

# *edible*

SANTA FE · ALBUQUERQUE · TAOS

*THE STORY OF LOCAL FOOD, SEASON BY SEASON*



*Food as Art*

ISSUE 36 · LATE WINTER

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2015



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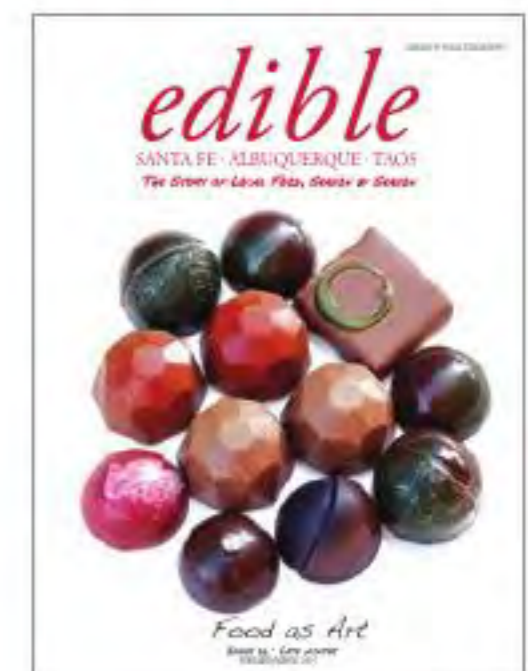
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Chocolates by Joliesse  
Chocolates.

*Photo by Stephanie Cameron.*



## grist for the mill

For the first time ever at *edible*, this issue is collaboratively edited. We, Sarah Wentzel-Fisher and Nancy Zastudil, owner and director of Central Features in Albuquerque, conceptualized an issue that presents the work of artists focused on food and food systems in New Mexico.

Our sense of place has long been defined by many creative folks: artists, designers, architects, farmers, bakers, and chefs. But contemporary art is rarely limited by materials, subject matter, location, or audience; rather, it often feeds on experience, taking on a life of its own. And with the increased number of artists working with food—from production and presentation to consumption and waste—comes increased opportunities for food and art lovers alike to gain a deeper appreciation of each other's tastes.

In a recent conversation with *edible* copyeditors, one asked, "I think these are all interesting stories, but what does art really have to do with the mission of *edible*?" Part of the issue is about how these two unique cultural and economic drivers, food and art, find intersection and space for collaboration. The *edible* team engaged restaurateurs and food artisans actively engaging and supporting creativity in community; the art-related features were included because of Nancy's personal connections to and interests in the ways food can be a vehicle for education, revelation, and change.

Both from a curatorial and editorial perspective, our hope for this issue is that the reader's interests are piqued by the ways the artists featured here have used art-making to help tell the personal stories of food, as well as an accounting of its varied cultures and politics. By considering food as a shared experience based on a common need, these artists use their skills to illuminate specific instances through which that universal bond is not simply aestheticized, but also supplemented and enriched.

We hope you find these artists and their artworks to be as interesting, entertaining, and challenging as we do.



Sarah Wentzel-Fisher and Nancy Zastudil, Editors

### A Note from the Publishers

This issue marks the beginning of our fourth year publishing *edible Santa Fe* after taking the reigns from Kate Manchester in 2012. It has been a truly amazing ride. We consider ourselves blessed to be a part of the local food community in New Mexico. The people we have met on this journey inspire and make a difference in the world we live in. We relish every story that we tell in the pages of *edible* and we look forward to bringing you many more in the years to come.

As always, we are grateful to the amazing advertisers that support *edible*. Quite simply, these businesses make it possible for us to bring you this magazine every eight weeks. Please make a point to patronize them and let them know how much you appreciate their contribution to the the local food economy. Thank you and we will see you around the table.



Stephanie and Walt Cameron, Publishers

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# A Recipe for Justice

SANTA FE ART INSTITUTE

by Matthew Irwin

Last growing season, New Mexico farmer and artist Alexis Elton sent squash seeds to Colorado, New York, Oregon, and Washington. She prompted the recipients, all experienced farmers, to document how the seeds performed through a series of questions about their land, soil and experience preparing and eating squash. Nestled in these rather technical questions, she also asked what they knew about or how they experienced the idea of food security.

Their answers, which tended toward issues of accessibility, comprise one part of an art installation Elton began developing in 2014 as an artist-in-residence at the Santa Fe Art Institute (SFAI) where Executive Director Sanjit Sethi has initiated a new series of socially engaged residencies. SFAI plans to announce the full list of themes in March 2015 at the earliest, and each theme will run eight months to

a year, with an additional year of educational programming through a corresponding series called Project 8. The first theme focuses on food justice.

Elton is a member of the inaugural cohort. Just as she left it up to her farmers to define food security, SFAI has given its residents the clearing to describe food justice through artistic practice and community engagement. Sethi has, however, asked them to consider how their work confronts social, cultural, and economic problems in our food system, and how they work in an interdisciplinary way to address these problems trans-regionally.

“Critical inquiry is where we start,” Sethi says. “It’s not about art, not about design, not about architecture. It’s about people who are





Santa Fe Art Institute Food Justice resident Alexis Elton, artist and farmer of Gemini Farms, working with students of La Tierra Montessori School in Española. Photos courtesy of SFAI.

asking critical questions, and then defining themselves as being creative practitioners in some way, shape, or form.”

For one year, approximately July 2014 to July 2015, thirty individual artists and art collectives from around the world will use SFAI as a hub to explore food justice through art. The list includes a number of art-world heavyweights like Fallen Fruit, M12 Collective, and Fictilis, as well as local farmers, artists, and writers, such as Albuquerque’s former poet laureate Hakim Bellamy.

SFAI requires residents to engage with communities in New Mexico, but the issues they address don’t have to—and in some cases, shouldn’t—be limited to the local context. Take, for instance, Rodrigo St. Martin, a new media artist who will use his summer 2015 residency to design, build, and implement a “cricket coop” to harvest crickets for protein.

St. Martin has teamed up with faculty in the biology department at the University of New Mexico to identify edible cricket and grasshopper species in New Mexico. Recently, EXO, a start-up that sells insect-based protein bars, offered to sponsor the project.

“We wanted to reach out to [companies like EXO] because we realized that the problem with entomography—raising insects for food for human consumption—is cultural,” says St. Martin, who’s from Mexico City, but recently relocated to New York. “It’s still taboo in places like Europe and the US. In Mexico, it’s a common food. And the numbers are out there regarding protein and the ease of doing this.”

Understanding how food production and consumption move across cultures, communities, and generations is part of SFAI’s goal, Sethi says, emphasizing that he and his staff do not claim to be experts. Rather, SFAI has partnered with an impressive list of New Mexico food, education, and arts organizations: Hamaatsa, an “indigenous continuum learning center” and farm; SeedBroadcast, which takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining seed networks, agricultural systems, and food production; Moving Arts, which provides low-cost arts instruction to children; Dancing Earth, a widely talented contemporary indigenous dance company; Santa Fe Innovation Park, a research and development institute for social innovation; and several others.

“We don’t want to say that a bunch of outsiders can come in and fix local problems,” Sethi says. “We’re not trying to pretend we have all the answers around food justice. But, we are saying that this is a place where we can learn a lot from individuals and organizations working together.”

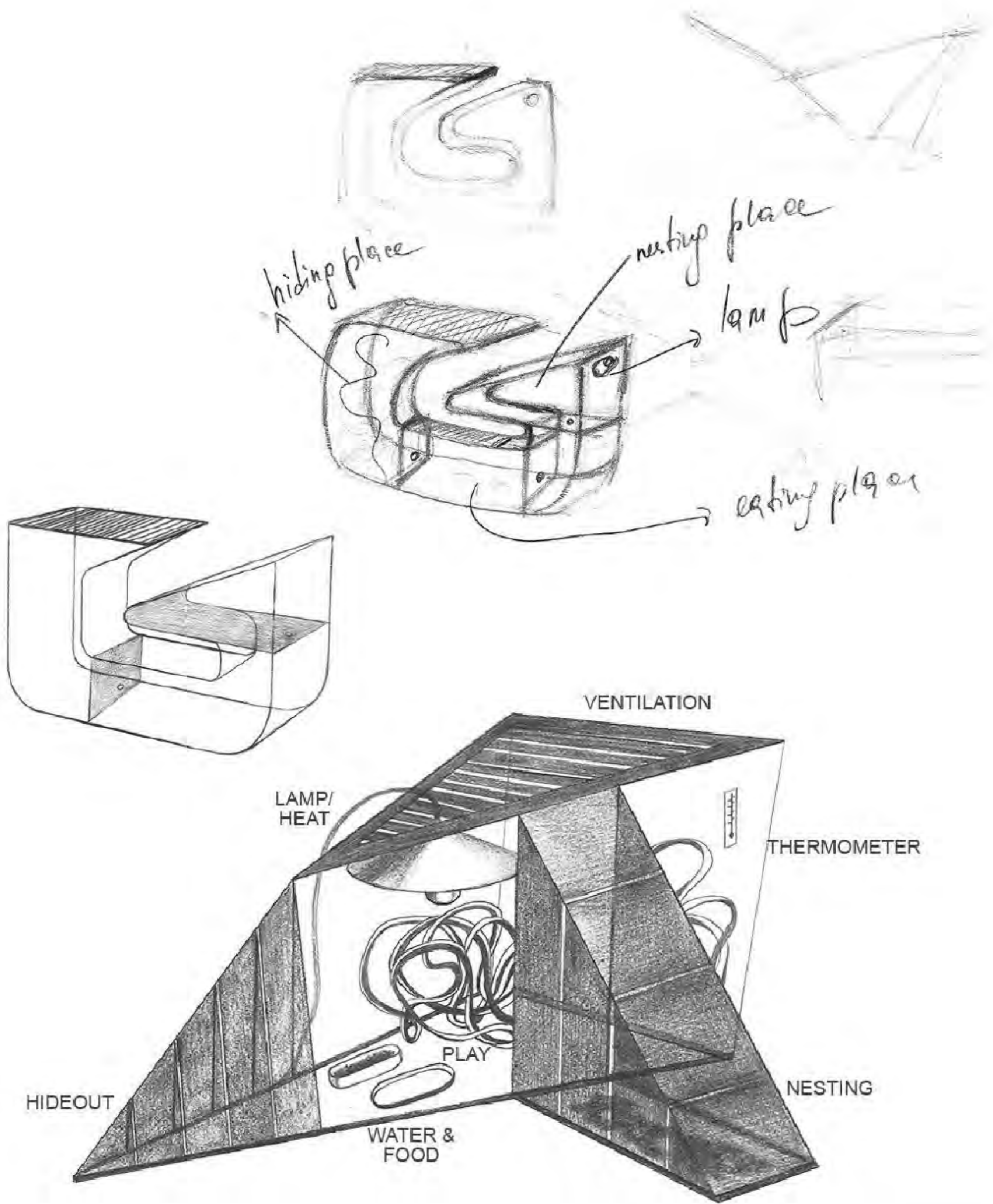
Whereas SFAI’s traditional studio residency program tended to attract out-of-staters looking for a getaway, the food justice program elicited a number of applications from regional practitioners concerned about local food. For SFAI’s residency program manager, Nina Elder, these in-state applicants not only confirmed the direction of the new, more regional, community-engaged residency program, but also brought specificity to this year’s theme.

“We have such a different identity here in New Mexico that wasn’t picked up on by the international community,” she says. “There’s still a romantic, land-based, individualist notion of Northern New Mexico that is not always accurate, but the world still sees us that way.”

Among the local artists-in-residence, Elton is a partner in Gemini Farms, located up in Las Trampas, with a sister farm in Chimayó. She is a recognizable part of the Santa Fe Farmers Market, where Gemini roosts year-round, relying on a sizable squash harvest to get them and their customers through the winter.

That squash, a Hubbard variety known as *calabasa mexicana*, dates back more than three hundred years in the high mountains of Northern New Mexico, Elton says. It has a blue, pink, or marbled exterior with a brilliant orange meat. The taste is sweet, perfect for sweet or savory pies and soups. Elton prefers it simply roasted. A large part of her project is about spreading the seed across the country and the process of cultivating it. She also sees the squash as a site for discourses on the origin of food, the legacy of colonial agricultural practices, and ongoing food security issues in New Mexico, all of which underlie the sensory experience of her installation involving New Mexico-grown corn, beans, and squash (known together as the Three Sisters) in Chimayó.






Above: Santa Fe Art Institute Food Justice resident Rodrigo St. Martin's concept sketches for cricket coop. Right: fried crickets.



“This is a food source,” Elton says of the squash, “but it also carries a story.”

Sethi sees food and art as living, growing systems with common languages related to identity and sustainability. Importantly, they can both critique social, political, and economic systems.

“The commonality [between art and food] is in people who are searching for a critical, often misunderstood dialogue, that exists in both fields,” Sethi says. “Bringing [food and art] together is what we’re trying to synthesize with the food justice residency.” 

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## CRICKET FLOUR CHIPOTLE CREAM SAUCE WITH CRICKETS

by Rodrigo St. Martin

Serves 4

- 1 1/2 chipotle peppers (use canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce preferably)
- 4 – 5 medium size champignon mushrooms, washed and sliced
- 1/2 white onion, chopped

- 1 Roma tomato
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 tablespoon of cricket flour
- 1/2 cup of milk, whole or reduced fat
- 3 – 4 tablespoons of sour cream
- 1 1/2 cups of crickets *Acheta domestica* [small] or *Gryllus bimaculatus* [big] (preferably cooked and/or dehydrated)
- Salt and pepper

Fry the onion and the champignons in a pan with some oil (add a bit of salt) for about 5 minutes over medium heat. Do not let the onion get brown. Put the onions with the champignons in the blender, let cool.

Melt the butter and add the cricket flour to brown over medium heat. Add the milk and mix. Remove from heat. In a blender combine the chipotle peppers, the milk with the butter-cricket flour, the tomato (chopped), the sour cream, and salt and pepper to taste. Blend everything to liquefy.

Taste sauce, if too spicy or too thick, add more milk or water. If too liquid, add more sour cream. In a saucepan over medium heat, combine sauce and crickets, and stir for 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Enjoy with: white rice, quinoa, or boiled vegetables (zucchini, broccoli, or eggplant go perfect!)

