

# The *Agri/Cultures.Seed-Links* Exhibition

Seeking visual art works that celebrate the bonds between biological and cultural diversity in agri-food systems

In June 2019, a new shipment of seeds will arrive at the Svalbard Global Seed Vault. This deep cavern carved inside a frozen mountain on the Arctic island of Svalbard currently holds over 1 million samples of the world's seeds. In June, when the new deposit arrives, a collection of artworks will also be interred in the mountain alongside them. This exhibition will serve as a reminder that seeds live within vast webs of interrelations – ecological, socio-technical and cultural – and that these connections are also worthy of celebration and preservation.

The *Svalbard Global Seed Vault* holds a global collection of seeds from all around the world. It stores 'back-up' copies in case disaster (fire, flood, civil war) strikes the genebanks holding the original seeds. The only withdrawal from the Vault so far has been by ICARDA, a genebank based in Aleppo, Syria. With over 1 million seed samples now stored on Svalbard, the Global Seed Vault is an incredible achievement of science and diplomacy. However, this incredible effort to preserve the biological diversity of seeds, omits the rich cultural diversity required to generate and maintain this agricultural biodiversity. The *Agri/Cultures.Seed-Links* Exhibition aims to celebrate and honor the fertile bonds between biological and cultural diversity in agri-food systems.



Artists are asked to **submit proposals for visual art works that speak to the bio-cultural connections in agriculture and the links seeds have to society, ecology and culture through their presence within agri-food systems. Any archival medium is welcome, but the works must fit within 60x40x28cm** – the size of the black plastic boxes used to store seed deposits in the Vault.

The selection of works will take place in two tiers. 1) Three to four artists will be identified as the primary artists who will be offered sponsorship to travel to Longyearbyen, Svalbard to attend the exhibition, speak about their work, and to physically inter their original artwork in the mountain that houses the Global Seed Vault. 2) A number of additional artists will be invited to submit high resolution images of their artwork for archival printing, exhibition in Longyearbyen, and inclusion in a group box that will be interred in the mountain site.

The event in Longyearbyen will also include a presentation from the manager of the Seed Vault and a film screening from last year's deposit of artworks. During a closing reception, artists will pack down their works and seal them inside their black boxes. The following day, the sealed boxes of artworks will be delivered for permanent "interment" in the mountain alongside the Vault. The artworks will be placed at the original site of seed deposits within the mountain, in an inactive coalmine. This will be the second deposit of artworks as part of an ongoing effort to establish a unique museum for the forgotten stories of seeds.

## Details for How to Get Involved

The whole event is planned to take place between **7-10 June 2019**.

A select number of *original* artworks will be deposited. For these, *sponsorships* will be available for the artists to cover the costs of travel to/from and accommodation in Svalbard for the exhibition. For *secondary selections*, high quality *prints* will be made of the works and these will join a collective box for exhibition and deposit.

To be considered for selection and sponsorship, please **submit** a 200-500 word statement of purpose (describing yourself and your proposed project) a CV, and relevant examples of your work (or website where examples of work can be seen). These application documents should be sent to [svalbardseedart@gmail.com](mailto:svalbardseedart@gmail.com) **before March 25<sup>th</sup> 2019**.

**Selected artists will be notified by April 12<sup>th</sup> 2019.**

*The Agri/Cultures Project has been a four-year effort, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, to research different cultures of agriculture. The researchers have followed and mapped the journey of a kernel of maize through four different agri-food systems: agro-ecological, certified organic, chemically intensive, and GMO. To help share the journeys, the researchers created Seed-Links – an interactive website and pedagogical tool for exploring our everyday agri-food realities. The Agri/Cultures.Seed-Links Exhibition is both a culmination of the Agri/Cultures Project and launch of the Seed-Links website.*