



CURRENT:LA FOOD ✱

**Public Art
Triennial 2019**

Evaluation Report

This report is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

Prepared For: City of Los Angeles
Department of Cultural Affairs, Public Art Division

Recommended Citation: de la Parra, L., Rosenblum, A., Lindstrom, C., & Karlin, B. (2020). CURRENT:LA FOOD Final Evaluation. See Change Institute Report #MA2001. Los Angeles: See Change Institute.

About:



See Change Institute (SCI) is a research institute devoted to studying and shaping behavior change programs for the greater good. Backed by theory, tested with data, and designed with care, we develop, implement, and evaluate efforts to solve the issues that matter the most.



Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced.



Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) supports art that sparks the pleasure of discovery and challenges the way we see and experience the world, ourselves, and each other. Through exhibitions, education programs, and community partnerships, they foster critique of the familiar and empathy with the different. ICA LA is committed to making contemporary art relevant and accessible for all.

Acknowledgements:

CURRENT:LA is organized and funded by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), and See Change Institute (SCI) was selected to serve as its third-party evaluator. We would like to thank all of the DCA staff, artists, programmers, community partners, and visitors who assisted with data collection and/or spoke with us about their experiences. Special thanks to DCA Community Engagement Coordinators Sanaz Alesafar and Nicholas Fox Robbins for sharing so many stories from the field, and DCA Arts Associate Cerrina Tayag-Rivera for providing support every step of the way in this evaluation process.

Correspondence: Dr. Beth Karlin, bkarlin@seechangeinstitute.com

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	5
Findings in Brief	8
Robust Attendance	9
<i>Total Attendance</i>	9
<i>Art Projects</i>	11
<i>Events</i>	12
<i>Online Presence</i>	12
Issues Awareness	14
<i>Areas of Learning</i>	14
<i>Pathways to Understanding</i>	15
Engaged Communities	17
<i>Audience Impressions</i>	17
<i>Audience Actions</i>	18
<i>Engagement and Inclusion</i>	20
<i>Inclusion as Impact</i>	22
Strong Connections	25
<i>Social Capital</i>	25
<i>Collaborative Capacity</i>	29
<i>Workforce Development</i>	30
Recommendations	33
Promote Early, Often, and Everywhere	34
Tailor, Translate, and Activate	35
Practice Continuous Engagement	36
Connect the Dots	37
Conclusion	38
References	39
Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology	40
Appendix B: Curatorial Committee	45
Appendix C: Site Descriptions	48

Executive Summary

CURRENT:LA FOOD was the second iteration of the City of Los Angeles' public art triennial initiative, held October 3–November 5, 2019. Produced by the City's Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), CURRENT:LA aims to advance the role of public art as a uniquely effective driver of civic engagement around global issues. The physical framework of the triennial initiative revolves around 15 public parks located throughout the city of Los Angeles, one in each of its Council Districts, with one temporary public art project and one public program commissioned and developed for each unique site and context. The inaugural edition, CURRENT:LA **WATER**, took place in 2016; CURRENT:LA **FOOD** built upon WATER's successes, and expanded the triennial's reach. This innovative triennial model treats the fabric of the city as a canvas for creating temporary, socially engaged art projects and programs in the neighborhoods where residents and visitors live, stay, work, and play.

This social impact evaluation report investigates the impacts of CURRENT:LA FOOD, the mechanisms involved, and how they might be extended for future application. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data collected through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and site observations, this report explores how CURRENT:LA's ephemeral, intersectional approach to the presentation and experience of public art has the capacity to create social capital¹ and civic discourse around the theme of food. It also contextualizes CURRENT:LA's burgeoning model within a larger body of writings on social impact research and evaluation, prototyping pathways for impact that correlates with what happened and why it matters.

CURRENT:LA's ambitions extend beyond typical public art projects commissioned by public agencies. The initiative requires the harnessing of and coordination between people and resources from the City itself (e.g. DCA staff, public parks), contemporary artists and cultural producers (within LA, nationally, globally), and issues-based organizations (NGOs, less formal collectives) with an intention to generate a multitude of conversations that intersect all three of these spheres. What is the role of a global city in facilitating food justice, food access, environmental sustainability, and public health? CURRENT:LA makes the bold statement that a City can engage communities with these issues through culturally-relevant art projects and programs, and facilitate outcomes and impacts like inclusion, collaboration, and social cohesion¹. Findings show that CURRENT:LA FOOD was successful in these efforts. Findings have been grouped into four key themes:

Robust Attendance - Audiences were diverse and intergenerational, representing food, art, and neighborhood communities.

- 59,812 visitors attended CURRENT:LA FOOD, more than doubling attendance at WATER. General visitor attendance (those who visited sites to view art projects, not to attend events) represented 90% of total attendance, while event attendance represented 10%. Attendees hailed from 225 unique zip codes.
- Social media was a key strategic element of CURRENT:LA FOOD's online presence, and an important avenue for promotion and engagement. Reach exceeded 3 million users, with over 7 million total impressions.

¹ Concepts defined further in full body of report.

Issues Awareness - The triennial encouraged Angelenos to visit new parts of their city, and to challenge their preexisting notions of cultures, traditions, history, and food.

- 68% of surveyed attendees reported that they discovered new organizations, programs, or ideas through their experience with CURRENT:LA FOOD. Top areas of learning included sustainability, food access, urban/community agriculture, and food waste.

Engaged Communities - Site-specific and community-responsive approaches engaged new audiences and created new possibilities for civic engagement.

- Audiences were highly engaged, with community interaction cited as the top reason attendees liked CURRENT:LA FOOD. 43% of attendees surveyed had taken specific actions in their personal lives as a result of their experience.
- CURRENT:LA FOOD's emphasis on hands-on participatory events led to increased feelings of inclusion, with cultural heritage and culinary traditions as central pathways.

Strong Connections - Attendees reported high levels of engagement with the issues, with each other, and the sensory nature of food that was often the centerpiece of shared experiences.

- 79% of attendees surveyed met and/or interacted with people they did not know through CURRENT:LA FOOD. The intimacy created by small events and shared community meals contributed significantly to the creation of social capital.
- CURRENT:LA FOOD created new connections and strengthened existing ones among its many diverse stakeholders. Collaborative capacity was markedly enhanced both among external partners and within DCA.

Based on evaluators' experiences with CURRENT:LA FOOD and feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders, four key recommendations were identified for the future:

1. **Promote Early, Often, and Everywhere:** Use visual teasers, especially ones highlighting onsite art project fabrication or installation process, to draw in audiences before the triennial officially begins. Empower artists and programmers to promote CURRENT:LA, and couple this with strong on-the-ground marketing.
2. **Tailor, Translate, Activate:** Tailor marketing materials for different audiences, emphasizing visual and didactic accessibility. Translate all marketing materials into Spanish and locally appropriate languages, and implement live interpretation at events. Ensure a consistent event-based presence at all sites, and provide opportunities for attendees to deepen their involvement with the issues being addressed.
3. **Practice Continuous Engagement:** Continue to emphasize participatory practice and community engagement throughout CURRENT:LA's planning and implementation. Hire site-based staff (Community Engagement Coordinators and Site Production Assistants) as early in the planning process as possible to support ongoing engagement.
4. **Connect the Dots:** Connect artists and programmers to each other early in the planning process, and provide regular opportunities for connection throughout the triennial. Consider a longer time-frame for the triennial to facilitate connections. Connect all site-based programming to Indigenous histories through land acknowledgment.

This report shares and utilizes the insights gained through the evaluation process to strengthen capacity for CURRENT:LA to thrive and grow, and to empower other cities and regions to consider this unique and adaptable model for positive impacts in their own communities.

Introduction

CURRENT:LA FOOD, the City's second edition of its public art triennial initiative, explored the relationships of the city and its residents with food. As the triennial's curatorial statement affirms, "Through intricate partnerships between artists and communities, CURRENT:LA FOOD [will] shed new light on the precarious balance between pleasure and peril in food today, and the many ways food gives expression to social and political life" (Hisa, 2019). The triennial was situated across 15 public parks in Los Angeles, one in each Council District [see Figure 1 below], from October 5 to November 3, 2019. During this time, Angelenos had an opportunity to participate in contemporary art that is often only accessible to limited populations.



Image credit: Alberto Nichols, *Urban Lights*

CURRENT:LA's model was developed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) Public Art Division as a way to assess how public art could serve as a catalyst for critical conversations around issues affecting the city and its residents. When one thinks of public art, the image that often comes to mind is that of a large, visible, and permanent installation - such as Chris Burden's *Urban Lights* at the Los Angeles Contemporary Museum of Art (LACMA). CURRENT:LA seeks to transform this model, inviting an expanded and experimental approach for what constitutes art in the public realm. Envisioned by DCA as a platform to establish a new paradigm of social practice in public art, the concept of temporary, museum-caliber art and cultural experiences spread out across the city, yet centered around local communities, represented a marked departure from convention. Selected from among a pool of 237 cities that originally submitted proposals, DCA was awarded a \$1 million Public Art Challenge Grant grant by Bloomberg Philanthropies. The three initial topics proposed were *water*, *food*, and *justice*; DCA launched CURRENT:LA in 2016, focusing on the theme of WATER.

CURRENT:LA FOOD built on the success of 2016's WATER in several important ways. Incorporating best practices discovered through an external evaluation of the triennial's first iteration, DCA expanded its approach to community engagement in significant ways in 2019. CURRENT:LA FOOD also marked the expansion of DCA's curatorial approach, encompassing a formal partnership with the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA). This provided critical support for the thematic and programmatic development of the triennial, and fostered collaboration to strengthen the conceptual cohesion of CURRENT:LA as a whole.

The curatorial process for the triennial emphasized multigenerational, international, and local perspectives, and articulated an ethos of experimentation, learning, participation, and remembrance. Artists and programmers were encouraged to conceptualize projects that were responsive to the moment while affirming the legacies of performance and social engagement as art. ICA LA played an instrumental role in the thematic framing of the triennial as a whole, in addition to the selection and spatial development of the triennial's projects. In addition, by matching artists and programmers to sites in mutually-supportive ways, the curatorial process magnified the production of serious, poetic, whimsical, and even philosophical visions of art.

Many critical food-related issues were explored over the course of the month, covering a number of sub-topics to the broader theme of food. As part of the triennial's curatorial process, the 15 temporary art project commissions and 15 public program commissions were awarded to projects and programs that examined topics including but not limited to: **food diversity and access; food justice and (in)equity; waste and recycling; and public health and community-building**. Each site hosted one art project and one program, each site-specific, community-engaged, and developed in response to the theme of food (see Table 1).

In turn, CURRENT:LA FOOD invited attendees to experience these projects and programs and imagine new potential futures for their city, and possibilities for how they might go about creating them. In addition to the chosen theme of food and the use of free and publicly-accessible sites, an important element of the triennial's strategic approach was its orientation around Los Angeles's burgeoning public transportation system. Not only was this framework intended to enhance equity and accessibility, it also engaged attendees with CURRENT:LA's overarching goal of cultivating civic imagination through emphasis on the interconnected infrastructures of art, food, and public parks.



Figure 1. Map of Sites: CURRENT:LA FOOD

Table 1. Artists and Programmers by Site

District	Park	Artist	Programmer
1	L.A. State Historic Park / The HUB	Adrià Julià	LA Food Policy Council
2	Valley Plaza Recreation Center	Shana Lutker	Christopher Reynolds
3	Reseda Park	Eva Aguila & Coaxial Arts Foundation	Across Our Kitchen Tables
4	Pan Pacific Park	Michael Rakowitz	Leyna Lightman
5	Palms Park	Ry Rocklen	Babsi Loisch
6	Delano Recreation Center	Carolyn Pennypacker Riggs & Annie Gimas	Women's Center for Creative Work
7	Roger Jessup Park	Emily Marchand	Bed & Breakfast
8	Martin Luther King Jr. Park	Jazmin Urrea	Sustainable Economic Enterprises of LA (SEE-LA)
9	Exposition Park Rose Garden	Michael Queenland	Center for the Arts Eagle Rock
10	Leimert Plaza Park	Nari Ward	SÜPRSEED, Inc.
11	Venice Beach Recreation Center	Cooking Sections	Human Resources LA
12	Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center	Nonfood	Lucia Fabio
13	Barnsdall Park	Julio César Morales & Max La Rivière-Hedrick	Los Angeles Eats Itself
14	Pershing Square	Nancy Lupo	The Golden Dome
15	Ted Watkins Memorial Park	Torolab	LA Commons

By activating public spaces to create culturally relevant and aesthetically engaging experiences for all Angelenos, CURRENT:LA's unique approach draws upon and interplays with local place attachment and urban/neighborhood identity to create community connections and foster engagement with public art. This evaluation serves to elucidate the outcomes of this commitment to cultural innovation, and highlight the impacts that CURRENT:LA's model is creating for people, places, and the social practice of public art.

Findings in Brief

The symbolic value of a citywide public art triennial is inherently about civic pride. CURRENT:LA expands the traditional concept of biennials by focusing on a global theme and inviting diverse and renowned artists to integrate elements of the community where the art is embedded. CURRENT:LA chose a triennial model due to the increased complexity of the endeavor and the associated planning time this requires. CURRENT:LA FOOD sought to create dialogue and shape civic discourse around the highly salient global issue of food, and to do so in a way that brings ambitious, museum-caliber art into the public realm, activating public spaces while advancing equity as a central tenet.

Evaluating a project with such ambitious and often intangible goals is a non-trivial task and a mixed-methods approach to impact measurement was taken. After a month-long discovery process with the CURRENT:LA team, the following logic model was developed:

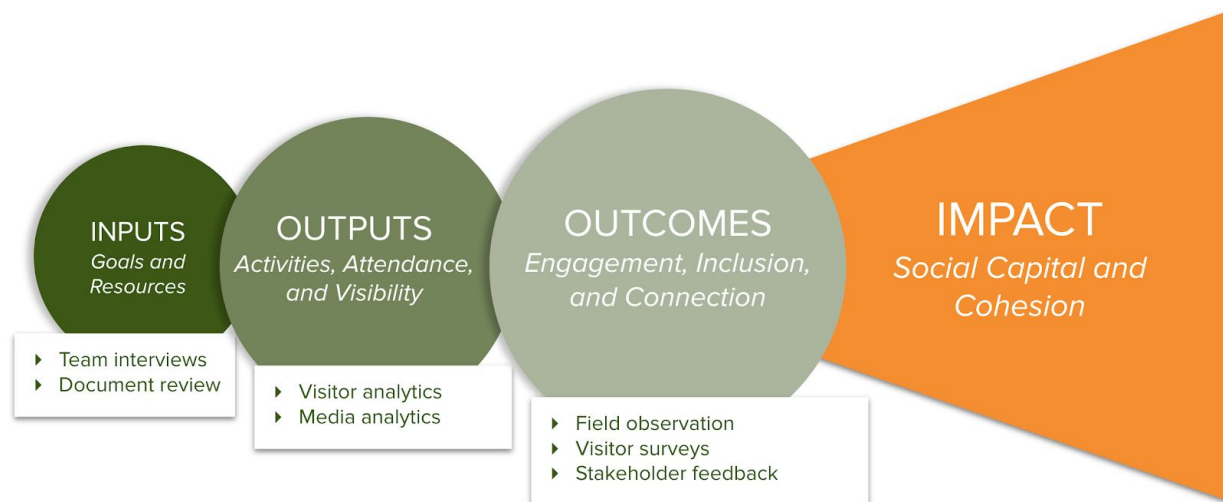


Figure 2. Social Impact Evaluation Logic Model

Data collection included field observations from three evaluators and 13 Site Production Assistants; 1,440 Eventbrite RSVPs; over a dozen in-depth debriefs with City staff, artists, and programmers; eight partner survey responses; five weeks of social media and web analytics, and 176 attendee survey responses. A description of all methods can be found in the Appendix.

Focusing on community as the foundation for an inclusive infrastructure supporting civic engagement with the arts, CURRENT:LA FOOD was successful on four key dimensions:

1. **Robust Attendance** by visitors and participants from local communities and across LA.
2. **Issues Awareness** of LA's diverse cultures, histories, and several food-related topics.
3. **Engaging Communities** to visit public space, participate in public art, and contribute to civic initiatives.
4. **Connecting People** to one another, to artists and programmers, to their city, and to new possibilities/opportunities.

The sections below review each of these dimensions in detail, presenting data to support conclusions drawn about the social impact of CURRENT:LA FOOD.

Robust Attendance

Consistent with best practices identified during and following CURRENT:LA WATER, CURRENT:LA FOOD presented a diverse array of events, each one new, site-specific, and community-engaged, thereby expanding CURRENT:LA's reach to ever-broader audiences. CURRENT:LA FOOD was presented at an all-new set of 15 public park sites (i.e. no 2019 site had also been a site for CURRENT:LA WATER in 2016); this was a deliberate choice intended both to engage new audiences and to activate an additional set of public parks with contemporary art projects and public programs. Attendance at CURRENT:LA FOOD was strong, almost double that of WATER in 2016.

Total Attendance

Total estimated attendance for CURRENT:LA FOOD was 59,812. Of this number, approximately 90% visited CURRENT:LA FOOD sites to view the temporary art projects (“visitor attendance”) and 10% attended events (“event attendance”). The graph below [Figure 3] shows a breakdown of visitor attendance and event attendance for each site.²

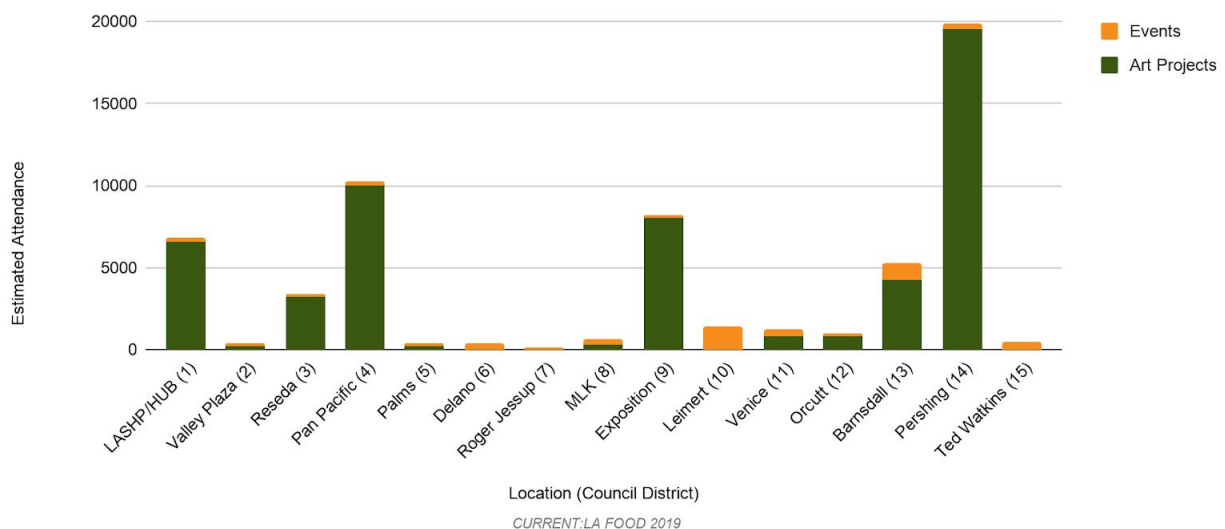


Figure 3. CURRENT:LA FOOD Event & Visitor Attendance by Site

Attendees in 2019 hailed from 225 unique zip codes³. This represents one aspect of attendance diversity that increased from CURRENT:LA WATER, with attendance up from 184 unique zip codes in 2016.

² Attendance at CD2 is slightly underreported due to a lack of non-event tracking around the launch of CURRENT

³ Data collected via Eventbrite RSVPs.

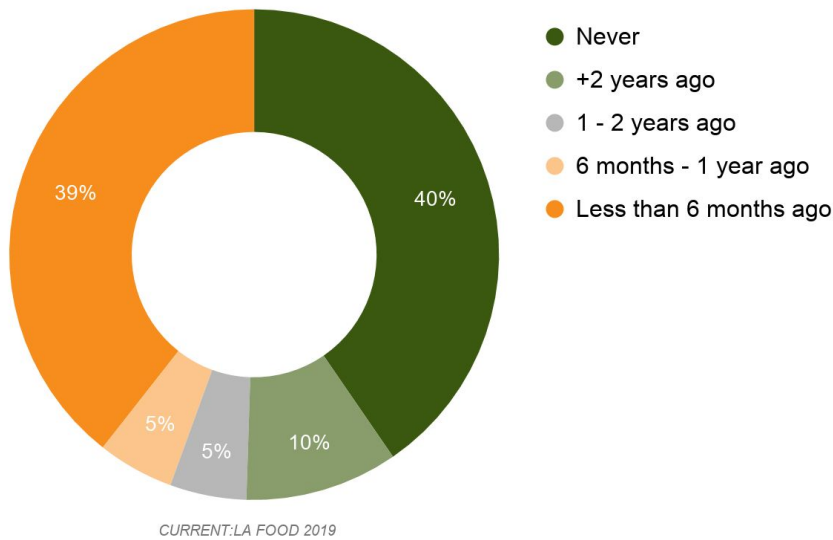


Figure 4. Attendees' Most Recent Previous Visit to Park

Attendance represented a mix of local community members and neighborhood visitors, with the triennial playing a key role in introducing Angelenos to new areas of their city. 40% of survey respondents reported visiting at least one park for CURRENT:LA that they had never visited previously [see Figure 4]. Though many attendees learned about CURRENT:LA FOOD through existing connections to an artist or via traditional marketing channels, others came from the neighborhoods around each site, having learned about the triennial through a community partner or simply by encountering an art project and/or event in their local park. DCA's Site Production Assistants and Community Engagement Coordinators (CECs) played a critical role in introducing neighborhood residents and park users to CURRENT:LA FOOD; many reported extending personal invitations for artists' events and public programs, which proved to be an effective engagement strategy.



Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Michael Queenland, *Untitled* © 2019]

Repeat attendance was also an important driver of engagement with CURRENT:LA FOOD, with 32% of attendee survey respondents reporting that they visited two or more sites during the triennial. This finding is consistent with comments from staff, artists, and programmers that reiterated an observation that attending CURRENT:LA FOOD was the best advertisement for the initiative; in other words, an attendee's first experience of the triennial was what most effectively seeded the curiosity and desire to continue to engage with the initiative, and to encourage their networks to attend as well.

"I went to parts of the city that I had never been to and got to have all of these heartwarming experiences. It was really beautiful. It allows you this adventurous spirit. I heard that a lot; "I never come to the Valley" or "I've never been to Watts."" - CURRENT:LA FOOD Attendee

Art Projects

The 15 new, multidisciplinary, and site-specific temporary art projects created for CURRENT:LA FOOD together represented a range of overlapping approaches in contemporary public art. Artists utilized a multiplicity of approaches to engage their audiences with their projects and the food-related themes they sought to explore. Of the 15 art projects, one at each site, four were primarily community-based, in that artists utilized early engagement with local and/or issues-relevant communities as part of the conceptual development of their projects (two of these were performance-based, two were sculptural installations); four were sculptural installations and primarily object-based (though all art projects incorporated at least one event organized and presented by the artist); two were interactive installations, one object-based and the other event-based (a sculptural installation that mediated interaction with the former, and an on-demand audio tour that guided interaction with the latter); two were one-night community events featuring film and live performance; two were a series of community events featuring performative installations and shared meals; and one was a live performance series.

Visitor attendance refers to visitors who came to sites to experience an art project *outside of a scheduled event*. Total visitor attendance over the course of the triennial's 30 days was **53,888**. Visitor attendance varied significantly by site, with existing park popularity/use and proximity to other cultural attractions interacting to influence visitor counts driven by local foot traffic. Parks that were considered underutilized prior to CURRENT:LA FOOD showed correspondingly lower attendance during triennial events; yet, the triennial still served to bring new users to these parks and increased their exposure and use during that period. CURRENT:LA's mission to activate public parks with museum-caliber art requires new strategies to engage communities, activate wide outreach, and reveal the new definitions of public art. Artworks placed to low-traffic areas are especially vulnerable to invisibility and thus require more audience engagement approaches. Directly or indirectly, CURRENT:LA's approach may also be addressing some of the underlying reasons why certain public spaces are underutilized and others are extremely popular. For instance, Stern & Pray (2014) argue that because public art is critical to the symbolic economy that influences how places are valued, increasing concentrations of cultural assets within a neighborhood are more likely to result in positive social impacts.

Events

A total of 141 individual free, public events and activities were offered as part of CURRENT:LA FOOD, over the course of the triennial's 30 days and across its 15 sites. Event types were varied, and in some cases more than one type of engagement was incorporated into a single event. Of the 141 events, the majority took the form of mediated or interactive experiences (34%), hands-on workshops (25%), and performances (18%). Other CURRENT:LA FOOD events included artist talks, speaker panels, and fireside chats (9%), community meals (8%), festivals (5%), and film screenings (2%). This breakdown reflects the more participatory and performance-oriented framework that CURRENT:LA is developing increasingly with each iteration.

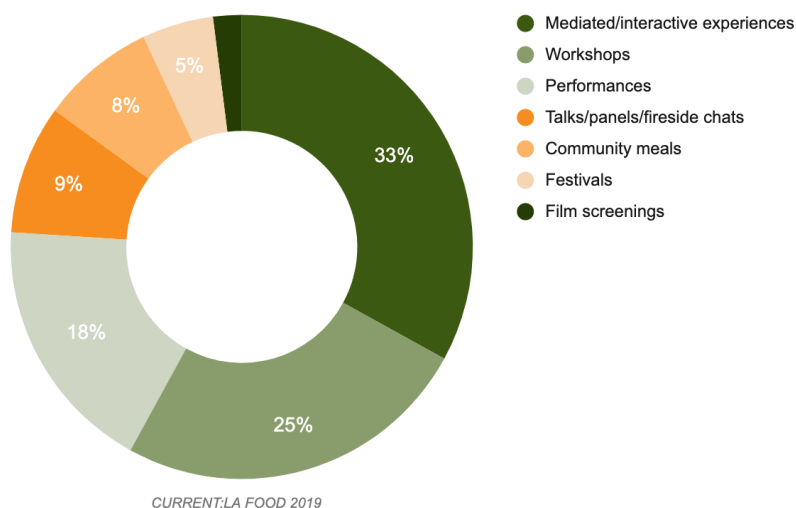


Figure 5. CURRENT:LA Events by Type

Total event attendance of 5,925 was counted for CURRENT:LA FOOD. Attendance varied among sites due to the diversity of event types that were produced [see Figure 5]. It is important to note that where events were crafted intentionally around hands-on making or intimate conversational settings, capacity was limited in order to ensure that participants would be able to engage fully with the activities. As a result, absolute event attendance is not directly reflective of the overall success of an event. Of the 39 limited-capacity events, 21 events (54%) met or exceeded maximum capacity, another six events (15%) were between 80% and 99% capacity, and only six events were below 50% capacity.

Online Presence

The third element of CURRENT:LA FOOD's cultural footprint was its online presence. Through its website, social media, and other online activities, CURRENT:LA FOOD digitally connected people to the triennial and allowed them to share their experiences.

The currentla.org website had 10,318 total visitors, most of whom were unique (first time) visitors to the website. The home page had the most unique page views (6,328) followed by the calendar (2,921), and programmers page (1,544) and the artists page (882).

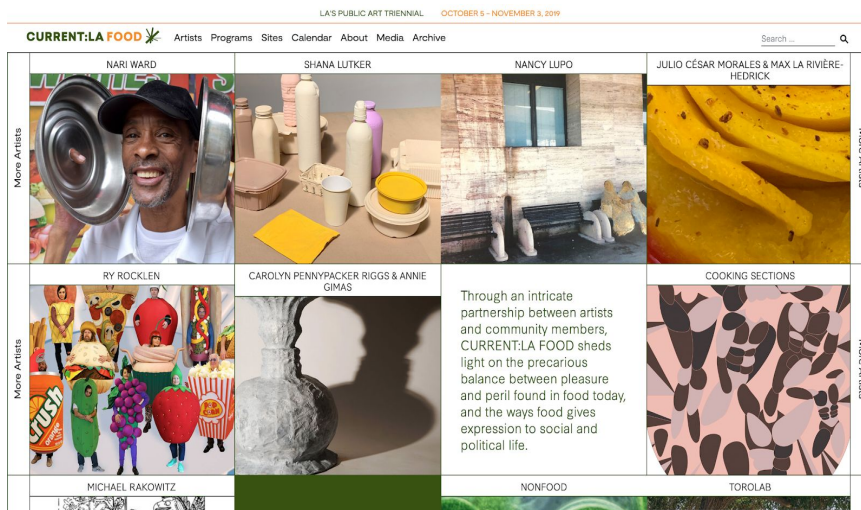


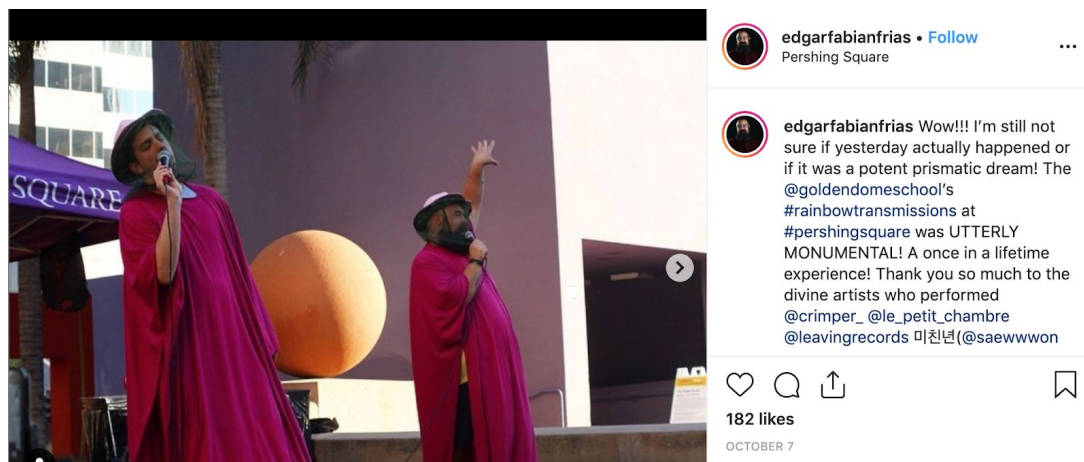
Figure 6. Snapshot of currentla.org Homepage for CURRENT:LA FOOD

CURRENT:LA also elevated its use of social media to organize, promote, and reflect on the experiences of the triennial compared with WATER in 2016. Key metrics include:

- **Posts:** 1,056 posts on FB, Twitter, or Instagram, using CURRENT keywords.
- **Users:** 191 unique individuals posting content during the month.
- **Engagement:** 22,396 total likes, comments, shares, retweets of CURRENT posts.
- **Reach:** 3,227,138 total users who saw CURRENT posts.
- **Impressions:** 7,007,942 total times that somebody engaged with CURRENT content.

In terms of the overall online presence of CURRENT:LA, comparing 2016 to 2019, WATER received a total of 1.7 million impressions, less than a quarter of CURRENT:LA FOOD's 7 million impressions.

[@Edgarfabianfrias](#), 10/7



Issues Awareness

CURRENT:LA sought to create connections between visitors and the art projects and programs, and critical issues surrounding food. This allowed artists and programmers to build awareness around multiple themes through their work. As one artist put it: “I was hoping to achieve a rethinking of the way public art creates systems of value.”

Areas of Learning

Nutrition and food justice, culinary heritage and cultural tradition, and environmental sustainability were three core sets of themes woven throughout the triennial. An emphasis on indigenous cultures and foodways invited attendees to consider the evolution of food and food systems in Los Angeles, and how they can be decolonized. An array of food-related issues were explored across CURRENT:LA FOOD’s art projects and programs, including:

- Nutrition, public health, and food justice
- LA’s diverse culinary heritages and cultural traditions
- Environment and sustainability
- Food in American popular culture
- Food-related waste and composting
- Food deserts and food sovereignty
- Native plants and indigenous foodways
- Urban agriculture and local food
- Decolonization of food systems
- Plant-based eating and cooking

CURRENT:LA FOOD visitors were invited to support and share organizations operating in their neighborhoods and citywide that are committed to addressing these issues. CURRENT:LA FOOD’s community partner organizations were empowered to experiment with new forms of public outreach and education, expand their reach, and deepen their impact in communities they already serve. 68% of attendees surveyed reported that they discovered new organizations, programs, or ideas through their experience with CURRENT:LA FOOD.

“I was not aware before this how many different groups and forward-thinking individuals are doing great things in neighboring communities.” - CURRENT:LA FOOD Attendee



“I had no idea organizations like the seed library or Food Forward existed. I love that Food Forward is trying to relocate all the fruit on trees I notice homeowners / companies do nothing with. And that you can “rent” seeds so that we can keep cycles going and learn which seeds grow best in different parts of LA.” - Attendee at Lucia Fabio’s public program From Seed to Earth

Photo credit: Robbins, N. F. (2019). *Untitled* [digital image]

Pathways to Understanding

CURRENT:LA FOOD facilitated attendees' learning when socially conscious art projects and programs were activated by hands-on opportunities for skills-building that attendees could apply and implement in their lives and beyond the triennial. Among the highest-attended events were workshops, each offering instruction in a unique skill or activity while simultaneously offering a deeper understanding of the contextual framework around a particular art project or public program.

"Earthquake preparedness is something I have not taken seriously before. Learning how to set up a pantry of shelf stable foods is a survival skill I am grateful to have learned about in a real practical way." - Attendee at LA Eats Itself's public program SHOOK: A Survivalist Last Supper.

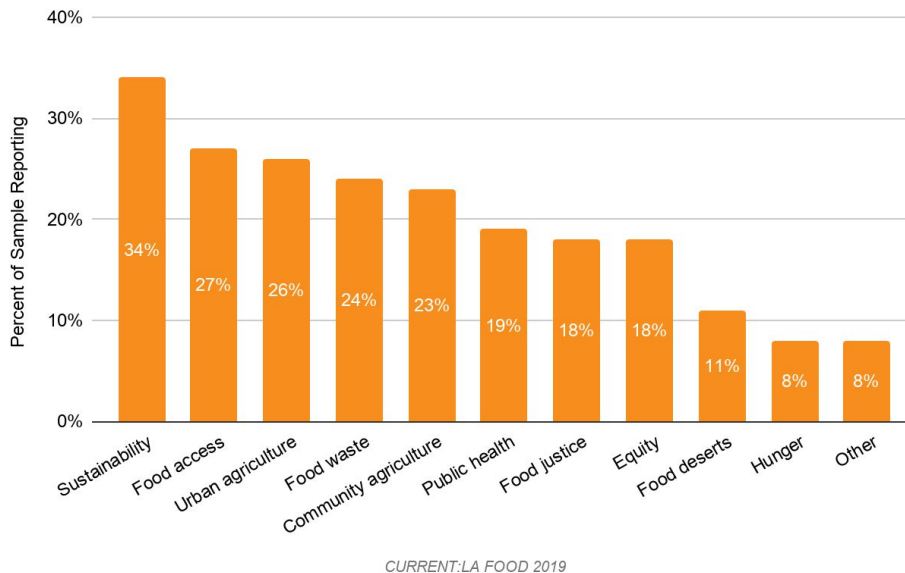


Figure 8. Increased Understanding of Issues as a Result of Attendance at CURRENT:LA FOOD
Additional items written in for "other" included food/art in culture and community space.

CURRENT:LA was also a unique platform for artists and programmers to experiment with tackling food issues in a community context. For instance, SEE-LA (Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles) presented new workshops specifically for CURRENT:LA, designed to empower people to grow their own food, and this was an expansion of their existing activities, which focus on organizing and running farmers markets in historically underserved neighborhoods. This approach is one of the central goals of CURRENT:LA—to evoke what is *currently* happening in LA (and also *not happening*), then make the space and provide the support to allow people to envision what else is needed and how it might be realized.

When attendees were asked about their understanding of food-related issues, the highest gains were reported in understanding of sustainability, food access, urban agriculture, and food waste [see Figure 8].

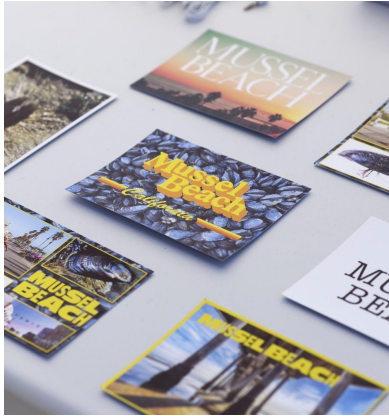


Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Cooking Sections, *Mussel Beach*© 2019]

Critically, *CURRENT:LA* also challenged preconceived notions about LA's history and development, giving visitors the opportunity to experience the city in new ways. For example, Cooking Sections' *Mussel Beach* interactive workout and walking tour explored the history of Venice Beach through the history of mussels, interweaving contemporary images of

Muscle Beach and the local entertainment industry with images of the environmental history of Venice, giving participants a new and different perspective from which to view one of LA's most iconic places.

"So it seems like there is a crazy amount of learning going on...the [popular] history of Venice is through entertainment, [so] that giving [attendees] a different lens to view the environment is completely—they're just astonished and it's kind of funny to see them make that realization that Venice is something else besides what you see right now." - Onsite Staff Member, reflecting on visitors' experiences of Cooking Sections' art project *Mussel Beach*.

Several other artists and programmers focused on revealing the richness and diversity of urban and civic life. For example, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council's *Layers in the Land: Stories of Food Across Centuries* was a weekly series of fireside chats focused on unique aspects and histories of LA's food systems.

"I loved learning about the history of LA's food system. I was unaware, prior to attending the event, that LA had such a long and diverse agricultural history. I always considered LA itself to be a desert-like environment; I know there were orange farms years ago in places like the San Fernando Valley, but had never viewed even what is now DTLA as having an agricultural boom." - Attendee at LA Food Policy Council's public program *Layers in the Land*

"I learned from Meztli Projects about the importance of placing indigenous people and indigenous philosophies into discussions of future planning with food, construction, and development projects." - Attendee at LAFPC's *Layers in the Land*

Overall responses to learning experiences emphasized: increased awareness of organizations and initiatives that tackle food-related issues in LA on an ongoing basis; experiential learning through exposure to new cultures and ideas; and practical learning through hands-on workshops and other interactive activities.

Engaged Communities

Engagement represents a key overall success metric for the triennial. The evaluation sought to understand how visitors' experiences with CURRENT:LA influenced their appreciation for public art, shifted their perspectives, and/or inspired them to take action. In addition, in the context of CURRENT:LA's expanded definition of what counts as "public art," exploring attendees' motivations to participate and engage with the art helps to capture participation outside of traditional, eurocentric arts institutions (Stallings & Mauldin, 2016).

Artists and programmers approached the theme of CURRENT:LA FOOD from many perspectives and modalities. From sculptures and installation, performances and panel discussions, to hands-on making and interactive tours, an overarching theme of CURRENT:LA FOOD was *participation*. Community members and local organizations were approached and became involved in the execution of many of the art projects and programs, integrated participatory practices and a commitment to engage communities across LA.

Audience Impressions

Attendees reported high levels of enjoyment of their CURRENT:LA experience, wanting to attend more CURRENT:LA events, learning from their experience about food and/or art, and saying that they would recommend CURRENT:LA FOOD to a friend [see Figure 9].

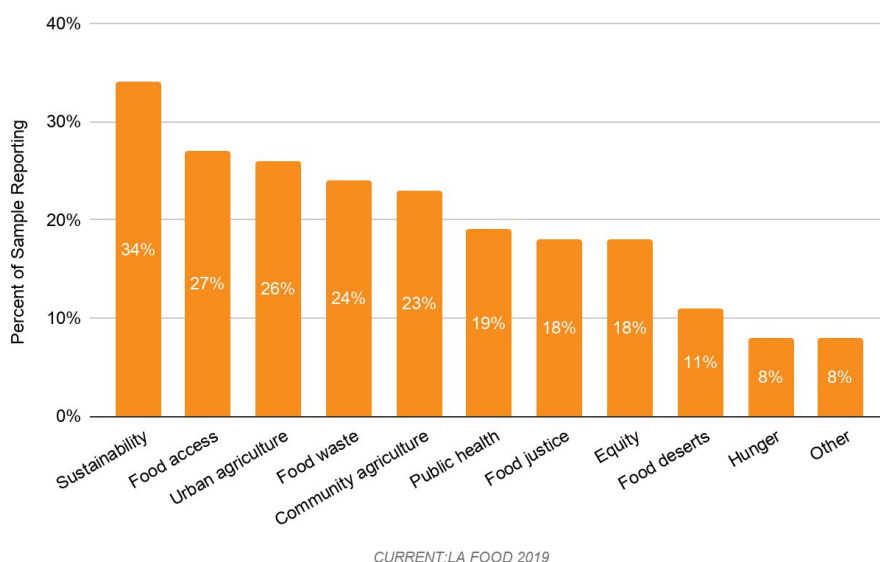


Figure 9. Attendee Impressions and Experiences

When asked what they liked about CURRENT:LA FOOD, **community interaction** was the top reason mentioned (34%). The quality of the art and entertainment value it provided were close behind (32%), with several mentions of the curatorial care and innovative, thought-provoking nature of the art coming up. This was followed by location (25%) and food (25%), which were frequently cited together in the context of attendees' sharing food in public parks. Many also pointed to CURRENT-goers' appreciation of the free and accessible nature of events and programming, and how these factors created an inviting and inclusive atmosphere

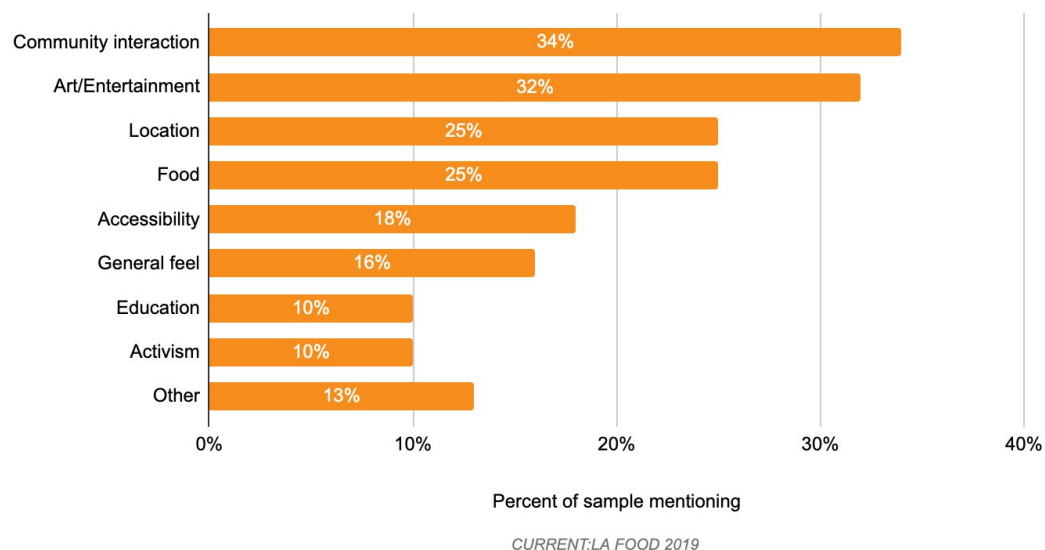


Figure 10. Attendee Survey Responses, “What did you LIKE about CURRENT:LA FOOD?”



Audience Actions

CURRENT:LA FOOD's model was developed with an understanding that siting artists and programmers in communities where they did not necessarily have existing connections would present both unique opportunities to create new interchanges around public art, and unique challenges to authentic community engagement. Recognizing that staff and curatorial support were essential to the creation of an effective framework for engagement, artists and programmers also catalyzed engagement directly through their work. The triennial was successful in engaging communities; how was this achieved?

Events played a central role in fostering engagement, and were critical to the success of CURRENT:LA FOOD's approach to social practice public art. They created the space for interpersonal exchanges and interactive learning that are absent from the typical public art experience (e.g., as discussed in the introduction to this report), and did so within a framework that was explicitly about creating public art. They were also key in terms of facilitating inclusion, because they focused on the accommodation of meaningful interactions between participants. Generally speaking, more events correlated with higher community responses over the course of the month.

Hands-on workshops drove engagement by inviting people to connect with growing, making, cooking, and composting food; events that focused on intimate conversational learning fostered engagement through storytelling and reflections on shared experiences. Reports from CURRENT:LA FOOD staff suggest that the most popular workshops were those where attendees got to *participate* in some meaningful way, whether through making, sharing, performing, or interacting with artists and programmers to create something new and unique to the moment.

[@Otisfoodpolitics on Instagram, 10/28](#)

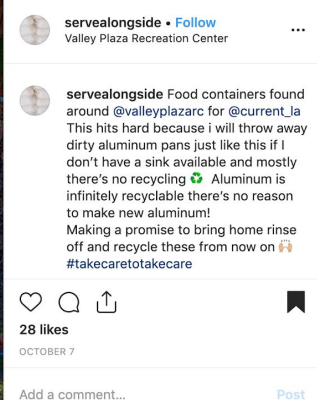


Engagement with CURRENT and its core themes didn't stop with showing up. When asked if they had taken any actions as a result of CURRENT:LA FOOD, 43% of survey respondents said yes. The most frequently reported actions included:

- Recommending or sharing their experience with others
- Making or doing something they learned at an event
- Initiating further contact with CURRENT:LA affiliates
- Creating and/or posting media content related to food, art, and/or CURRENT:LA FOOD
- Planning and/or participating in additional community engagement activities
- Changing their eating and/or food-related habits
- Starting to garden/grow food

Attendees reported increased mindfulness about waste, stronger relationships to nature and to their communities, and inspiration to build networks in support of food access and food justice. The ethics of consumption and the imperative of food sovereignty were discussed as lasting impressions, and several respondents

expressed sentiments of empowerment around growing and sharing food. The value of creative expression was also highlighted, with one respondent reporting that CURRENT:LA FOOD inspired them to increase song and ritual in their everyday life.



Engagement and Inclusion

Inclusion is not a state, but an intentional process of ensuring that individuals with diverse backgrounds are able to fully participate in all aspects of a program and feel valued and respected as members of the community (Jermyn, 2001). Engagement and inclusion are highly interrelated concepts, and CURRENT:LA FOOD encouraged inclusion in several important ways. Partnerships with community-based organizations and leaders played an important role in CURRENT:LA's strategy for engagement, an approach that has been shown to be particularly important for encouraging attendance in diverse communities (Mauldin, Kidd, & Ruskin, 2016). Eclectic art pieces and programming that reflect working-class concerns (e.g. celebrating cultural heritage, supporting community) are also key for engaging diverse audiences (Grodach, 2009) and CURRENT:LA FOOD's curation emphasized this. Two major sources of CURRENT:LA FOOD's success in promoting inclusion were: 1) A focus on cultural heritage, which emerged naturally from the co-creative process that took place between artists, programmers, and ICA LA; and 2) The highlighting of the uniqueness of local communities, a hallmark of CURRENT:LA's overall ethos.

The importance of LA's culinary heritages and cultural traditions to Angelenos' personal relationships with food was among the major sub-issues explored in the triennial's art projects and programs. Many artists and programmers chose to consider the unique cultural contexts and histories of Los Angeles, and highlight the confluence of communities that are represented within the city's many food sectors and scenes. This emphasis can be understood as an organic expression of community-building through the creation of art grounded in shared experience and storytelling. Cultures and heritages featured through CURRENT:LA FOOD art projects and programs included: Armenian, Azerbaijani, Aztec, Costa Rican, Ethiopian, Iraqi, Jewish, Korean, Mayan, Mexican, Salvadoran, Sicilian, Thai, Tongva, Turkish.



Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Michael Rakowitz, *Beneath the Date Palms* © 2019]

This turned out to be a strong contributor to the triennial’s overall success in engaging people with public art. By appealing to and resonating with LA’s diverse communities and cuisines, participants experienced microcosms of the city reflected back to them in new ways. Sometimes this occurred as a feeling of recognition or affirmation, as with attendees from immigrant communities whose cultural heritages were being showcased through *CURRENT:LA FOOD*. In other instances, sentiments of appreciation and affinity were expressed by Angelenos who had the opportunity to learn about cultures and traditions to which they did not previously have personal connections.

*“I think especially those of us who inherently had these cultural touchstones within our projects... had deeply inclusive experience[s]. As the programmer, I think the public felt that way. I was getting so much feedback that demonstrated resonance and feeling affirmed.” – Programmer for *CURRENT:LA FOOD**

Intertwined with the notion of celebrating cultural heritage and culinary traditions was the intention of highlighting the uniqueness of the local communities surrounding each of *CURRENT:LA FOOD*’s project sites. Staff noted the strongest instances of engagement and inclusion emerging when art projects and programs spoke to the local park users and reflected the distinctiveness of the surrounding community. This incorporation of site-specific concerns in the conception of events and programming was an approach encouraged by ICA LA and deliberately employed by many of *CURRENT:LA FOOD*’s artists and programmers as a best practice for increasing feelings of neighborhood inclusion.

Examples of projects where the local community context was reflected in art projects and programs include: Julio César Morales and Max LaRivière-Hedrick’s *New Shores: The Future Dialogue Between Two Homelands*, a weekly series of community dinners honoring the culture and traditional foods of various immigrant communities in East Hollywood; Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA)’s *Change: Anyone Can Grow*, a day-long

summit focused on cultivating food sovereignty for Angelenos through the development of local, sustainable urban food systems; and *Imperishable*, Jazmin Urrea's sculptural testament to the crisis of food deserts in South Los Angeles. The former successfully showcased cuisines and traditions of prominent immigrant communities in the neighborhood, engaging local caterers to provide food for events and local community leaders to speak to the significance of their culinary customs, while the latter two developed programming that focused on an issue of great relevance in communities that have historically experienced a lack of fresh and affordable food options, highlighting the work of local community members who are cultivating culturally relevant and agriculturally productive urban spaces today.

"I learned something about the beauty of the LA community. In terms of ideas... the Futuro dinner left me with new concepts of heritage." - Attendee at Julio César Morales and Max LaRivière-Hedrick's closing event, *Futuro of New Shores* (Barnsdall Park, CD13)

Inclusion as Impact

Returning to the theme of *participation* that permeated throughout CURRENT:LA FOOD, its impact was evaluated through the lens of *equality of outcome*, which denotes the occurrence of measurably greater participation by underserved populations in terms of number and depth of engagement (Mauldin, Kidd, & Ruskin, 2016). Accessibility, intergenerational engagement, and participation among individuals experiencing homelessness were repeatedly cited as key aspects of the triennial's success in creating inclusive environments.

"There was a "random" member of the public... who had stumbled upon the Survivalist Supper the night before and returned for Distant Shores. She's going to as many CURRENT events and sites as possible before we close up. Her two sons are going with her - one of which is differently abled and has often been discriminated against/ignored during events due to his special needs... I really connected with [her], her gratitude at having found a space to be outside and participating with her family in an open-hearted, stimulating event was palpable. She talked at length about moving through Los Angeles, seeking places/events where she could bring her sons and that feel they belonged. She talked about the Survivalist Supper the previous evening, and how many of the participants had included her special needs son in activities with patience and warm humor. She talked about the strange magic of just happening upon a community like the one that we are building, and instantly being welcomed there." - CURRENT:LA FOOD Onsite Staff Member



Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Los Angeles Eats Itself, *SHOOK: A Survivalist Last Supper* © 2019]

CURRENT:LA FOOD's emphasis on cultural heritage and community uniqueness also contributed significantly to intergenerational engagement. Explorations of ancestral connections, as seen in artist Eva Aguila's *Comida a Mano* event (which included reflections on the evolution of cultural traditions within her family across geographies and generations), as well as community-focused celebrations, such as Center for the Arts Eagle Rock's *The Art of Food: A Recipe for Community* (which included bilingual and family-friendly heritage Zapotec chocolate-making), encouraged intergenerational attendance. This served to engage people young and old with public art through identification with their interpersonal relationships and family histories.

"...Bringing art into the public sphere can mean the difference between exposure and no exposure for kids, whose experiences of art can depend greatly on school funding and education policy, for instance." - Programmer for CURRENT:LA FOOD

"Something that sticks out for me is that to see generations of one family making art together was a very beautiful experience, and that was just really moving for all of us." - Programmer for CURRENT:LA FOOD

@Dca.lhyac, 10/23



Finally, inclusion of individuals experiencing homelessness was approached both from a programmatic and a staff capacity standpoint. Programmatically, works like artist Emily Marchand's *1,000 Lunches* focused specifically on Los Angeles's crisis around homelessness, engaging attendees in a community lunch-packing session to benefit local homeless services in Pacoima. Together, attendees packed 1,000 healthy, portable, and compact lunches that did not require refrigeration, while learning about food access, survivalism, and activism around homelessness. At Barnsdall Park, all leftovers from Julio César Morales and Max LaRivière-Hedrick's *New Shores* dinners were donated to the Hollywood Food Coalition, a local nonprofit serving the immediate needs of the hungry every night of the year.

In terms of staff capacity, a new DCA initiative ensured that CURRENT:LA staff received training on how to relate to individuals experiencing homelessness prior to the triennial. This training was significant both in terms of direct engagement with homeless populations during events, and because of anticipated long-term benefits. With respect to events, staff reported that food was frequently the avenue for engagement with those experiencing homelessness, but that an inclusive atmosphere facilitated by sensitive staff was what encouraged those individuals to stay and connect with others. Related to long-term benefits, CURRENT:LA has created a precedent upon which to build in future iterations, as well as an awareness of what's possible in terms of engagement with homeless populations within the DCA as a whole. As one DCA representative noted, "We now have a language of how we'll participate in this work with this population."

Strong Connections

A significant impetus to undertake evaluation of CURRENT:LA with each iteration has been DCA's interest in understanding the pathways to impact that the triennial's model has succeeded in prototyping. In particular, elucidating high-impact strategies for the creation of **social capital** through civic engagement with public art has been a central concern for DCA since CURRENT:LA's inception. Social capital refers to the strength and resilience of social groups and networks created through *connections* that foster shared understanding, trust, cooperation, and reciprocity (Narayan & Cassidy, 2001; Jermyn, 2001). Therefore, CURRENT:LA's success in building social capital can be evaluated in terms of facilitating connections within neighborhoods and across communities.

Another important metric for impact that DCA has prioritized is the expansion of **collaborative capacity** as a result of involvement with CURRENT:LA, both within and between participating City departments and external community partners. Collaborative capacity is "the ability of organizations to enter into, develop, and sustain interorganizational systems in pursuit of collective outcomes" (Hocevar, Thomas, & Jansen, 2006). Thus, the evaluation examined how collaborative partnerships enhanced CURRENT:LA FOOD's outcomes in terms of encouraging attendance, tackling societal issues, and engaging communities, and how involvement with CURRENT:LA impacted its partners' ability and willingness to work together in the future.

Finally, **workforce development** as a result of CURRENT:LA is a key indicator of broader impacts within the city fueled by civic engagement with public art. Artistic and professional development among staff, artists, and programmers, as well as the economic engagement of many individuals working in other fields who supported and made possible CURRENT:LA FOOD's dynamic events and programming, are important considerations that demonstrate how funding for public art can be a larger catalyst for community development (Grodach, 2009).

Social Capital

Social capital is generated where there are "dense, lateral networks involving voluntary engagement, trust, and mutual benefit" (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). To assess the influence of CURRENT:LA on social capital, connections were defined as *interactions between people who may not otherwise come into contact with one another resulting in shared understanding*. These types of connections in the context of arts and cultural activity have been shown to foster shared meaning and context within communities, providing a foundation for the creation of social capital (Smith et al., 2016). Taking this one step further was an exploration involving the connection between social capital and social cohesion, or the extent to which community members are willing and able to cooperate with each other across social and economic divides in order to realize and achieve collective goals and outcomes (Stanley, 2003; Kawachi & Berkman, 2000). It is clear that CURRENT:LA FOOD created social capital by connecting attendees, artists, and programmers to each other through shared experiences, and that it enhanced social cohesion in the process.

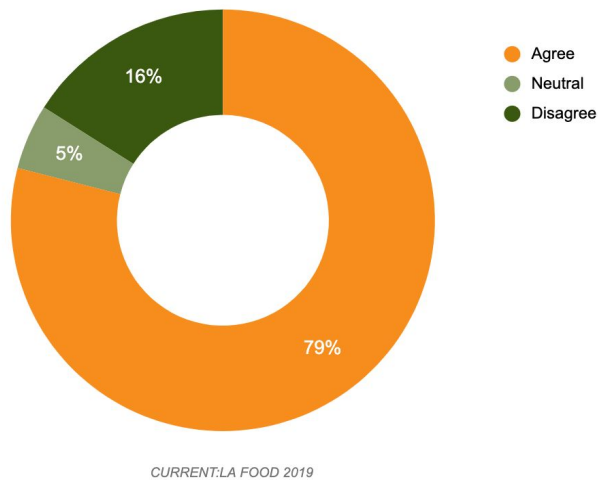


Figure 11. Attendee Survey Responses, “I met and/or interacted with people I did not know”



Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Julio César Morales & Max La Revière-Hedrick, *New Shores: The Future Dialogue Between Two Homelands* © 2019]

One major contributor to the creation of social capital was the sense of intimacy created by smaller events, during which participants were able to interact informally and get to know each other over shared interests and/or experiences. Opportunities to exchange stories, engage in collective art-making, or learn together in community were frequently referenced as enhancing positive feelings of connection and reciprocity. For instance, site staff at Palms Park [CD5] and Roger Jessup Park [CD7] reported that strong connections emerged between attendees because events were small and intimate. As one Site Production Assistant noted, “I think that creating a sense of intimacy really allows people to sort of linger for longer at the site.”

“The event was beautifully produced as the intimacy of the gathering really helped shape the lens through which we’re viewing the food we’re consuming - where it comes from and who it’s made by. It gave me new ideas in terms of exploring your identity and in a larger sense, your community, through food.” - Attendee Survey respondent, on their experience at Julio César Morales and Max LaRivière-Hedrick’s Chapter 3: Korea of New Shores

Shared meals were another highlight when it came to creating the kinds of connections that support the emergence of social capital, as they often incorporated all of these opportunities (shared stories, art-making, and learning) into a unified experience. Similarly, events that created inviting atmospheres through the use of practical and symbolic implements such as picnic blankets or other communal seating tended to encourage interactions among strangers. Also significant for cultivating connections were project elements that transformed community input *into* public art. Across Our Kitchen Tables’ *Oral History Project*, and Torolab’s *Watts Cookbook*, both of which focused on the compilation of community recipes as a process of cultural placemaking, are two such examples. In these ways, CURRENT:LA FOOD’s art projects and programs used public art as a medium for constituting meaningful gathering places and connecting experiences for people.

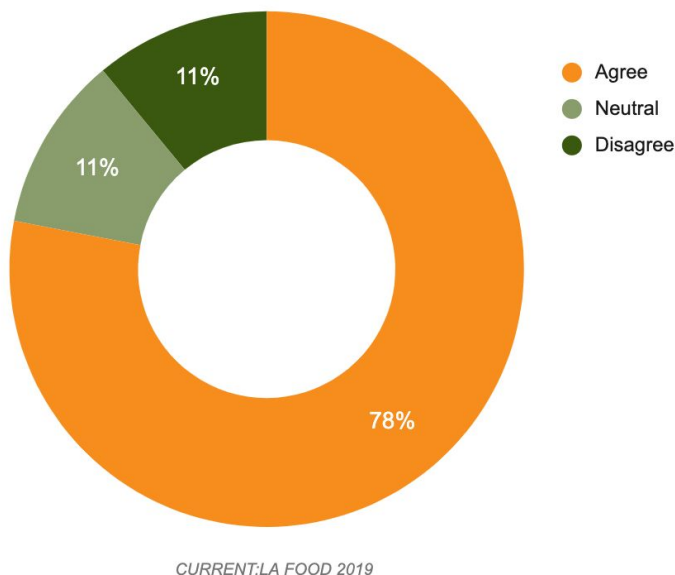


Figure 12. Attendee Survey Responses, “I feel more connected to my community”

As a result, over 75% of attendees reported feeling more connected to their community after attending a CURRENT:LA FOOD event.

“People were thrilled about these moments where they can meet someone that isn’t tied to their network or their own day to day. I had friends that visited that think CURRENT is important for that particular reason. Food has a way of bringing people together. That note came up again and again.” - CURRENT:LA FOOD/City Staff Member

A CLOSER LOOK: TED WATKINS IN WATTS

At Ted Watkins Memorial Park in Watts, CURRENT:LA fostered connections that left a lasting impression for all involved. Artist collective Torolab and programmer LA Commons shared a deep commitment to socially-engaged practices and the development of community partnerships, collaborating to create a memorable and enduring transformation within the community. Torolab, hailing from Tijuana, Mexico, moved temporarily to the Watts community for CURRENT:LA FOOD, embedding themselves in the fabric of the neighborhood before their project, *Watts Cookbook*, even began. They connected with many local residents and organizations, particularly the Watts Gang Prevention Task Force, which led to an exceptional opening day: there had been a shooting in the park the day before, so setup had been delayed, and local residents stepped in to help Torolab complete the installation of their vibrantly-multicolored food stand.

Thereafter, community leaders from the Task Force and other local organizations were in attendance every weekend, with many proudly wearing their “Watts Cookbook” t-shirts. As word started to spread about what was happening, neighbors who wouldn’t normally come to an art event started to get involved, resulting in a sense of community ownership over the project. Because Torolab’s place- and inquiry-based approach centered around the creation of a community cookbook, connections between attendees contributed to the creation of a new narrative for the neighborhood, one focused on art, food, culture, and community (Stern & Steifert, 2009).



“For those events that were more celebratory, I still think there was a level of learning and engagement around what was feasible with art in the community. For example in Watts... where events were about food and community, I heard people talking about the art. And those were interesting conversations.” - CURRENT:LA FOOD/City Staff Member

LA Commons, through their project *Family + Food = Love: A Parent Appreciation Picnic*, expanded upon a neighborhood tradition of parent appreciation events. Planned to coincide with Torolab’s second BBQ event, this one-day festival drew a crowd that was exceptionally integrated, with Watts’ African American and Latino communities coming together over freshly prepared food, sharing of recipes, and the memories that are so often intertwined with them. The Mexican Consul was also in attendance, creating an additionally meaningful connection for Torolab, and for LA Commons because of their long-standing work at MacArthur Park, a site very close to the Consulate. The atmosphere of joy that day, and at every CURRENT:LA FOOD event at Watkins, was felt by all. The connections created in Watts sparked community commitment to continuing the work, with partners now working together to create opportunities to expand its impact into the future.

Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for CURRENT:LA FOOD © [Torolab, *Watts Cookbook Fire-up and BBQ workshop* © 2019]

Collaborative Capacity

Partnerships of various forms emerged as a result of CURRENT:LA FOOD. Three categories of partnerships served as indicators of its impact on collaborative capacity: city-internal, city with external partners, and external partners with each other. Feedback from City staff, artists, and programmers indicate that over 90 external partners, including local nonprofits, community groups, clubs, neighborhood councils, schools, private businesses, and more, were engaged as partners for CURRENT:LA FOOD. Positive interactions were found between the triennial's many civic actors (including City, art, and food stakeholders) as a result of their involvement in CURRENT:LA FOOD, enhancing their capacity to collaborate more effectively in the future.

Interdepartmental collaboration in the planning and execution of CURRENT:LA has been absolutely critical to the triennial's evolution and success. CURRENT:LA expanded its partnership focus in CURRENT:LA FOOD with the hiring of two "Community Engagement Coordinators" (CECs). This role served two critical goals - working with Council Districts, park staff, and community members to identify and communicate local needs, and working with artists and programmers to craft responsive and inclusive engagement strategies.

With two iterations now under their belts, City staff pointed to growth in the quality of connections between DCA, Recreation and Parks, and Council District offices as a tangible benefit resulting from their work together on the project. Increased engagement of Council District offices enhanced the community focus that DCA continued to deepen, allowing for site-specific evaluations of community needs to take place for the first time. Collaboration between Recreation and Parks and DCA during site selection allowed both partners to achieve shared goals around activating new public spaces, and to plan CURRENT:LA FOOD events strategically around existing park uses and schedules. Finally, collaboration across divisions within DCA was enhanced, with staff reporting that the triennial afforded them opportunities to step outside of their usual silos and work alongside each other, improving internal dynamics and expanding the department's capacity for creative problem-solving.

Collaboration between the City and CURRENT:LA FOOD's many external stakeholders also resulted in the development of fertile ground for future partnerships. DCA's partnership with the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles represented an innovation in the triennial's approach to the curatorial process, lending institutional capacity and expertise to the selection and development of projects, and creating the conditions for mutual learning and continued improvements to CURRENT:LA's process. Artists and programmers frequently mentioned positive experiences working with Recreation and Parks staff onsite, leveraging their local knowledge and community connections to implement more site-responsive programming and promote more effectively. In addition, CURRENT:LA brought external stakeholders into conversations with Council Districts and City staff that allowed for the emergence of partnerships focused on the creation of new initiatives. A great example came from the connection between the Office of Councilmember John Lee [CD12] and LA Compost that was established at programmer Lucia Fabio's event *From Seed to Earth*. LA Compost Executive Director Michael Martinez was invited by Councilmember Lee to speak at a post-CURRENT:LA FOOD event in CD12, and these two entities are now in conversation about the creation of a compost hub in the District.



Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA).
Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Jazmin Urrea, *Imperishable* © 2019]

Also critical to a new framework for art as social practice, many of *CURRENT:LA FOOD*'s artists and programmers collaborated to create avenues for interaction with a mutual theme of interest. Not only was this incredibly artistically rewarding for many, but several artists and programmers made connections through their peers to others working in similar ways or on resonant issues, further expanding their communities of practice. Networks and relationships were strengthened in ways that are anticipated by many to lead to future collaboration, and it was noted repeatedly that *CURRENT:LA FOOD* was a powerful catalyst in this regard.

"I felt that CURRENT:LA created opportunities to spend time with people who are in this field, at the nexus of food and art, but who we don't necessarily get to interact with." - Programmer for *CURRENT:LA FOOD*

One budding relationship incubated by *CURRENT:LA FOOD* emerged between the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) and the Lincoln Heights Youth Arts Center (LHYAC). With support from the site's Community Engagement Coordinator, LAFPC and LHYAC collaborated on the creation of a special youth arts workshop grounded in creative exploration and dialogue around food justice. The artworks created by LHYAC's youth participants through the workshop were subsequently featured at City Hall during LAFPC's Annual Food Day, and LHYAC youth returned to LA State Historic Park later in the month to attend one of LAFPC's "fireside chat" events. Both parties were so positively impacted by their collaboration during *CURRENT:LA FOOD* that they are now discussing future opportunities to work together.

Workforce Development

Many artists noted that *CURRENT:LA FOOD* gave them the opportunity to do something they would not have been able to do otherwise. Artists with less prior experience creating public art frequently cited that the triennial represented an incredible opportunity to bring their work into the public sphere, and to facilitate a more public and dynamic dialogue on a topic of personal and social relevance. In addition, artists whose work had an existing public focus but a different thematic context expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the theme of food, which in some cases was not a central aspect of their practice prior to the triennial.

Several artists were able to leverage their CURRENT:LA FOOD experiences to test out new processes and techniques that led to individual learning and innovation, not to mention novel experiences for attendees. For many, CURRENT:LA FOOD helped to incubate the development of a concept or approach that an artist or programmer had been percolating but not yet had the space or support to realize, and this experience ultimately elevated their understanding and expanded ideas for what to do next. Overall, artists and programmers made many references to the value of experimentation in the public sphere, and to the professional validation and personal growth that came along with witnessing the public's (often enthusiastic) response.

The curatorial and planning emphasis placed on community engagement was also pointed to as an important factor that contributed to the continued artistic development of many involved. Several artists expressed intentions or made plans to create more public art after having had their first experience with it as part of the triennial. Programmers also noted that the triennial's significant theme, unique model, and presence across all fifteen Council Districts of Los Angeles created the potential for deepened and expanded connections to the city and its residents, and therefore enhanced their potential for impact.



Photo credit: Robbins, N. F. (2019).

"I think food is an incredible bridge building tool and it gives us all an opportunity to understand each other and so, for our organization to be in a community that we don't normally provide our programming to... was great for us, because we were able to connect with a whole new group of individuals and families." - Programmer for CURRENT:LA FOOD

Site staff also grew personally and professionally as a result of their involvement in CURRENT:LA FOOD. In fact, one of CURRENT:LA FOOD's programmers had previously worked in a site-based staff capacity on CURRENT:LA WATER, and another Site Production Assistant for CURRENT:LA FOOD went on to be hired part-time with the DCA.

"From a personal level, CURRENT has left me with really meaningful experiences and exposure to my hometown. We're always taught that L.A. has no history, but it does. The entertainment industry is constantly reinventing, but what I learned is that these neighborhoods have a deep sense of history." - CURRENT:LA FOOD Onsite Staff Member

"I will echo that as a native Angeleno, this made me appreciate my city on such a different level. I wish others had had the experience of experiencing CURRENT the way I did -- moving all over the city. It was just so wonderful." - CURRENT:LA FOOD Onsite Staff Member

Finally, data was collected to help measure how CURRENT:LA's provision of funding for public art ultimately benefited people working in other fields. Many of CURRENT:LA FOOD's artists and programmers hired additional staff, contractors, and suppliers to provide goods and services in support of their art projects and programs. Not only can this increase cultural equity and inclusion, it also provides valuable workforce development opportunities within the arts that would not exist otherwise (Mauldin, 2018). Based on artist/programmer budgets and focus group feedback, an estimated 230 additional people were employed as a result of CURRENT:LA FOOD, representing the following (non-exhaustive) categories:

- Production managers and assistants
- Photographers, videographers, and graphic designers
- Composers, musicians, and audio technicians
- Guest artists and performers
- Guest speakers and panelists
- Fabricators and installers
- Chefs, bakers, and caterers
- Advisers and curators
- Art handlers and drivers

Recommendations

This section identifies key takeaways and recommendations to support future iterations of CURRENT:LA and (hopefully) inspire other communities to develop similar programs.

First and foremost, it was universally agreed that the CURRENT:LA triennial model is unique, innovative, and valuable to multiple communities within and across Los Angeles. Central to this uniqueness was the merging of communities who do not always interact toward a common goal (see Figure 13). These communities can be broadly described as:

1. **City** - Local Government Agencies
2. **Art** - Contemporary artists and cultural producers
3. **Food** - Issues-based organizations

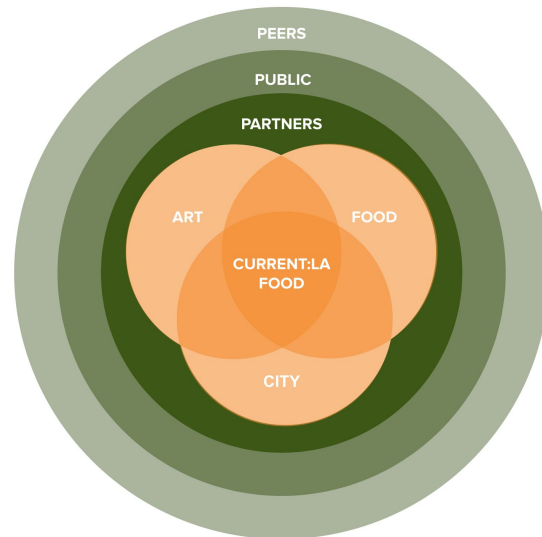


Figure 13. Communities and Audiences Impacted by CURRENT:LA FOOD

Additional elements of CURRENT:LA worth noting are:

- The temporary and ephemeral nature of the art projects speaks to concerns of the moment in regards to the theme (food) and allows artistic freedom in both medium and material, creating opportunities to bring museum-quality art into the public realm.
- The focus on events allowed for more engagement and collaboration among artists and programmers as well as between both groups and the public.
- Taking place completely in public parks exposed audiences that may not have been actively seeking art or cultural experience.

The diversity of approaches to the theme of food, the geographic coverage, and the timespan amounted to an expansive moment that was more than the sum of its parts. Organizers viewed and treated CURRENT:LA FOOD as a system in and of itself. Similar to other systems, CURRENT:LA FOOD was structured to adapt and create new pathways and partnerships. This system was then used as a collective tool to analyze other civic systems' approaches to global themes (e.g., water in 2016 and food in 2019). It is no surprise that an undertaking as significant as this requires new ways of conceptualizing and structuring systems of social practice public art. Four key recommendations are presented here to support future iterations of CURRENT:LA and (hopefully) inspire other communities to develop similar programs.

Promote Early, Often, and Everywhere

In the bustling metropolis that is Los Angeles, there is no shortage of events and activities going on and it can be tough for anyone to break through and reach a wide audience. CURRENT:LA FOOD's focus on direct community outreach expanded on the more standard promotional methods of paid and earned media and reached audiences that might not have been engaged in a traditional art experience.

Projects with the most visually-appealing initial renderings tended to receive the most press attention in the months prior to installation, pointing to the importance of strong visuals for the media to highlight. In addition, because of differing industry standards between mainstream and art-specific press outlets in terms of timelines (art-specific outlets tend to work on much longer timelines), targeting the latter necessitates having content available far in advance.

Other opportunities for early and ongoing promotion exist during the art project installation process, which fascinated many regular park visitors and often resulted in positive interactions with the public in advance of CURRENT:LA FOOD. This almost certainly served to increase word-of-mouth promotion as well. Pairing this effect with social media coverage focused on art project construction can create a "sneak-peek" feeling, akin to teasers, to intrigue audiences and build anticipation.

Artists and programmers are great promotional resources. Empowering them to engage in promotion, either by providing visual assets and CURRENT:LA collateral for approved use, or creating standardized procedures for interfacing with CURRENT:LA Marketing, can enhance their promotional reach and increase interest in the triennial among their existing audiences. This has the potential to encourage audiences to explore more of what CURRENT:LA has to offer, and for all artists and programmers to gain new audiences as a result.

CURRENT:LA FOOD was conceived around LA's budding public transportation system, and as future iterations continue to prioritize equity and accessibility as important factors in site selection, partnerships with local transit agencies such as LA Metro can reinforce this connection. Making the link to public transit in other CURRENT:LA marketing materials can also encourage attendees to make use of this infrastructure, and create a holistic impression of CURRENT:LA's commitment to equity, accessibility, and sustainability.

Finally, on-the-ground marketing, including poster,ing, flyer,ing, and placing informational brochures in strategic community locations, can enhance brand recognition within local communities, while reinforcing the notion that CURRENT:LA is a citywide happening. Hiring additional marketing support for DCA as the triennial's planning process gets underway could be invaluable in streamlining new promotional strategies and providing the on-the-ground capacity needed to execute more neighborhood-local approaches. Particularly when the primary intention is to activate an underutilized space, a robust marketing emphasis and accompanying staff support is needed.

Tailor, Translate, and Activate

Tailoring materials for different audiences has the potential to increase public understanding and resonance with CURRENT:LA. While traditional arts audiences may be familiar with the visual and didactic conventions of a triennial, CURRENT:LA's goal of engaging diverse audiences from within *and outside* of the art world means that a segmented approach is needed. An example of where this was done effectively for CURRENT:LA FOOD is where Community Engagement Coordinators created "neighborhood newsletters" tailored to local audiences, contextualizing the triennial and its presence in their local park. In these cases, the community seemed to have a better understanding of what was happening and seemed more able to identify with CURRENT:LA. This approach can be expanded inclusively to target specific audiences that DCA wants to reach, including individual communities, issue groups, sectors, and more.

In line with CURRENT:LA's engagement strategy, understanding the primary modes of communication within a neighborhood can enable local tailoring of outreach. For example, the community in Leimert Park was notably present on social media, whereas other communities tend toward other forms of communication such as phone trees or local announcement boards to share information. As CURRENT:LA continues to expand to new neighborhoods, this kind of informal local knowledge can be requested during the Community Needs Survey process in collaboration with local Council Districts. Overall, starting with a focus on encouraging attendance at the community level is a promising strategy for continuing to increase engagement. Especially for attendees new to CURRENT:LA and its unconventional model, identifying with the triennial's influence in their own backyards may become an invitation for them to branch out and visit additional sites in other neighborhoods.

Another element of tailoring outreach to increase engagement is translation. Translating all marketing materials into Spanish, spoken at home by 39% of Angelenos, as well as locally-relevant languages by site, can increase feelings of inclusion and recognition among attendees at CURRENT:LA. This recommendation can also be applied to programming and staffing. Offering programming in languages other than English, and/or providing translation services, can facilitate inclusion and reach new audiences (Mauldin, Kidd, & Ruskin, 2016). Similarly, ensuring that staff liaisons are hired and sited for maximum effectiveness with respect to overcoming language barriers can support inclusive outcomes.

Events can be thought of not only as strategies for engaging people, but also opportunities to build awareness of CURRENT:LA and the role of the arts in propelling forward conversations about critical issues. The more consistently the triennial had an event-based presence at a location, the more awareness was successively built over the course of the month, and attendees were better able to appreciate that their unique experience was part of a larger framework. In addition, there is enormous potential to connect communities to issues even more deeply in future iterations, by infusing more opportunities for participants to take action and get involved with local organizations beyond the triennial.

Practice Continuous Engagement

The consensus among CURRENT:LA FOOD's staff, artists, and programmers was that the triennial's continued emphasis on the creation of participatory, community-engaged public art was effective and essential to its success. It also deeply resonated with individual artists and programmers and was often cited as a primary impetus for getting involved. These findings are consistent with academic research showing that communities with a strong arts presence tend to be more connected and engaged, and are more likely to have diverse groups sharing common experiences (Smith et al., 2016). Continuing to move in this direction with future iterations will only serve to strengthen CURRENT:LA's impacts in terms of social capital, social cohesion, and collaborative capacity. For instance, maintaining a database of partners engaged and continuing to communicate with them between triennials can facilitate stronger engagement in advance of CURRENT:LA's next iteration and enhance the potential for collaboration in the interim.

"I love being involved in anything public art-related and socially engaged in this fashion, where I can be embedded in communities and be a part of different cultures and of the fabric of this city..." - Programmer for CURRENT:LA FOOD

CURRENT:LA has codified community engagement in its curatorial approach, and involving relevant staff positions as soon as project strategies begin to formulate can help to ensure that pertinent connections are made early enough to facilitate partnerships. The role of CURRENT:LA FOOD's Community Engagement Coordinators in connecting artists and programmers to local organizations, institutions, and businesses proved instrumental to impacts such as social capital and community cohesion, and incorporating their capacity into project development can help leverage additional local relationships. Furthermore, formal curatorial oversight throughout the entire period of planning and implementation (i.e. beyond project selection) can serve to strengthen artist and programmer support for community engagement.

Hiring community engagement staff as early as possible will also increase the potential to engage school-aged youth: given the timing of CURRENT:LA FOOD so close to the beginning of the academic year, logistical limitations prevented schools from being approached early enough to enable robust student participation in the 2019 triennial. Earlier hiring of site production staff could likewise increase local community engagement, adding onsite capacity for documentation, marketing, and community involvement in the installation of art projects, and enhancing the participatory framework that CURRENT:LA continues to strengthen.

Finally, continuing to expand engagement via social media can provide opportunities for participants to initiate and carry forward conversations about the issues addressed, about public art, and about their city through the lens of CURRENT:LA. Conceiving of social media as a tool for engagement in addition to promotion has the potential to draw in broader audiences, and allow people to "participate" even if they are not in the Los Angeles area (Smith, 2009). This can also serve to expose CURRENT:LA's model to new constituencies, and spark national and international interest in creating the kind of civic impact through social practice public art that CURRENT:LA has achieved.

Connect the Dots

The final recommendation relates to the connections and interconnections that CURRENT:LA's model can facilitate. Primary among these are the connections between artists and programmers that can emerge from this transformative shared experience. Artists and programmers spoke to the richness and rewards of being able to meet each other and/or experience each other's work, and supporting these kinds of connections through the provision of regular touchpoints is one way that CURRENT:LA can build on its existing success. Whether through a digital communication platform, more formal opportunities for artists and programmers to network, or simply a longer time-frame for the triennial's art projects and programs, these types of connections are invaluable in creating a CURRENT:LA community of practice.

Some suggested CURRENT:LA could extend even longer than a month - two months was suggested by some stakeholders. The argument for a longer time-frame extends beyond allowing artists and programmers more time to visit each other's works. Facilitating cultural equity and inclusion requires extensive relationship-building, and cultivating the kinds of relationships that have been most impactful as part of CURRENT:LA takes time. Particularly when siting artists and programmers in locations where they do not have existing connections, the effort and planning required to create partnerships that will effectively engage communities is significant. A longer time horizon can allow CURRENT:LA to penetrate the cultural consciousness of the city more deeply, and may facilitate attendance at more remote locations. As CURRENT:LA's network of partners continues to grow, maintaining strong community relationships can support streamlined engagement planning.

Finally, several people mentioned the importance of observing land acknowledgement and appreciated when this was done. Several CURRENT:LA FOOD events recognized Indigenous Peoples and highlighted the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and park sites. Making the connection between present-day public parks and their Indigenous histories can further deepen CURRENT:LA's impact on civic identity, and continue to engage Indigenous communities in the triennial's process can underscore the authenticity of this choice.

Conclusion

CURRENT:LA FOOD created meaningful outcomes as a result of its innovative proposal to bring museum-quality art into the public realm in socially-engaged ways. The evidence presented in this report demonstrates its effectiveness relative to the goals DCA established at its outset, namely engaging Angelenos with critical issues around food and civic life through interactions with public art, connecting them to each other and to community resources and initiatives in the process. Focusing on the intersecting infrastructures of food systems, public parks, and City-sponsored public art, CURRENT:LA FOOD invited Angelenos to envision new futures for their city built around principles of equity, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.

Cultural heritage and history of place were other prominent themes that resonated with visitors, offering alternative narratives for civic identity rooted in community values and the diversity of LA's culinary traditions. Engagement was strong, with audiences actively participating in the development and execution of projects. CURRENT:LA's inviting, publicly-accessible locations fostered convivial interactions among visitors, particularly where intimacy was facilitated, either through small group settings or an emphasis on hospitality. Experiences of inclusion led to positive impacts on social capital, and collaborative capacity among CURRENT:LA's artists, programmers, and multi-stakeholder planning team increased markedly.

The triennial's continued emphasis on community engagement and expanded use of social media elevated civic discourse around critical issues of food access, food justice, sustainability, and public health, among others. The level of awareness of these issues increased significantly for visitors, with many reportedly taking action in their own lives as a result of their CURRENT:LA experiences. Despite inevitable challenges in the planning and execution of this ambitious, multifaceted, month-long, and citywide triennial, CURRENT:LA is shifting common conceptions of what public art can be, and the impacts that it can have.

DCA's approach provides an incredibly promising model for other local governments to emulate as a form of civic innovation, and this report intends to serve as inspirational guidance on how to do so. Across the board, those involved reported deeply moving and sometimes even life-changing experiences as a result of their involvement with CURRENT:LA, and the transformational power of this kind of sustained but fleeting citywide activation within public life cannot be underestimated. With each iteration, CURRENT:LA will change and grow, but at its core remains a commitment to the democratization of art for social impact.

References

- Grodach, C. (2009). Art spaces, public space, and the link to community development. *Community Development Journal*, 45(4), 474-493.
- Hisa, A. (2019). CURRENT:LA FOOD Curatorial Statement. Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles (ICA LA). Los Angeles, California.
- Hocevar, S. P., Thomas, G. F., & Jansen, E. (2006). Building collaborative capacity: An innovative strategy for homeland security preparedness. In M. Beyerlein, S. Beyerlein, & F. Kennedy (Eds.), *Innovation through Collaboration* (p. 255-274).
- Jermyn, H. (2001). *The Arts and Social Exclusion: A Review Prepared for the Arts Council of England*. 1–43. Retrieved from www.creativecity.ca/database/files/library/arts_social_exclusion_uk.pdf
- Kawachi, I. & Berkman, L. (2000). Social cohesion, social capital, and health. In: L.F. Berkman, & I. Kawachi (Eds.), *Social Epidemiology* (174-190). New York, NY: Oxford Press.
- Mauldin, B. (2018). Research & Evaluation at the Los Angeles County Arts Commission. Retrieved from www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/re_2016-17report-web.pdf
- Mauldin, B., Kidd, S. L., & Ruskin, J. (2016). Los Angeles County Arts Commission Cultural Equity and Inclusion Initiative: Literature Review.
- Narayan, D. & Cassidy, M. F. (2001). A Dimensional Approach to Measuring Social Capital: Development and Validation of a Social Capital Inventory. *Current Sociology*, 49(2), 59-102.
- Onyx, J. & Bullen, P. (2000). *Measure Social Capital in Five Communities*. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 36(1), 23-42.
- Smith, M., Fisher, R., & Mader, J. (2016). *Social Impacts and Benefits of Arts and Culture: A Literature Review*. Retrieved from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/pch/CH4-187-2016-eng.pdf
- Smith, S.J. (2009) The creative use of online social media to increase public engagement and participation in the professional arts through collaborative involvement in creative practice. *Proceedings of the Computers and the History of Art (CHArt 09)*, London, November 2009. Retrieved from <https://dora.dmu.ac.uk/handle/2086/3233>
- Stallings, S. N. & Mauldin, B. (2016). Public Engagement in the Arts: A Review of Recent Literature. Retrieved from www.lacountyarts.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/lacac_pubenglitrev.pdf
- Stanley, D. (2003). What Do We Know about Social Cohesion: The Research Perspective of the Federal Government's Social Cohesion Research Network. *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28(1), 5-17.
- Stern, M. J. & Pray, K. L. M., (2014). *Measuring the Outcomes of Creative Placemaking*. Retrieved from https://repository.upenn.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=siap_placemaking
- Stern, M. J. & Seifert, S. C. (2009). *Civic Engagement and the Arts: Issues of Conceptualization and Measurement*. Retrieved from https://animatingdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/CE_Arts_SternSeifert.pdf

Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology

The City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) issued a public call to independent evaluators for CURRENT:LA FOOD, and See Change Institute (SCI) was selected. The role of SCI was to assess the impact of CURRENT:LA for target audiences throughout the city. The following logic model was developed to guide this work:



To evaluate inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts, a variety of data collection methods were employed. These included field observations from three evaluators and 13 onsite CURRENT:LA staff; 1,440 Eventbrite RSVPs; over a dozen in-depth debriefs with City staff, artists, and programmers; 8 partner survey responses; 5 weeks of social media and web analytics, and 176 attendee survey responses. This appendix details data collection methods used for evaluation.

Team Interviews

The goal of the preliminary stakeholder interviews was to assess the needs and opportunities for the CURRENT:LA FOOD evaluation. Specific goals included getting input on program goals and priorities, opportunities for data collection, and areas for improvement from the last evaluation. Meetings were conducted with six core project teams:

- Leadership team
- Site production team
- Curatorial team
- Public programming team
- Marketing team
- Community Engagement team

We designed semi-custom agendas for each meeting based on a general template that asked about their role in CURRENT, their goals for CURRENT, what kind of data would be useful to them, and what they hope attendees would get out of their CURRENT experience.

Document Review

To understand and assess the strengths and weaknesses of CURRENT:LA Water as well as the goals and artists for CURRENT:LA FOOD, program materials - including all evaluation materials from CURRENT:LA WATER, the community engagement survey responses, master events calendar, curator bios, and all artist project proposals - were reviewed.

Document review continued throughout the project to paint a picture of CURRENT:LA FOOD, providing the foundation and understanding from which all other work built. Activity data was collected in partnership with the project team, including Site Production Assistants (SPAs), Community Engagement Coordinators (CECs), production leads, curators, and the marketing team. Some of the data sources that were collected from and with these team members include:

- Artist and programmer applications and project/program descriptions
- Photographs from art projects and programs
- Descriptions of art projects and programs from onsite teams
- Copies of invites and online listings
- Press releases and media alerts

Visitor Analytics

Two methods were used for visitor analytics: Eventbrite and field counting.

Eventbrite. The evaluation, production and marketing teams created Eventbrite pages for all time-bound CURRENT:LA events. While RSVPing was not mandatory for attendance, it was strongly recommended and mentioned in all marketing materials. Additionally, several events had limited capacity, in which case preference was given to visitors who had RSVPed via Eventbrite prior to the event. The following information was collected from each person who registered on Eventbrite: name, email address, zip code, and how they heard about the event. While Eventbrite was not relied on for attendance counts, the zip code data enabled an assessment of the geographic diversity of CURRENT:LA attendees.

Field Counting. Data for field counting was collected by the SPAs and analyzed by the evaluation team. Each SPA was provided with a tally counter to assist them with field counting. An in-person field counting training was conducted two days prior to program launch. Field counting approaches for art projects and programs differed slightly, as follows:

- **Events.** SPAs provided estimated counts for each event. Events with a predictable start, end, and visitor flow (i.e., everyone was sitting down or traveling from a designated starting place to a designated ending place) were relatively easy to count, especially with the tally counter. For longer events with unpredictable crowd flow, it was recommended that the SPAs conduct multiple counts throughout the event. For example, there might have been one count at the beginning of the event (~30 minutes in), one at the peak of event attendance, and one towards the end of the event. Using these methods, SPAs made headcount estimates, which they reported on the [SPA Check-In form](#)⁴.

⁴ In addition to approximate attendance counts, SPAs had the option to provide additional notes about the events (i.e., stories, observations, etc.).

- **Art projects.** For the art projects on constant view throughout the month, visitor counting was more difficult. For these art projects, SPAs visited the site for three hours once a week. They then filled out the [SPA Check-In form](#)⁵ with the number of visitors they counted. The evaluation team created a spreadsheet with slots for weekdays and weekends (in 3-hour blocks) and filled in headcount data from the SPA check-ins. Using these numbers, an average attendance number per site per time slot (as available) was calculated and used those averages to estimate attendance during time periods when no data was collected (statistical imputation). Totals were calculated from a combination of the input and imputed data.⁶

Media Analytics

Web analytics were collected through DCA to assess overall web traffic and trends over the course of the project. Metrics collected include the number of users visiting the CURRENT:LA website, number of visits by page, average time on website, and pages visited.

Social media related to CURRENT was tracked to assess what visitors, artists, and programmers shared about their experiences with CURRENT without any constraints imposed by researchers (e.g., questions asked, or not asked); allows for a more organic assessment of perceptions. To track CURRENT:LA FOOD on social media, the social listening tool *Keyhole* was used. Keyhole allows users to set up keyword/hashtag and account trackers to analyze the number of posts, engagements, followers, etc. for each keyword and/or account over time, pulling data from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as news, blogs, and forums. For keyword/hashtag tracking, Keyhole compiled the following analytics:

- **Overview.** The number of posts that used CURRENT:LA FOOD (or some variation) over a designated period of time, the number of users who made posts referencing CURRENT, the number of engagements (i.e., likes, comments, shares), the number of unique users who saw posts (i.e., reach), and the number of times users saw posts (i.e., impressions; a single user could deliver multiple impressions).
- **Top posts.** The most engaging (i.e., greatest number of likes, comments, shares, and retweets) OR the most recent posts that contained references to CURRENT.
- **Related topics.** Other hashtags users used in posts that referenced CURRENT.
- **Influential users.** Users with the highest number of engagements on OR highest frequency of posts that referenced CURRENT.
- **Sentiment.** The percentage of posts referencing CURRENT that had a positive, negative, and neutral sentiment.
- **Location.** The country and state where users were located (this information was based on account metadata, not IP addresses, so locations were not real-time).

⁵ The same SPA Check-in Form was used for art projects and programs; the SPAs specified on the form whether they were reporting on an event or a weekly site visit.

⁶ Statistical imputation was only possible if SPAs provided attendance counts at least weekly at each site.

- **Gender.** The ratio of males to females who made posts that referenced CURRENT (this information came from account metadata).
- **Most linked websites.** The website users who were referencing CURRENT were linking to most often in their posts (Twitter and Facebook only).
- **Post type.** The percentage of posts referencing CURRENT that were original, replies, or retweets (Twitter only).

Field Observation

The evaluation team had a heavy presence at CURRENT:LA FOOD art projects and programs, which allowed a better understanding of the content of the triennial and development of rich descriptions for events across the 15 sites. Members of the evaluation team, with assistance from the SPAs and CECs, conducted field observations throughout the month of CURRENT. All three groups actively engaged with artists, programmers, and visitors and recorded their impressions, interactions, and feedback. SPAs provided feedback via the [SPA Check-In form](#) and Basecamp, while CECs provided feedback via email and weekly meetings with our team. Field observations included text entries, site photos, and videos.

Visitor Survey

A [visitor survey](#) was drafted to assess overall impressions and individual outcomes of attending one or more CURRENT:LA FOOD art projects or programs. Questions included the following:

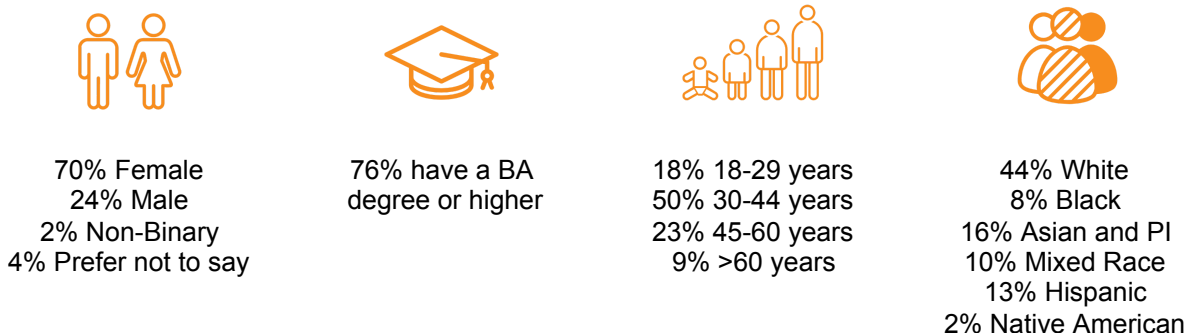
- Which events/activities they attended;
- What their impressions of CURRENT:LA FOOD were;
- What they learned from their participation;
- How CURRENT:LA impacted their attitudes toward art, Los Angeles, and food;
- Whether they met or established deeper connections with someone at an event; and
- Whether CURRENT influenced their intent to change their behavior.

The survey took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. Respondents' names and email addresses were not associated with the rest of their responses. Participation was incentivized by offering respondents the opportunity to enter into a raffle to win a prize for a \$100 gift card.

The survey was promoted via QR code at all sites (bottom of the banner on each shipping container), an automated thank you email sent via Eventbrite, personal invitations during field observation, and via social media posts from the DCA and other CURRENT:LA Partners.

While the individuals who chose to complete this survey only represent a segment of the CURRENT:LA audience, even this relatively small sample ($n = 160$) provided meaningful insights about attendees' experiences and the impact of CURRENT.

The demographic breakdown of the sample is as follows:



While attendee survey responses are presented throughout this report, their associated findings were triangulated with other data, due to the small number of survey responses relative to attendance.

Stakeholder Feedback

Finally, a series of stakeholder feedback sessions were conducted to better understand how CURRENT:LA influenced the connections between stakeholders and impacted their capacity for collaboration with one another. Sessions were conducted with the following groups:

- SPAs (two meetings; one midway through CURRENT and one after CURRENT)
- DCA staff (including marketing team)
- Production staff
- Parks staff
- Artists and Programmers

Debriefs consisted of a ~60 minute semi-structured conversation via (recorded) conference call or in-person meeting. Individuals in these groups who were unable to participate in a debrief session received an online version of the debrief to provide their feedback.

These staff and stakeholders provided unique data that added significant depth to our findings. These team members, especially SPAs, CECs, artists, and programmers, had regular and significant direct contact with visitors and were able to communicate visitor feedback as well as their own impressions. Questions asked about their experiences with CURRENT, their observations of visitors, outcomes they experienced or witnessed, and suggestions they may have for future iterations of CURRENT:LA. Stakeholders who were not available to attend a debrief session (in person or over the phone) received a digital form to share their thoughts.

In addition to collecting feedback from those directly involved in the production and execution of CURRENT:LA, community leaders were identified by the CECs to hear their thoughts about CURRENT:LA FOOD. These community members received an online survey inquiring about the impact they thought CURRENT:LA had on their communities and their impressions of CURRENT:LA as a whole.

Appendix B: Curatorial Committee

Elsa Longhauser

Elsa Longhauser established the ICA LA, formerly known as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), as an epicenter of artistic and intellectual energy and innovation. As executive director, Longhauser continues to identify pioneering artists and thinkers and forge new connections among artists, curators, and audiences. The exhibitions she supports and organizes bring international, national, and local artists to the Museum and add essential voices to the chorus of contemporary art. During her tenure as director of the Galleries at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia from 1983 to 2000, Longhauser focused on three key artistic practices: important American artists, European artists who had not yet been shown in the United States, and outsider artists whose work merited sustained scholarly inquiry yet had not previously been placed in a fine-art context. Her extensive work in this field led to her collaboration with the renowned curator Harald Szeemann on an encyclopedic exhibition and catalogue for the American Folk Art Museum in New York, *Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century* (Chronicle Books, 1998). In 2000, when Longhauser came to SMMoA—a non-collecting museum of contemporary art in a diverse, cosmopolitan city—it was the perfect laboratory for developing what she calls “a collection of ideas”. Since then, she has continually diversified the museum’s curatorial voice, inviting the collaboration of distinguished guest curators as well as international scholars, performers, and activists.

Asuka Hisa

Asuka Hisa has developed unique public engagement programs for the ICA LA, formerly known as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), since 1998. Prior to SMMoA, she taught art to youth in France and to students of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Over the years, she has created a number of acclaimed and award-winning programs: Wall Works, Cause for Creativity, Park Studio, and ARTransmissions. In 2012, Wall Works received the Excellence in Museum Education award from the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Association of Museums. She collaborates with ICA LA’s curatorial staff and director Elsa Longhauser to produce exhibition programs and multi-disciplinary presentations titled *A Collection of Ideas*. She received her B.A. from Barnard College and her National Diploma of Art from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in France. As an artist, she has exhibited in Europe and in Los Angeles. She is the past President of the Museum Educators of Southern California (MESOC). In 2003, she received the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture. In 2007, she was appointed to the Arts Commission of the City of Santa Monica and formed the Arts and Learning Committee in 2009. She is on the board of Automata Arts, an avant-garde puppetry and film organization. She also sits on the Arts and the Urban Fabric committee for the City of Santa Monica Arts Commission.

Jamillah James

Jamillah James is Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA). Previously, she was Assistant Curator at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and organized exhibitions and programs for Art + Practice in LA's Leimert Park. Past exhibitions include John Outterbridge: Rag Man (co-organized with Anne Ellegood), Njideka Akunyili Crosby: The Beautiful Ones, Two Films by Akosua Adoma Owusu, Selections from the Brockman Gallery Archives, and Charles Gaines: Librettos: Manuel de Falla/Stokely Carmichael (with Ellegood). At the Hammer, she organized A Shape That Stands Up at Art + Practice, Hammer Projects: Njideka Akunyili Crosby; Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989 (with Ellegood; curated by The Studio Museum in Harlem); and assisted Connie Butler on the exhibition and publication Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth. Previously, James has held curatorial positions at the Studio Museum in Harlem and Queens Museum, and has independently organized exhibitions, performances, and screenings throughout the US and Canada since 2004. Her writings have been included in Artforum and the International Review of African American Art, and featured in exhibition catalogues for the ICA LA, the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York, the Hammer Museum; the Nasher Museum at Duke University, and the Studio Museum, among others. James is an adjunct professor in the Graduate Art Department at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, and regularly lectures on curating, contemporary art, and professional development for artists at various colleges and institutions across the country.

Diana Nawi

Diana Nawi is an independent curator based in Los Angeles. Most recently, she has organized Adler Guerrier: Conditions and Forms for black Longevity at the California African American Museum. She previously served as Associate Curator at Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) for five years, where she curated major exhibitions and organized newly commissioned projects with artists including Yael Bartana, John Dunkley, Iman Issa, Bouchra Khalili, LOS JAICHACKERS, Shana Lutker, and Nari Ward. Prior to joining PAMM, Nawi worked as an assistant curator on the Abu Dhabi Project of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and served as a fellow at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Nawi's writing has appeared in publications for the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, MOCA GA, Marrakech Biennial, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum Villa Stuck, National Gallery of Jamaica, New Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Studio Museum of Harlem, among others. Most recently Nawi was selected (with Naima Keith) to organize Prospect.5, the next edition of the New Orleans triennial (Fall of 2020).

Lauren Mackler

Lauren Mackler is a French / American curator and graphic designer based in Los Angeles. In 2010, she founded Public Fiction, a forum to stage exhibitions and performances by contemporary artists, a year later she founded the PF journal with the same mission in print. Mackler has organized Public Fiction exhibitions at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) LA, the Hammer Museum, The MAK Center for Art and Architecture's Schindler House, Artissima LIDO in Turin, Italy, and Frieze Projects in New York, among others. She is currently the Managing Editor of SubLevel, CalArts' literary magazine out of the School of Critical Studies, and has been faculty at the School of Visual Arts in New York, the Graduate Department of Art at UCLA, and Otis College of Art and Design. Mackler is a contributor to various periodicals, catalogues, and artist monographs. She is also a founding member of the Artists Acquisition Club, a non-profit which collectively-collects works by artists' artists and gifts them to institutions. In 2015, she was awarded the Rome Prize by the American Academy in Rome.

Marco Rios

Marco Rios is a Los Angeles-based artist who works in sculpture, photography, video, and performance. He received his M.F.A. in Studio Art from the University of California, Irvine and his undergraduate degree from Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. His work has been exhibited at LACMA; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; Artists Space, New York; Estacion, Tijuana, Mexico. Previous exhibitions include Death's Boutique at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Mixed Signals, a traveling exhibition organized by ICI; This is Killing Me, a group exhibition at MASS MoCA; Despair Beyond Despair, a solo project at LAX ART, Los Angeles; and the 2008 California Biennial at Orange County Museum of Art. Recently, he had his third solo exhibition "S" is for Sincere formerly formally "F" is for Fake at Simon Preston Gallery, NY; a solo project Anatomy of an Absent Artist at Santa Monica Museum, CA; and an outdoor public project at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. In 2007, he was a recipient of the California Community Foundation Fellowship. In 2008, he was selected as one of the James Irvine Foundation Visions from the New California awardees, and in 2009 awarded an ARC grant from The Durfee Foundation. Most recently he was awarded an Art Matters grant in 2016. Marco Rios is represented by Simon Preston Gallery in NY and has been Gallery Curator of The Luckman Gallery at The Luckman Fine Arts Complex at Cal State LA since 2010.

Appendix C: Site Descriptions

CD1. LA State Historic Park and the HUB

Artist: Adrià Julià

Programmer: L.A. Food Policy Council

The Los Angeles State Historic Park was the host for the CURRENT:LA FOOD HUB. This HUB provided details to all guests about all aspects of CURRENT:LA. It was staffed every week on Wednesday through Sunday throughout the month and provided marketing materials and resources to all visitors.



The site itself, in the heart of L.A.'s Chinatown neighborhood, also hosted weekly Wednesday night events organized by the L.A. Food Policy Council and its partners, and a single film screening and performance from artist Adrià Julià. The Wednesday night events were part of a series called *Layers in the Land: Stories of Food Across Centuries*, which focused on the history of the Los Angeles food system, starting with the indigenous people and plants who lived on the land before colonization, and continuing with stories about European settlement, food sovereignty, and sustainability. In the same vein, Adrià Julià's film, *A Very White Flower*, shared the history of popcorn with CURRENT:LA FOOD attendees, focusing particularly on Spanish colonialism in the Americas.

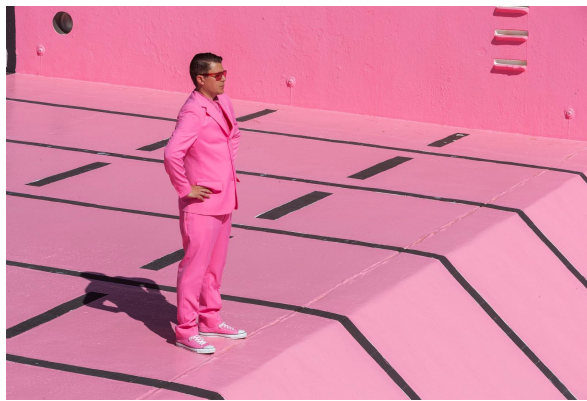
Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for CURRENT:LA FOOD © [Adrià Julià, *A Very White Flower* © 2019]

CD2. Valley Plaza Recreation Center

Artist: Shana Lutker

Programmer: Christopher Reynolds

Nestled in North Hollywood, this CURRENT:LA FOOD location boasted two different art installations. One of the installations, the *Contemporary Museum of Temporary Containers* by Shana Lutker, focused on recycling and recyclables. This installation directed much of the conversation at this site, which focused largely on the intersection of food and inorganic waste (e.g., plastic).



The second installation was located in the Valley Plaza Recreation Center pool, which was painted entirely in Baker-Miller pink. This installation served as the set for Christopher Reynolds *Appetite Monument* performances. These multisensory performances presented a critique of manipulative food marketing and consumption practices. Outside of these performances, workshops related to waste and recycling filled out the remainder of the schedule at this site.

Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Shana Lutker, *Contemporary Museum of Temporary Containers* © 2019] [Christopher Reynolds, *Appetite Monument Movement #1* © 2019]

CD3. Reseda Recreation Center

Artist: Eva Aguila + Coaxial Arts Foundation

Programmer: Across Our Kitchen Tables

The Reseda Recreation Center is a large and frequently used park in Reseda. *CURRENT:LA FOOD* events on site meant that community soccer games ended up being paired with free taco bars and tortilla making demonstrations at the outdoor earthen oven, which remained on display all month.



There were two events at this site, a screening of the documentary film *Comida a Mano*, which discussed the social stigma around eating with one's hands in Western, eurocentric culture, and a festival about art, culture, and ecological histories. This festival featured a pop-up marketplace, a traditional arts workshop, cooking demos, family activities, and a dance performance, inviting viewers to eat, exchange ideas, and reflect on local and global histories.

Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Eva Aguila & Coaxial Arts Foundation, *Comida a Mano* © 2019]

CD4. Pan Pacific Park

Artist: Michael Rakowitz

Programmer: Leyna Lightman

Pan Pacific Park is a very well used park in the middle of L.A.'s Fairfax District. This site boasted an art exhibit and event series from both the artist and the programmer. Most events at this site were filled to or beyond capacity.



The artist's events took place in Michael Rakowitz's mosaic reconstruction of the ancient Palace of Nimrud (present day Iraq). His event series, *Beneath the Date Palms*, included three community dinners (one celebrating the Jewish harvest festival, *Sukkot*), all of which focused on and supported members of the Iraqi diaspora and Iraq Veterans Against the War.

The programmer's exhibit and event series revolved around community bread making in an outdoor adobe oven. In ancient times, many communities shared access to a single town oven. Leyna Lightman's programming intended to revive this communal baking tradition and collaborate with women from different regions of the world to prepare, bake, and share bread over conversations that explored the history and heritage of this fundamental food.

Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Michael Rakowitz, *Beneath the Date Palms* © 2019]

CD5. Palms Park

Artist: Ry Rocklen

Programmer: Babsi Loisch

Palms Park in West Los Angeles was a very busy site for events. Both the artist and programmer held regular events, from intimate conversations about breastfeeding, nurturing, and family with Babsi Loisch, to fun and engaging performances of Ry Rocklen's *Food Group: The Body Palms*, a musical featuring actors wearing costumes of some of America's favorite hand-held foods. While moving through the park as if it were a giant body, this



performance sought to highlight the power and danger of these foods and our relationships to them. Unfortunately, Ry Rocklen's sculpture at this site needed to be removed part way through the exhibit period, but the event schedule kept this park active throughout the month.

Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Ry Rocklen, *Food Group: The Body Palms* © 2019]

CD6. Delano Recreation Center

Artist: Carolyn Pennypacker Riggs & Annie Gimas

Programmer: Women's Center for Creative Work

This park in Van Nuys was one of CURRENT:LA FOOD's event-only locations, where there were no object-based art projects on display for the community to view at their leisure.

However, this site hosted several events, including a screening of the animated film *Going Bananas*, which shines light on the problematic history and conditions of the western banana market, workshops about composting with LA Compost, and a series of participatory vocal and movement performances, leading up to the finale, a musical performance of *ALL AGAIN*. At this site, the Van Nuys neighborhood got to be the audience *and* the artist!



Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Carolyn Pennypackery Riggs & Annie Gimas, *ALL AGAIN* © 2019]

CD7. Roger Jessup Park

Artist: Emily Marchand

Programmer: Bed & Breakfast

Considered one of the more ‘out of the way’ CURRENT:LA FOOD locations in Pacoima, this site didn’t offer any stationary art exhibits (only one of two sites that did not), but did have a vibrant array of events. At one event, 1000 lunches were packed to be delivered to Angelenos experiencing homelessness, and at others, solar ovens and cookers were used to make coffee, bread, stew and even s’mores!



Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Bed & Breakfast, *Solar Cooking* © 2019]

CD8. Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Artist: Jazmin Urrea

Programmer: Sustainable Economic Enterprises - Los Angeles (SEE-LA)



One of the more iconic standing art exhibits from CURRENT:LA FOOD, this exhibit was affectionately referred to as 'Cheeto Stonehenge.' This large series of statues in the center of mid-city critiques the inaccessibility of fresh food in underserved parts of Los Angeles. It attracted interest from neighborhood locals, as well as individuals from all over the city.

In addition to this popular exhibit, Martin Luther King Jr. Park also hosted a series of conversations about food insecurity, health, community building, and veganism, entitled *Imperishable Talks*. Events at this park culminated with SEE-LA's day-long event, *Anyone Can Grow*, which included workshops about composting and food justice and featured speakers with experience in farming and community organizing, among other things. During the final weekend of events at this site, this park hosted a panel of 15 selected artists, who each presented and reflected on a memorable meal, from the sublime to the traumatic.



Image Alesafar, S. (2019). *Imperishable Vegan* [digital image].

credit: Alesafar, S. (2019). *SEE-LA 10/26* [digital image].

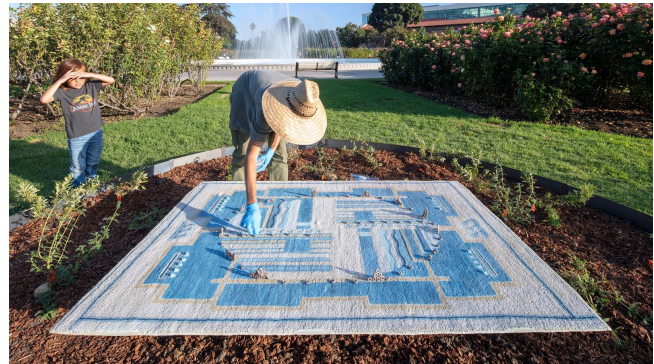
CD9. Exposition Park Rose Garden

Artist: Michael Queenland

Programmer: Center for the Arts Eagle Rock

Located near downtown L.A., this heavily trafficked park exhibited Michael Queenland's magnetic cereal configuration among rows of roses. In addition to this exhibit, there were two events at this site.

The first event, *California Food Chains*, focused on the repopulation and use of native plant species in Southern California to aid the dwindling bird and insect populations and promote the knowledge of native plants' uses among present day Californians. Michael Queenland grew his own native California plant seedlings (edible and non-edible plants) that he offered for free to those who attended. Speakers at this event discussed the uses and benefits of planting native plants, as it promotes the pollination of fruit and vegetable plants and supports Southern California's rich biodiversity.



The second event, hosted by the programmer, Center for the Arts Eagle Rock, was an all-day, all ages event that took place across the park. It brought together members of L.A.'s art and culinary communities to engage participants in a vibrant series of hands-on activities exploring the city's rich and diverse art and food cultures. Visitors had the opportunity to partake in an enchanted picnic and painting experience, pop-up food poetry, vegetable printmaking, and heritage chocolate-making. Because of the location of this park in proximity to many of Los Angeles' museums, this site attracted visitors from all around the world!

Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Michael Queenland, *Untitled* © 2019]

Alesafar, S. (2019). *Untitled 1* [digital image].

CD10. Leimert Plaza Park

Artist: Nari Ward

Programmer: Süprseed

This park, in the heart of Leimert Plaza, held events that boasted huge crowds and beautifully displayed community engagement. This site hosted what was most likely one of the most notable events of CURRENT:LA FOOD: *SÜPRFEST*, a vegan food festival. *SÜPRFEST* brought in nearly a thousand people to enjoy healthy, plant-based foods at a free or reduced cost, making this type of food accessible to a community that typically does not have access to it. In addition to vegan food, this festival incorporated other aspects of wellness, such as guided, intersectional meditation and yoga sessions.



On the other weekends of CURRENT:LA FOOD, this site hosted a series of events called *Enchanted Servers*. These events were nothing short of spiritual, with poetry readings, drumming, and dancing meant to embrace African culture and pay respect to the ancestors of the African diaspora. The performers at these events invited the audience to move around the park with them, ultimately circling around Nari Ward's sculpture for an inclusive and engaging experience. These performances were accompanied by an interactive photo booth featuring Nari Ward's work, and several South LA based food trucks.

Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [SÜPRSEED, *SÜPRFEST* © 2019]
[Nari Ward, *Enchanted Servers* © 2019]

CD11. Venice Beach Recreation Center

Artist: Cooking Sections

Programmer: Human Resources LA

Built into the center of Muscle Beach in Venice, Cooking Sections created a self-guided walking tour titled *Mussel Beach*, which roamed the area while educating its audience about the local neighborhood and its connection to the history of mussels. This project delved into a holistic health model for the human body, the body of mussels, and the body of the city of Los Angeles. The project told stories featuring mussels, filter feeders that clean seawater by breathing, as the protagonists. As active 'digestive machines' that capture and break down pollutants, Cooking Sections used mussels to explore the diverse ecologies of Venice Beach and how to improve the state of life – human and other-than-human – in the city at large.



In addition to this walking tour, this site hosted weekend performance art pieces from the public programmer, Human Resources LA. For these performances, a diverse group of artists contributed 'recipe' versions of new and existing artworks. Then, facilitators used the four handball courts next to Muscle Beach as theatrical stages to perform these recipes in front of a public audience, resulting in a bizarre and entertaining show for attendees.

Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Cooking Sections, *Mussel Beach*© 2019]

CD12. Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center

Artist: Nonfood

Programmer: Lucia Fabio

Another one of the less central sites, Orcutt Ranch Horticultural Center in West Hills created a gorgeous environment for discussions about native plants and sustainable eating, as well as an ideal home for the art piece on display -- a tour-able algae growing greenhouse. The regular artist workshops were complemented by a single, day-long picnic, guided walking tour, and conversation comparing the life cycle of humans and plants, all organized by programmer Lucia Fabio.



Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Nonfood, *Algae Bioreactor 1* © 2019]

CD13. Barnsdall Park

Artist: Julio César Morales + Max La Riviere-Hedrick

Programmer: Los Angeles Eats Itself

Artists Julio César Morales + Max La Riviere-Hedrick and programmer Los Angeles Eats Itself turned East Hollywood's Barnsdall Park into a very busy event location. Free, weekly community dinners brought hundreds of Angelenos to Barnsdall to honor the culture and taste traditional foods of various immigrant communities in East Hollywood, including Armenian, Korean, Thai, and Mayan communities. Community members also showed up for Los Angeles Eats Itself's series of workshops exploring survivalist culture. These events focused on topics such as MREs (Meal, Ready-to-Eat) from various cultures across the world, fermentation techniques, and efficient use of resources. These multicultural, and at times futuristic, events were a hit!



Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Julio César Morales & Max La Revière-Hedrick, *New Shores: The Future Dialogue Between Two Homelands* © 2019]
[Los Angeles Eats Itself, *SHOOK: A Survivalist Last Supper* © 2019]

CD14. Pershing Square

Artist: Nancy Lupo
Programmer: The Golden Dome

Situated on a corner of Pershing Square in the middle of downtown L.A., Nancy Lupo's installation, *Open Mouth*, placed benches in a circular formation that represented a human set of teeth. Inspired by benches the artist encountered in Rome, with thirty-two rounded end elements that represent the number of teeth in the adult human mouth, the work is a stage for viewing, meeting and thinking about the metabolism of the city. This site hosted various performances by the artist, musicians, writers and others which took place among the benches throughout the duration of CURRENT:LA FOOD.



The programmer at this site, the Golden Dome School, created an immersive food consumption experience called *Rainbow Transmissions*, which appealed to all the senses, with colorful costumes, multicolored food items, vocal and musical performances, and tasty bites to eat.

Image credit: Photo by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Nancy Lupo, *Open Mouth* © 2019]

Anderson, J. (2019). *Untitled* [digital image].

CD15. Ted Watkins Memorial Park

Artist: Torolab

Programmer: LA Commons

Community picnics and BBQs marked the month-long activities in the Watts neighborhood Ted Watkins Memorial Park. Torolab worked closely with the local community to turn their own loved and cherished family recipes into a community cookbook. To bring the community together for this project, Torolab hosted four barbecues with tasty free food and handmade tortillas. During the second week of events, the barbecue coincided with LA Commons' event, an annual parent appreciation picnic, with food, art, stories, and games. This site beautifully represented this community's resilience, engagement, and cohesion.



Image credit: Photos by Panic Studio LA, courtesy of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). Artwork commissioned by DCA for *CURRENT:LA FOOD* © [Torolab, *Watts Cookbook Fire-up and BBQ workshop* © 2019]