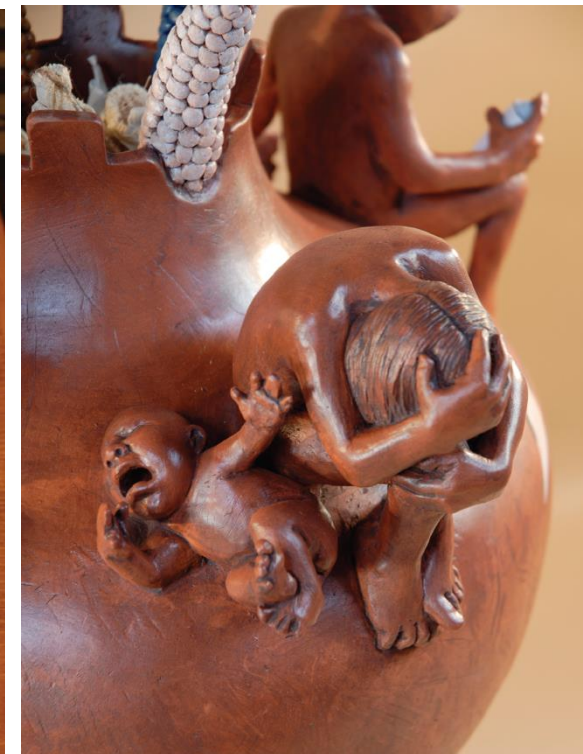
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2. Facilitating action and participation



Agnes Denes, *Wheatfield—A Confrontation*, 1982,
2 acres of wheat planted and harvested on Battery Park Landfill
For the International Campaign to End World Hunger

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Dishes pictured in *The Pueblo Food Experience Cookbook: Whole Food of Our Ancestors*. Roxanne Swentzell and Patricia M. Perea, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2016.

Roxanne Swentzell, *The Corn Mothers are Crying*. Clay sculpture, 2010



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**Flatbread Society: A Permanent Public Farm, Bakehouse
& Participatory Grain Breeding field.
Initiated by Futurefarmers
Photo: Monica Løvdahl**



Annie Sprinkle & Beth Stephens and friends
Documentation of Dirty Wedding to the Soil, Krems, Austria. 2014.
Photo by Iris Ranziner

Our unequal earth
Environment

This article is more than **8 months old**

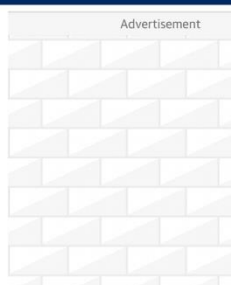
'America is a factory farming nation': key takeaways from US agriculture census

Small farms and Black farmers are going out of business, while corporate-controlled farms are booming, raking in subsidies



The agriculture census is a mammoth data collection effort involving more than a million farmers tracking various metrics to inform future policy Photograph: Tim Scrivener/Alamy

Record numbers of US farms are going out of business with small farms and Black farmers the hardest hit - again, according to the 2022 agriculture census, a comprehensive snapshot of the state of America's farms and farmers published every five years by the Department of Agriculture (USDA). Yet industrial factory farms rearing thousands of livestock in confinement have further expanded into rural America, acquiring smaller farms, raking in taxpayer subsidies and generating environmental harms.



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About this content

Nina Lakhani Graphics by Andrew Witherspoon

Thu 15 Feb 2024 13:00 CET

Share

Farming in Europe
Farming

Ajit Niranjan
Sun 3 Nov 2024 10:54 CET

Share

Revealed: billionaires are 'ultimate beneficiaries' linked to €3bn of EU farming subsidies

Thousands of small farms have closed according to analysis of official but opaque data from EU member states

● **'We didn't realise how hard it is': small farmers in Europe struggle to get by**



Seventeen billionaires received EU farming handouts through companies they owned in whole or in part over a four-year period. Photograph: Dominika Zarzycka/NurPhoto/Rex/Shutterstock

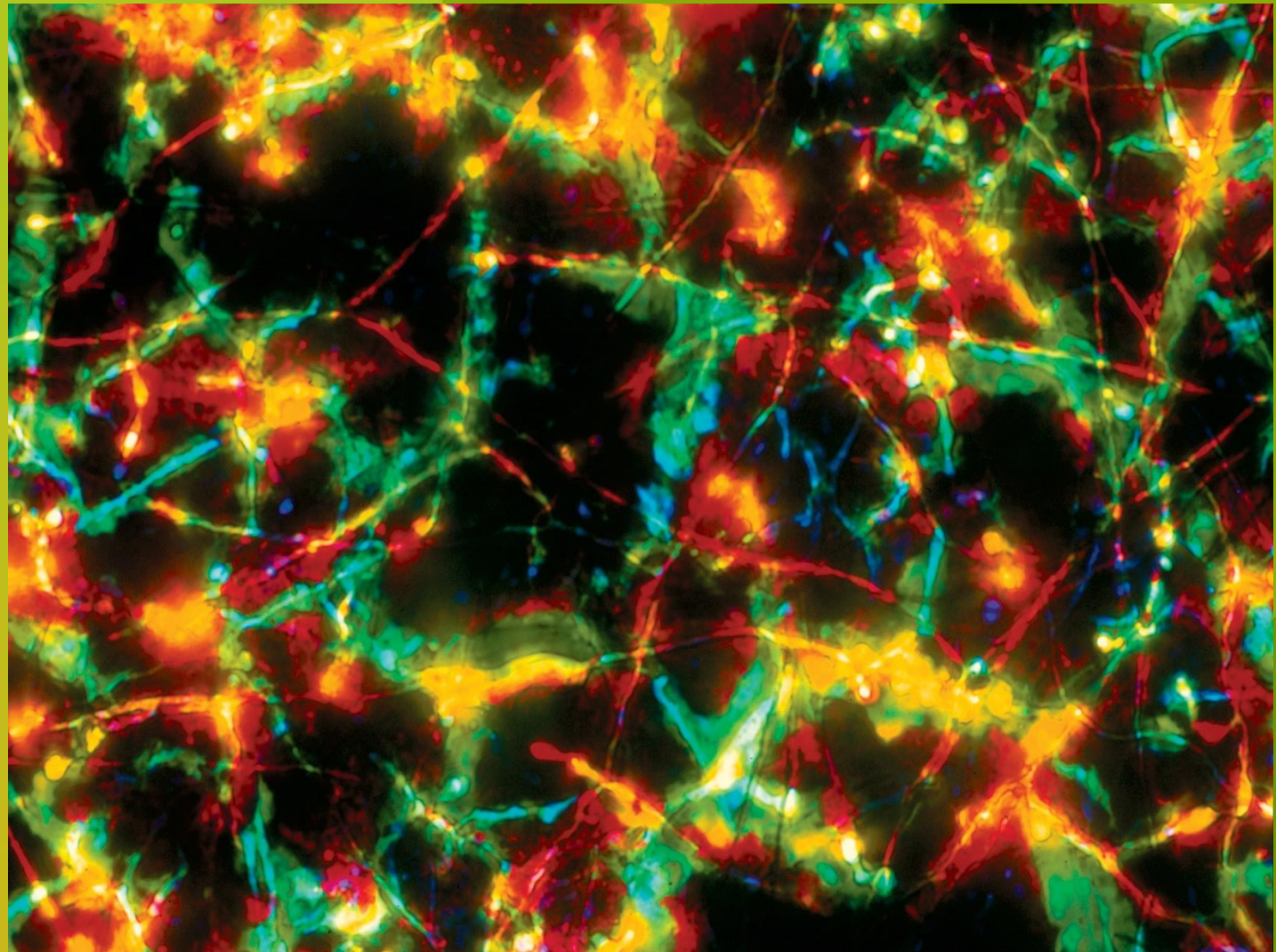
The **European Union** gave generous farming subsidies to the companies of more than a dozen billionaires between 2018 and 2021, the Guardian can reveal, including companies owned by the former Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš and the British businessman Sir James Dyson.

Billionaires were "ultimate beneficiaries" linked to €3.3bn (£2.76bn) of EU farming handouts over the four-year period even as thousands of small farms were closed down, according to the analysis of official but opaque data from EU member states.



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3. Developing creative methodologies



Daro Montag biolgyph 2, 1994

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Natsai Audrey Chieza, in collaboration with John Ward: The Rhizosphere Pigment Lab, Science Gallery Dublin 2013.



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Debra Solomon: Soil Portrait #55, Soil Chromatography used for soil health monitoring of urban agriculture in Amsterdam, 2016

Solomon, D., & Kaika, M. (2024). **Methodological rift: Applying infrastructure activism's 'skin in the game' embodied art research methods to urban green infrastructure planning.** *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, online first, 1504-1525.



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Marcus Maeder, Sounding Soil, 2018- ongoing
Custom built equipment for soil sonification



Publication of exhibition results and further methods by artists, designers, architects and other creatives; edited by Alexandra Toland and Patricia Watts of Ecoartspace



CALL FOR ARTISTS, SCIENTISTS, DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS & WRITERS

SOILS TURN

OPENED FOR APPLICATIONS March 18, 2024
DEADLINE May 18, 2024

Conclusion

Artists create new ways of seeing and sensing soils.

Artists facilitate direct experiences with soils and call to action.

Artists innovate new methods of investigating, interpreting, and interacting with soils

Take Home Message

The Mission Soil is transdisciplinary...
Include artists in research consortia.
(And get out of shutterstock!)

Support artistic production conventions such as residencies,
exhibitions, and festivals within the scope of the Mission Soil.
(Test out residencies at Living labs!)

Encourage artistic outputs as legitimate deliverables...
Support artistic research on equal terms.
(Fund PM salaries and not just material costs !)



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Thank you!

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Publications:

<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alexandra-Toland/research>

<https://independent.academia.edu/AlexToland>



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