
PORTFOLIO

JORGE

MENNA

BARRETO



SELECTED WORKS
2014 / 2020

RESTAURO: ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE, 2016

32 BIENNIAL OF
SAO PAULO,
BRAZIL

It consisted in the installation of a restaurant in the Sao Paulo Biennial Pavilion, which supplied mainly from farms that are practicing regenerative forms of agriculture called food forests, or agroforestry. The work thus deviated from the mere service provision and nutritional function of exhibition cafés to think of the event as an opportunity to create environmental “restauration”, inviting the public as participants of an ongoing environmental sculpture. The mental image suggested was that of our digestive systems as sculpting tools that shape the landscape where we live. The menu was fully plant-based, paying homage to and supporting the biodiversity of the forest and the health of people and the environment. It was the first time the restaurant area of the pavillion was integrated as part of an art project.

Video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXvj_x0qs7U

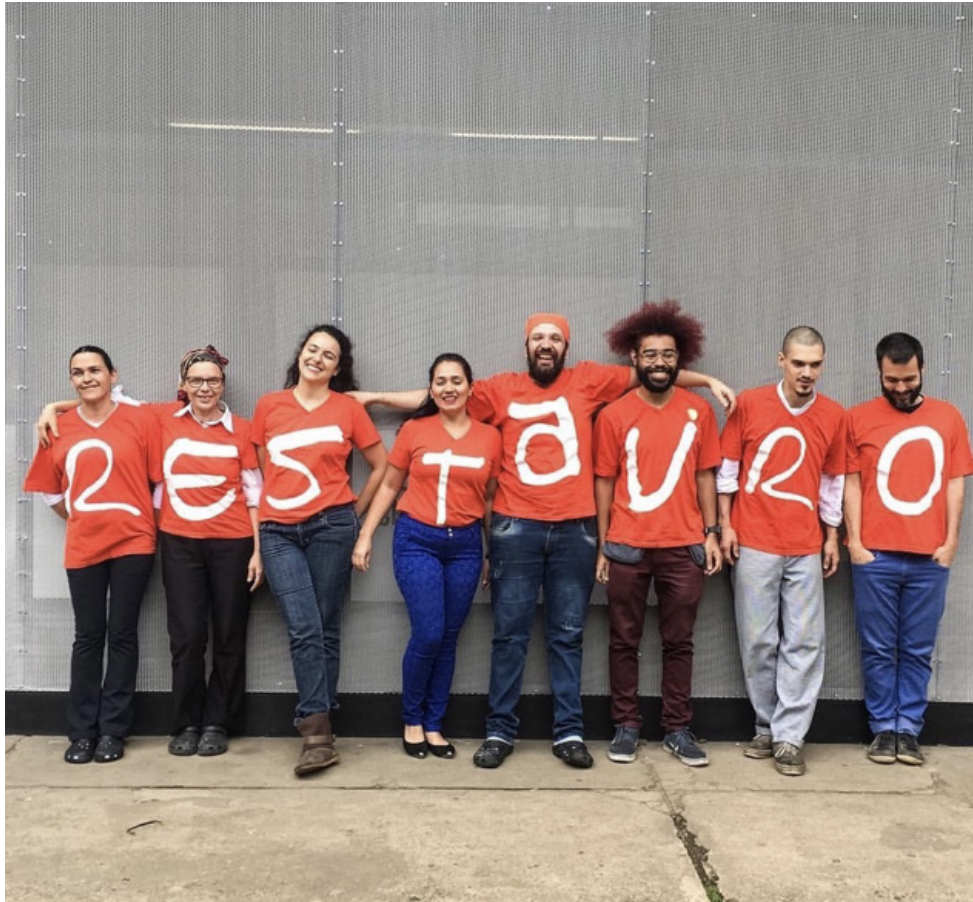




In collaboration with the Department of the Environment of the State of São Paulo, as well as cooperatives, the project collaborated with more than 200 families who have been practicing agroforestry. These families are part of the Landless People Movement of São Paulo, who squat unproductive land to propose alternatives to industrial farming.



We received weekly deliveries from agroforests around the state of São Paulo. Farmers were then invited for public talks at the restaurant, speaking about their practice and the importance of food forests in land regeneration.



Translating the forest into the pavillion was one of our main challenges, as these spaces could not be more remote. Interdependence to create meaning was a key concept and stepping stone to create working relations that were more meaningful and collaborative.



In the more than 14.000 meals we served during the three months the restaurant was open, biodiversity was a focus. Our last dish, the “Vegan Moqueca”, was built with layers of seven types of banana.





We had a specific education programme for Restauro. Schools were also visiting the project and offered special guided tours with our mediators, who were later given the nickname “digestive enzymes”. For its innovations in relation to art and education, Restauro was the winner of the 1st Art and Education Prize promoted by Select Magazine, having competed with more than 400 projects from all over Brazil:
<https://bit.ly/2QO8sD3>

Restauro was also long-listed for the International Visible Award 2017:
<https://bit.ly/35sISbR>



The group of artists and architects - O Grupo Inteiro - was invited to create the furniture for the restaurant, which was inspired in the light layers of the forest. Architect Ligia Nobre, who is part of the group, later wrote about the project for the publication "The Museum is Not Enough" [CCA/ Sternberg Press, 2019]. See article: <https://bit.ly/2QLNS6c>





Artist and musician Marcelo Wasem, also my colleague at UERJ, was a collaborator in Restauro: Environmental Sculpture and was responsible for documenting our visits to the food forests. Sound was chosen as the main medium for documentation, as dense forests do not lend themselves well to vision. It is during sunset and sunrise that you can really feel the forest through its soundscape. The more biodiversity, the more interesting



the biophony is. We also decided to interview farmers inside the forests, so that the human voice would be one more acoustic signature in these biodiverse soundscapes.



Part of the research for Restauro:Environmental Sculpture involved a trip to the Peruvian side of the Amazon forest, investigating ancestral and regenerative forms of agriculture. In this picture, land and table are short-circuited, which also informs the project I am working on now: Enzyme Magazine

ENZYME: MAGAZINE FOR DIGESTING, 2020

JAN VAN EYCK ACADEMIE,
NETHERLANDS

Enzyme is a collaborative project between artist and designer Joélson Buggilla and myself. It is the result of our one-year residency period at the Jan Van Eyck Academie, Netherlands, where we worked together with the Food Lab, the Lab for Nature Research and the Print Lab. The idea was to work in short-circuiting the surface of the land, the surface of the table and the surface of the page, considering these as part of the same ecology. The idea for Enzyme came during project Restauro, when we made a decision to hold back on the discursive material we had and consider food as the protagonist of that relationship to the public. Therefore, the space of the restaurant was very economic in terms of discursivity, which we understood should be shared at a later moment in the format of a publication. That was the project we applied with to come to Jan Van Eyck and what we worked on during our year. Part of that research was connecting with local food forests and regenerative agriculture projects, as we would like the publication not to be about Restauro, but sort of an iteration of its fundamental concepts into the page, or a “digestive non-site”. The main article can be read here: <https://bit.ly/2Fo3FCV>



MAUVAIS ALPHABET, 2019

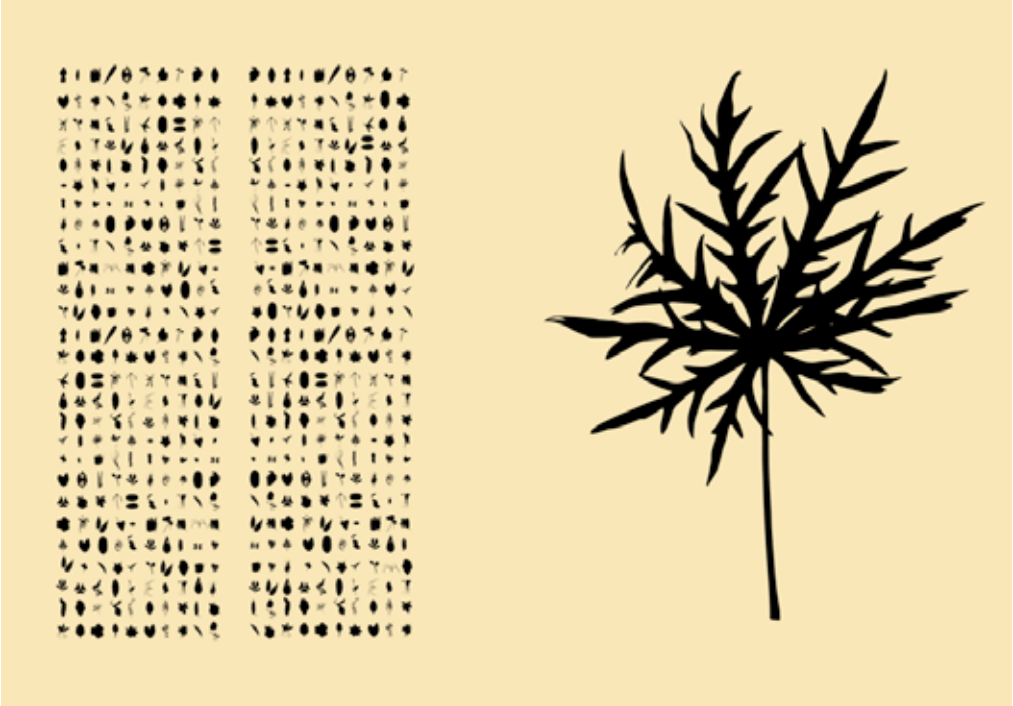
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

PARATY, BRAZIL

Mauvais Alphabet is a collaboration with artist Joélson Buggilla. It started during a residency at Utopiana, 2019, when we worked with the “mauvaises herbes” (weeds) that grow around the urban area of Geneva, Switzerland. The project soon travelled to Paraty, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where we worked with the spontaneous plants that grow in that area. Departing from the weeds images, we created an “alphabet” in each of these places, with which we have been experimenting different modes of writing. A version of the alphabet was printed on fabric, using cyanotype, for the exhibition at Le Commun, Geneva, Switzerland, also in 2019. The PDF version of the book that we did in Brazil can be seen downloaded from here: <https://bit.ly/2uh61RE>









Installation view in Paraty, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2019.



Installation view at the exhibition 1.000 Ecologies, Le Commun, Geneva, Switzerland, 2019.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

5 september 2019

A circular diagram illustrating a network of various vegetables and herbs. The items are connected by colored lines (yellow, green, pink) forming a complex web. The items included are:

- CELERY
- purple cabbage
- dandelion
- sage
- pumpkin
- black pepper
- kale
- green curry leaves
- sweet potato
- purple basil green
- Swiss chard
- chives
- lentils
- carrots (orange and purple)
- bay leaves
- ginger
- fennel
- onions
- garlic
- tomato
- potatoes



The first Soup of Biodiversity was prepared with the students of ESAAA - école supérieure d'art annecy alpes, France, where I was invited to give a workshop on the relationship between art, food and the environment.



RESTAURO: ENVIRONMENTAL SCULPTURE, 2017

ITERATION TO
THE SERPENTINE
GALLERIES,
LONDON, 2017

Based on the dandelions found in Hyde Park, where the Serpentine Galleries are located, we developed a “site-specific ice cream” that was served during the public program and the Restauro Dinner.

Programme:

<https://bit.ly/2MZWEwk>

Video documentation:

<https://vimeo.com/241764574>

Dinner:

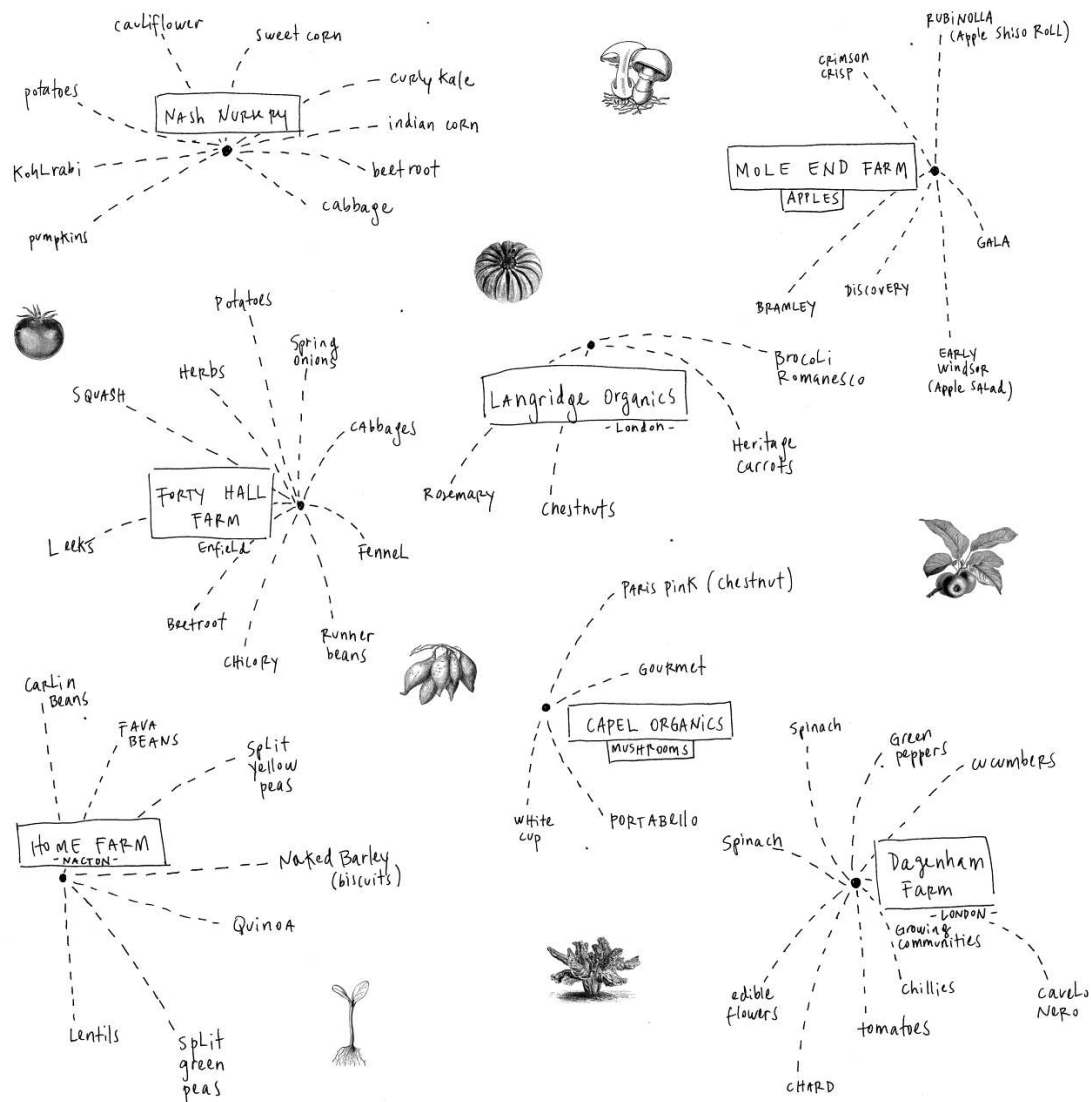
<https://bit.ly/2tE8d5l>







Wild edible walk in Hyde Park, with expert Jason Irving, and drawing class with botanical illustrator Gwen Dixon were part of the public programme for Restauro's iteration to the Serpentine Galleries.



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SUCOS ESPECIFICOS [SITE-SPECIFIC GREEN SMOOTHIES] 2014-2017

FLORIANÓPOLIS, BRAZIL

31 SAO PAULO BIENNIAL, BRAZIL

SANDHILLS INSTITUTE, USA

Site-specific Green Smoothies began in 2014 during the post-doctoral research I did in the city of Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. I was then investigating on possible relations between agroecology and site-specific practices in the arts. That was when I investigated on the idea of food as the main mediator in relationship society-environment. That was also when I started to work in collaboration with the Biology and the Agriculture Departments of the university I was at, UDESC.

<https://bit.ly/39lyyzV>





In 2017, I did my first site-visit to the Sandhills Institute, in Nebraska, USA, where we created a powder to be used in the Site-specific Smoothies, which was made from the local Stinging Nettles. Interview: <https://bit.ly/36vLvur>



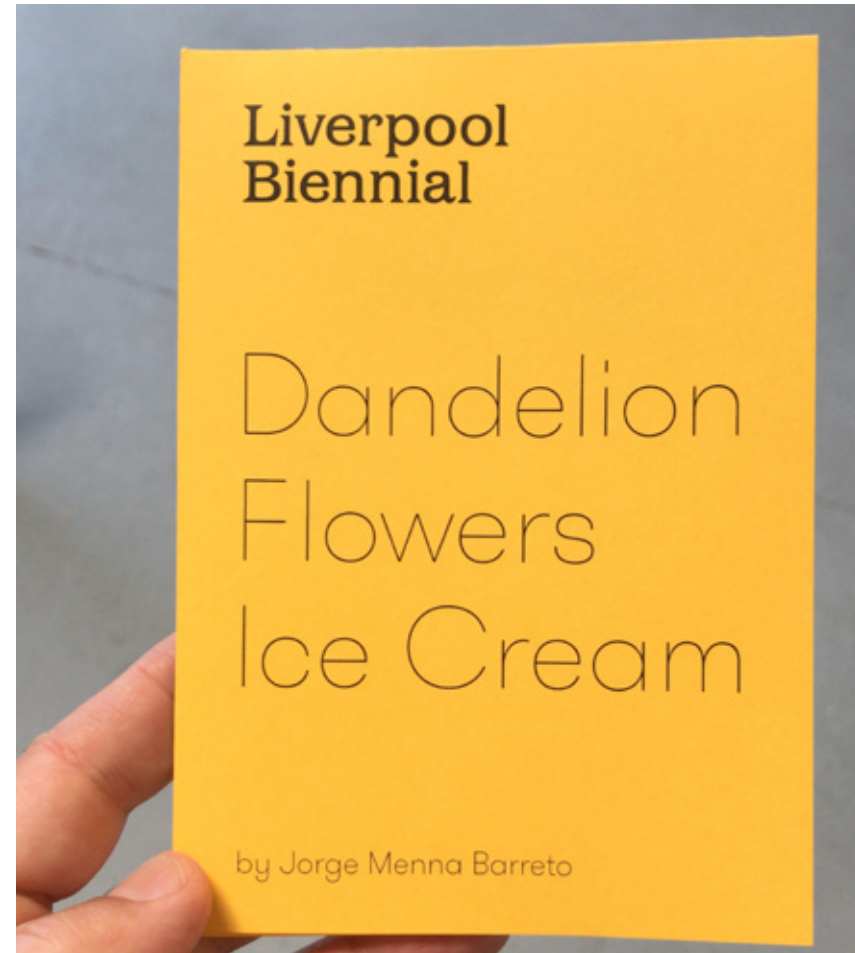
In the 2018 site-visit to the Sandhills Institute, I was able to meet with Richard Straight from the National Agroforestry Center, USDA, to start working on a long term project to relate land use, land art and regenerative forms of agriculture such as agroforestry.



Together with Richard Straight from NAC/USDA, artist and residency director Mel Ziegler and the local High School principal, we have begun exchanging ideas on a longer term project to build a food forest in the school for educational, environmental and nutritional purposes.



In 2019 I began working for my project at the Liverpool Biennial 2020. The Dandelion Flowers Ice Cream was made for the Light Night in that city. I am presently doing a post-doctoral research at Liverpool John Moores University in Liverpool, with whom I will collaborate on my project for the exhibition that opens in July 2020.. I am also in contact with the



Professor Johnathan Rushton from the University of Liverpool, who is responsible for the interdisciplinary Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Food Systems and who we should also collaborate with.

MESA-LÍNGUA

[TABLE-TONGUE], 2018-2019

CENTRO CULTURAL BANCO
DO BRASIL, SÃO PAULO
LE COMMUN, GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND

The installation consists in creating a table that will connect the inside and the outside of the exhibition space, being projected like a tongue into public space. The food displayed on its surface comes from regenerative forms of agriculture and is offered to the public as a gift.



