

MEME

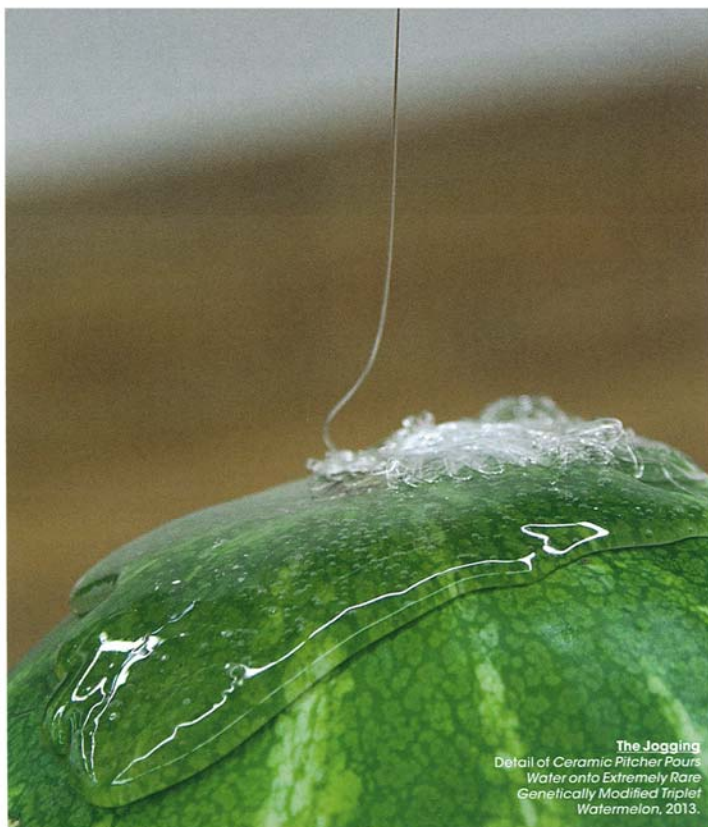
DAILY SERVINGS

The art world's food pyramid

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES—perennial subjects in art—are having something of a renaissance. Beyond exploiting the foodstuffs for traditional still-life paintings, artists have long used them to explore distribution, time, and the everyday. When Edouard Manet agreed to sell *A Bunch of Asparagus* for 800 francs, the buyer sent him 1,000. In response to the overpayment, Manet offered *Asparagus*, a painting of a single asparagus, with the affectionate note, “There was one missing from your bunch.” Fast-forward more than a century, and **Paul Branca’s** fruit-stand project, in which the artist and his peers sell paintings of fruits and vegetables out of a stand in Queens, trades in a similarly tender humor and investigates the circulation of paintings and produce.

Other artists are busy creating sculptural objects inspired by lemons, apples, and the noble tubers. **Nicolas Party’s** *Blakam’s Stones*, 2012, uses rocks as warped stand-ins for fruit and sets up a clever engagement with painting and sculpture. **Margaret Lee** has done several works incorporating facsimiles of potatoes; she initially turned to potatoes in an effort to find something that could act as an almost neutral object. (Which is not to say that the potato is uninteresting. In a text on philosophy’s neglect of vegetables, Christoph Cox quotes Samuel Butler on the potato’s inclination to sprout toward the light: “Even a potato in a dark cellar has a certain low cunning..”) In Lee’s work with **Michele Abeles** and **Darren Bader** at White Columns in 2010, the potato is a catalyst and point of departure for unexpected collaboration.

Sometimes produce is just one ingredient of an artwork, as in **Anthea Hamilton’s** *Kabuki Chefs*, 2013, which pairs real tomatoes and garlic with mannequins arrayed on a white grid platform. Also incorporating real food, **Shimabuku’s** *Onion Orion*, 2012, composed of onions placed on a sheet of plywood in the formation of the Orion constellation, plays on language and the unknown. For “Soon,” a 2013 exhibition at the Still House in New York, **The Jogging**, a Brooklyn-based collective, created time-sensitive works that gradually perished over the course of the exhibition—including one that featured a piece of cabbage mounted on the wall behind plastic. It’s a bit as if Dieter Roth had traded in chocolate for something more healthful, albeit quicker to decay. —CLARA HALPERN



The Jogging
Detail of Ceramic Pitcher Pours
Water onto Extremely Rare
Genetically Modified Triplet
Watermelon, 2013.