

Literary & Archival Research

By Julian Creutz

For the MLS "Borderless Seed Stories" Project

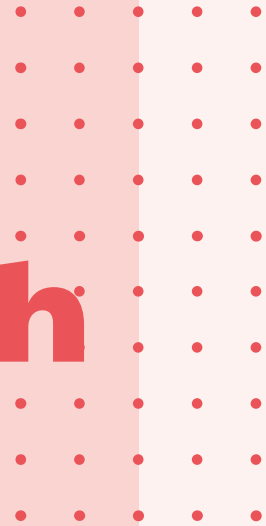
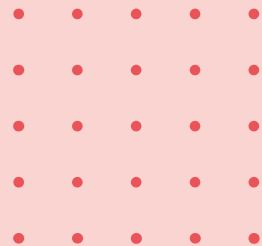


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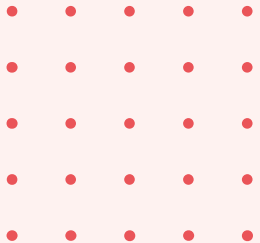
The not-so-fun part!

04. Recommendations

There's more to be done!

01. Gathering

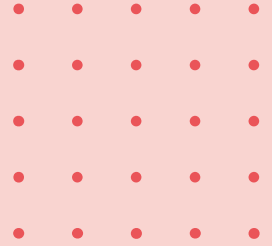
How I arranged resources
under each theme + vice versa!



Theme Exploration: What Is It?

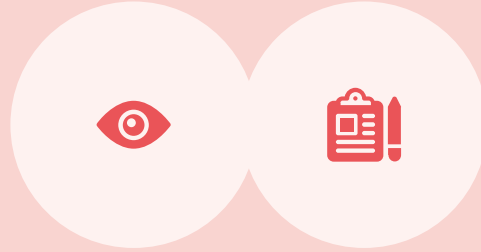
The process I used for gathering was termed “Theme Exploration,” or TE. For each of the five themes (1. geopolitical and colonial borders, 2. reclamation and rematriation, 3. seed sharing, 4. seed literacy, skills and community knowledge, and 5. seed sovereignty), three panels were produced that roped in articles, books, poems, and more to flesh out the themes that complimented SJ’s community conversations and oral history collection features.

Methodology



Researching

I read a variety of books and articles, some from the team, other librarians, or my own personal searching.

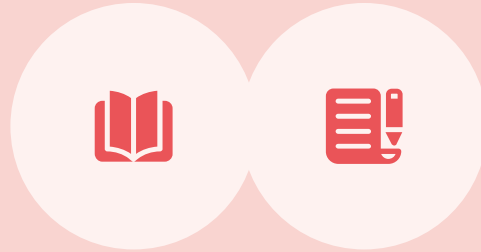


Collecting

I then looked through my bookmarks, reading notes, etc. to find sources that I felt particularly passionate about.

Organizing

I proceeded to pull out themes that I found salient across the materials and slot them under each theme.



Consolidating

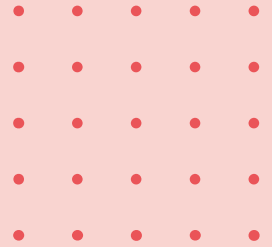
Together with the team, I solidified the themes we wanted to explore and reorganized the sources to slot under them.

02. Narrative

How I strung the quotes together!



Through Lines



Finding Story

After collecting the quotes I wanted to use for each section/theme, I asked myself: **What story are these quotes telling?** For the most part, the story was clear. Next...

Mind to Matter

I had to take the story I envisioned in my mind and make it tangible. I reordered quotes and added text to explain, connect, and make everything flow.

QUOTES *starred indicates most likely to use*

“Today, just four companies control more than 60% of proprietary seeds worldwide.” - Paulina Jenney, “A Guide to Seed Intellectual Property Rights”

“More recently, German chemical company Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik (BASF) sent out a letter to regional seed companies in the United States that made broad claims about plant varieties and genetic traits covered by their patents. Titles for the patents listed included ‘drought tolerant plants,’ ‘onions with high storage ability,’ and ‘seedless fruit producing plants.’ The letter warned recipients, some of whom had never even purchased BASF seed, that the unauthorized use of ‘germplasm covered by one or more of claims’ would be a violation of its intellectual property rights. Further, the letter claims that using the traits in the listed pending patent applications would be a violation of the company’s IPR, which is untrue as patent applications are not defensible until they are granted. The letter used this assertion to encourage seed companies interested in germplasm listed to request non-exclusive licenses in order to use the claimed technology.” – Paulina Jenney, “A Guide to Seed Intellectual Property Rights”

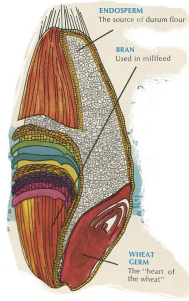
“In 1996 Via Campesina, a world-wide peasant, pastoralist, and fishers federation, launched a global call for food sovereignty—the human right of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate, sustainably grown food, and the right of communities to determine their own food systems.” – Eric Holt-Giménez and Raj Patel, “Food Rebellions!”

I started with quotes that I felt would be topical, taking them in their entirety with little paring-down.

“The modernization of agriculture, based on the industrialization of farm inputs, was deemed the ‘Green Revolution.’ Though credited for saving the world from hunger, the Green Revolution led to the monopolization of seed and chemical inputs by Northern companies, the loss of 90% of the South’s agricultural biodiversity, the global shift to an oil-based agricultural economy, and the displacement of millions of peasants to fragile hillsides, shrinking forests, and urban slums” – Eric Holt-Giménez and Raj Patel, “Food Rebellions!”

Process Example: Beginning

SEED SOVEREIGNTY



The article "A Guide to Seed Intellectual Property Rights" by Paulina Jenney outlines the confusing and contradictory nature of seed patents and the creation of an oligopoly in the seed market resulting from the production of seed patents and genetic modification, powerfully stating "Today, **just four companies control more than 60% of proprietary seeds** worldwide" (Jenney). This is confusing because seeds by their very nature defy patenting, as they reproduce on their own, leading to many small seed holders becoming fearful of planting seeds that might lead to retribution from major seed companies who claim to "own" certain seeds and even certain traits. Jenney exemplifies this issue with the following scenario: "German chemical company Badische Anilin und Soda Fabrik (BASF) sent out a letter to regional seed companies in the United States that made broad claims about plant varieties and genetic traits covered by their patents... The letter warned recipients, some of whom had never even purchased BASF seed, that the unauthorized use of 'germplasm covered by one or

more of claims' would be a violation of its intellectual property rights. Further, the letter claims that using the traits in the listed pending patent applications would be a violation of the company's IPR, which is untrue as patent applications are not defensible until they are granted..." – Paulina Jenney

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

The book "Food Rebellions! Forging Food Sovereignty to Solve the Global Food Crisis" by Eric Holt-Giménez and Raj Patel was published in 2009 and discusses the global food crisis at the time, pointing out that hunger is almost entirely a social problem and has been manufactured by companies motivated by profit above all. They discuss the Green Revolution, saying "Though credited for saving the world from hunger, the Green Revolution led to the monopolization of seed and chemical inputs by Northern companies, the loss of 90% of the South's agricultural biodiversity, the global shift to an oil-based agricultural economy, and the displacement of millions of peasants to fragile hillsides, shrinking forests, and urban slums" (Holt-Giménez and Patel 24). In fact, the Green Revolution caused as much if not more hunger in the world as it claimed to solve.

Still, even with these disheartening realities of corporate greed and increasing injustice, much is being done to push for seed and food sovereignty and justice. La Via Campesina, for example, has been doing incredible work in these areas since 1993, organizing countless protests and holding membership in 81 countries around the world. More and more research is being done on sustainable organic farming methods, and it has been found that a return to these methods (as proven by a 2007 study by University of Michigan researchers, who compared alternative and conventional agriculture in 293 examples from 91 studies [Holt-Giménez and Patel 107]) can produce just as much if not more food as we are currently producing, with a much more positive impact on people and the planet. Food Policy Councils are popping up

I then drafted all of the text I might incorporate on the panel.

EXHIBIT SCAFFOLDING

TE 4

SEED AND FOOD SOVEREIGNTY AND JUSTICE

This theme addresses sovereignty, commonly understood as supreme authority or the right of something to govern itself, in the context of seeds and food. "Sovereignty" is used here alongside justice to encompass a sense of autonomy with the fight for fairness and equity in seeds and food. "Borderless Seed Stories" seeks to uplift these missions of sovereignty through an exploration of how those things have been systemically depleted and how we might rebuild them.

USEFUL TERMS

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Termed by La Via Campesina in 1996: the human right of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate, sustainably grown food, and the right of communities to determine their own food systems

GREEN REVOLUTION

The modernization of agriculture, based on the industrialization of farm input, occurring in the mid-to-late 20th century

around the country to advocate for food justice (including one right here in Washtenaw County!). There is much more work to be done, but the movement for seed and food sovereignty and justice is strong and proves that we have the power to change our circumstances.

Process Example: Draft

Introduction

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Seed Sovereignty

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Seed + Food Sovereignty + Justice

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Food Sovereignty

Food Policy Councils

There are food policy councils instated all around the country. Many of them have meetings that are open to the public to attend, or opportunities to join and/or lead a committee! Check out the Washenaw County Food Policy Council, or look into joining a food policy council in your area by checking out an interactive map of food policy councils in the United States!

Washenaw Council Map of US Councils

QR

QR

Community Gardens

Start or contribute to a community garden! There are several in the Ann Arbor area, such as the East Quad Community Garden and the Peligee Garden Initiatives at the U-M Campus Farm. Community gardens are integral to protecting food sovereignty and providing food on a local level, and they are almost always in need of volunteers!

Shop Local

There are several shops and organizations that support local, national, and global food sovereignty efforts who would benefit from your patronage! Some local to the Ann Arbor area include the Argus Farm Shop, Slow Farm, Washenaw Food Hub, We The People Opportunity Farm, and Nature and Nurture Seeds. More wide-reaching efforts to check out include Organic Seed Alliance and so many more! It is worthwhile to look into food sovereignty efforts to support in your community.

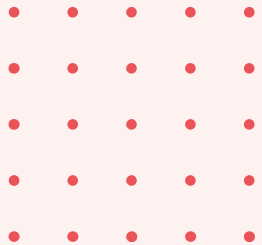
Get Involved!

Following guidance from SJ's exhibit visioning, I mocked up the panels in Canva. As you can see, it ended up being really dense and text-heavy! After these mockups, we pivoted our exhibit design to include three panels for these "Theme Explorations" instead of the one panel we initially planned for to allow more space for images and readability.

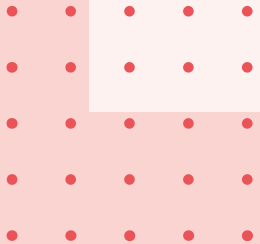
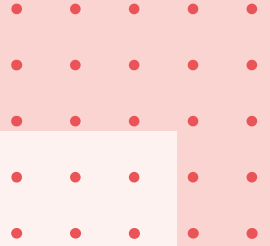
Process Example: Mock-Ups

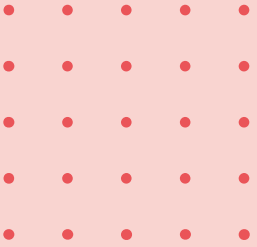
03. Difficulties

The things I struggled with through the process!



**This was
hard.**





The Struggle Bus

Thinking
So much time just
figuring things out!

01.

Anxiety

Is this “allowed?”

02.

Concision

This is an exhibit, not
a research paper.

03.

Timing

Everything takes at
least twice as long
as I expect.

04.

Brain Fog

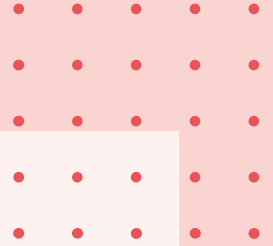
Intense creative
work – what a
challenge!

05.

06.

Balance

Negotiating rest
with myself while I
still have so much
to do!



However!

Key Takeaways

01.

This is by far the most fulfilling work I have ever done. To be able to take part in putting something tangible together to show other people for years to come is immeasurably rewarding.

The team. Is. AMAZING!!! It has been an absolute joy and pleasure to work with everyone; you are all so so talented and skilled and have taught me so much.

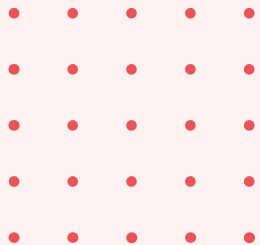
02.

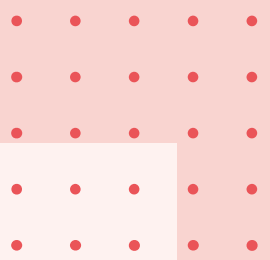


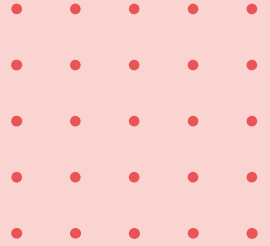
04.

Recommendations

What else!



- 
- Longer program time - longitudinal hours allotment
 - An exhibit is a lot to plan in 3 months! Having more flexibility in program “ending” times might be beneficial.
 - More networking/connecting to library staff and university resources
 - More entrenched mentor and/or program-facilitated connections (like meet and greets/coffee chats) considering the impact of internships on career development and the importance of networking within that – both connecting to librarians within U-M and also connecting with relevant people outside of U-M
 - More cohort bonding opportunities → What are other people up to? Consider monthly cohort lunches, biweekly Zooms, etc. This would help in building continuity and connection across projects!



Thanks!

Questions? Comments? Concerns?
creutz@umich.edu

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