Snacks
Anthology is an annual publication that examines artists’ relationships with the world around them in unexpected ways, with each issue revolving around our most recent class of awardees. The publication is edited and produced by our interns, who spend an academic year crafting their creative vision and learning through hands-on professional experiences with the United States Artists staff.

This second issue, Grazing: A Nationwide Study of Artists and Their Snacks, was produced by Rebecca Haley, Hyun Jung Jun, and Onyx Montes and features the 2020 USA Fellows.
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Hello!

Welcome to Grazing: A Nationwide Study of Artists and Their Snacks, the second edition of Anthology. This issue is focused on something we can’t stop talking about—snacking. What our favorite snacks are, how many times a day we snack, what snacks we miss from our childhood, what snacks we share with others, and what snacks we don’t. What we started to sense is that snacking, for us, is more than just the action itself; snacking illuminates the personal, the communal, and the ways we tell stories. Snacking is important because it offers a lens for shared human experiences and points us to the small, quiet moments that make up a whole life. Our intention was to dig a little deeper than usual in getting to know the artists of the 2020 Fellows class, using snacking as a means of illuminating who they are and the stories they’d like to share with us.

When we met this summer, each of us brought some of our favorite projects and publications to the table. Rebecca brought the design and interiors magazine Apartamento, offering a window into the interior lives and spaces of creative people she admired. Hyun Jung shared installation and performance artist Alison Knowles’ projects Make a Salad and Identical Lunch, showing us the potential for food as a means of community building. Onyx brought copies of the Rookie Yearbook, a compendium of articles, essays, poems, and artwork from the online magazine of the same name, illustrating the experience and intimacy of storytelling from teenagers’ perspectives. What became evident to us all was a mutual love of food as social bonding. Food was a great place for us
to start when getting to know one other as collaborators and friends.

We began to think deeply about how a person’s connection to food reflects a diversity of perspectives, tastes, rituals, and memories—how food shapes our daily individual and collective experience. We found that when you ask someone about a snack that reminds them of home, you learn a lot more about them than what they chomped on after school. You gain insight into the people, the environments, and the traditions that forged the way they see the world. Food and culture are intertwined. Food is an access point to culture, and culture is created around food. As we continued this line of thinking, our focus developed into snacks as a way to talk about the smaller moments outside of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Snacking is a practice that can bring you back to yourself, connect you with a friend, or remind you of a place you haven’t been in a while. It is a habitual break amid the structure of routine, a pause.

Oftentimes, what the world asks of artists is constant motion: working, producing, speaking, output, output, output. Artists are never far from their work, although the pace of their labor may range from a low hum to a high decibel, depending on the day. And while it might seem like the stresses inherent to an artistic practice fade during occasions of recognition, we’ve come to know that these are not the only moments that make up an artist’s life. Artists need time for deep thinking, room for reflection, and the space to be able to connect back to themselves. We see these moments as related to snacking: amid the hecticness of our daily schedules, we snack to take a minute for ourselves.
During our time at United States Artists, we’ve learned that this organization values these in-between moments. We trust artists to take the pauses they need to nurture their life and their practice. At our core, we recognize and support the whole artist—honoring their sensibilities and various nuances.

This iteration of Anthology embodies the wide breadth of lived experiences that the 2020 Fellows have been generous enough to share with us. We hope it sparks new ways of thinking about snacking as an opportunity to appreciate your tastes, tendencies, memories, and the little details that make you who you are.

With love,
Rebecca Haley, Hyun Jung Jun, Onyx Montes
2019–20 Interns
SNACKS THAT FUEL A CREATIVE PRACTICE
The job of an artist doesn’t begin and end with the creation of new artworks. In their role, artists spend days, weeks, months, and years struggling and dreaming of how to help us see and think more expansively in the world. In our study of the snacking tendencies of the 2020 USA Fellows, we were curious to learn about what artists turn to when they need a break from their creative process.

We considered the snack broadly in our approach—as a stand-in for that brief moment of transition between acts of work. So a snack for some could be a museum outing or a leisurely walk, while for others, it could be a bag of chips. What we were really asking was, how do artists recharge?
“Can seltzer count as a snack? The carbonation has just enough bite to keep my senses alert. I also love candy and will often nibble on Skittles or gummy worms. I have it in my mind that the bubbles or the sweetness helps me think while I’m writing.”
— Christina Anderson

“I need to do it more often, but I season a small bowl of walnuts with rosemary and sea salt mix. That mixture, plus carving up some Asian pears on the side to snack on throughout the afternoon, is great fuel. It satisfies with tactile texture—the crispness—and the flavors.”
— Mary Ping

“Senbei, the Japanese rice crackers—it gets me back to the origin... I used to eat them all the time when I was a kid.”
— Tatsu Aoki
“Snacks for me are about getting-by fuel and guilty pleasures. Snacks are also a reason to pause and chew on something, literally and figuratively. Foods that are snacks for me include peanuts, Almond Joy bars, fresh donuts, Jordan almonds, Reese’s cups, all kinds of cheese, pimento cheese on crackers, dark chocolate bars, coffee, and espresso drinks. Other things that provide snack-like sustenance in my studio are fabric scraps, new sewing pins, stamps, postcards, stickers, and a huge assortment of pens, colored pencils, and paint markers.” — Aaron McIntosh

“French fries and Coca-Cola as it brings me back to youth, when you are allowed to explore without limitations.” — Elizabeth Streb

“Bananas, nuts, Persian tea, and cookies!” — Hamid Rahmanian
“I feel as if there is an answer quelled inside me that will be some praisiesong to my Southernness, but the honest answer, at least the answer of late, is OLIVES, specifically Castelvetrano olives. The first time I had them I was staying with a writer friend in Rhode Island and her partner, a sculptor. I worked in her office and lounged in my private bedroom there. As an artist couple, they had developed a method of wearing a red string of yarn around their necks to alert one another when they were at the peak of some creative breakthrough. The other person was not to disturb the artist while they were wearing the red yarn. I wore my red yarn necklace around their house and bounded down the steps for their wonderful olives for nearly a week. I returned home and didn’t add the red yarn to my own practice, but the olives remained.”  
— Crystal Wilkinson

“It’s hard to select just one, but prosciutto e melone with a glass of prosecco is a good one. I also like having delicious cheeses with some kind of charcuterie, a sliced baguette, and a glass of wine. It really also depends on the time of day. Later in the afternoon, I like having an espresso with a little biscotto of some sort. Late at night, some kind of decadent melted something with rum or cognac and vanilla ice cream on it.”  
— Pamela Z
“I really enjoy eating freshly ground peanut butter with plain round crackers. I have never had a major sweet tooth, so the hardy, protein-rich peanut butter makes for an easy snack that doesn’t require much preparation. It is also an easy snack to share with my daughter. She loves it just as much as I do!”

— Dom Flemons

“My favorite snacks are Doritos and Crunch ‘n Munch, but I have little or no self-control, so I wouldn’t call how I handle a family-sized bag of either ‘snacking.’ Try Doritos though!”

— Jericho Brown

“I must have coffee or wine! I also crave being surrounded by plants when I’m working.”

— Sophia Nahli Allison

“I have three favorite snacks. One is the traditional Japanese rice cracker, also known as senbei, and specifically the sakura kind shaped like cherry blossoms. I grew up on these, and they are incredibly nostalgic and addictive. The second one is RED HOTS—the cinnamon imperials, also a nostalgic candy. I am not a sweets person, but these candies drive me crazy like a drug. However, several root canals and dental implants later, I can no longer indulge in these candies. Makes me so sad. Last but not least is Pennsylvania Dutch pretzels. The big fat crunchy ones, NOT the soft kind but the good hard crunchy ones with lots of salt stuck to them.”

— Wendy Maruyama
Snacks that fuel a creative practice

“Snacking is such a major part of my life. Everyone who knows me knows that I don’t leave home without food. For me, a happy belly makes for a clear mind. If I had to name my favorite utilitarian snack, it would be cashews and dried cherries, because they clearly make the superior nut and dried fruit combo. If I had to name my favorite decadent snack, it would be figs with rainforest crisps and Humboldt Fog cheese, because...why not?”
— Nathalie Joachim

“A trip to the library or museum to snack on the great histories of objects as they are documented through archeology, art history, or in images—painted or photographed or moving. In full physical presence or in representation, things and the places they occupy illuminate the relevance of the physical world and bring them into a consequential relationship with the imagination.”
— Linda Sikora

“I snack on my own aesthetic ideas—and eat the same for dessert.”
— Melvin Edwards
“Does coffee count? Coffee breaks are very important, and coffee with a treat is even better. We’re really serious about our coffee making. I’ll just say the process involves scales, thermometers, and timers. When I make coffee in the studio, I usually pair it with a couple of slices of wheat toast with butter and blackberry jam. I think there is something about a craft and ceramics practice in which process is really important, something about the ritual and repetition. I think I’m drawn to the same qualities in snacking.” — Del Harrow

“When I want inspiration and also a break from my day-to-day activities, I go out for oysters, either raw, chargrilled, or charbroiled.”
— Courtney Bryan

“My creative practice is fueled by the presence of my two cats. During intense creative sessions, a break will often be required. More times than not, this break will include petting and snuggling with my cats, Mrs. Lulu and Mr. Charles. I often feed them by hand and talk to them in a high catlike voice. I love their presence and energy; often, they send me creative vibes.”
— Sylvie Courvoisier
The Artist’s Palate

Over the course of our lives, we develop unique and subjective tastes, a palate that informs the kinds of experiences and aesthetics we are drawn to. For example, growing up eating chili-covered candy in Mexico could evolve into a love of spicy foods as an adult, but it may also spark a lifelong pursuit of boldness and adventure at large.

Perhaps it’s a happy accident that the word for the tool used by painters to mix paint (palette) sounds identical to the word for one’s sense of taste (palate). In the spirit of that serendipitous connection, we asked artists to reflect on their literal taste and flavor preferences. Not surprisingly, mellow and bland were the least selected.
SNACKS THAT FUEL A CREATIVE PRACTICE
When I was a kid and went to birthday parties in Mexico, my favorite moment was when we got to break the piñata. There was a strategy for the piñata breaking. When the candy fell from the multicolored paper figure, scrambling to collect it was a ruthless endeavor and there were no friends for several intense minutes. My technique was to drop to my knees, push everyone as hard as I could, and stretch my arms as far out as I could to maximize my chances of getting the good candy: the spicy tamarind-flavored Rellerindos, the watermelon-flavored Rebanaditas, and the tart, tamarind-flavored Pulparindo. These coveted candies were made from or entirely covered in spicy chili powder, which was my favorite thing about them.

You have to take your time with these candies and suffer a little before you get to taste the sweet, rewarding part. This is part of the experience that I appreciate. Rebanaditas are entirely covered in a thick, rich layer of chili powder at first, but once you reach the smooth watermelon-flavored center, it feels like a sweet burst. Just stick a Rebanaditas in your mouth as a pick-me-up for your next work meeting and go.

Rellerindos, on the other hand, don’t have any sort of stick or any easy way to consume them. You really have to grab the candy with your hand and lick it. You could just put it in your mouth and suck on it, but I’ve found from personal experience that doing so can scar your tongue—enjoy at
your own risk. This is a sweet, tamarind-flavored hard candy with a soft inside made of spicy tamarind pulp. At the low price of 1 Mexican peso, I used to buy as many Rellerindos as possible, hide them at school, and eat them in secret. I’m still unwilling to share these with others. No shame.

Lastly Pulparindo looks like those fruit bars you can find at a health food store. A thin bar full of sugar, tamarind paste, and chili powder, it’s best torn apart and eaten piece by piece. Not as overpowering as the other two, its spiciness has a milder kick and is paired with the sweet taste of tamarind.

According to Chef Bill Phillips, a spicy foods expert and associate professor at the Culinary Institute of America, “Fiery food tastes hot because chemical molecules, such as capsaicin, excite pain receptors on your tongue that are linked to the sensation of temperature, not because it’s burning off your tastebuds.” Phillips reminds us that spiciness is something that not only enhances our eating experience and elevates flavors in food but also has a visceral effect that can linger in our mouths for a while. In fact, the Mayans used to eat raw habañero peppers as a way to induce a cooling effect on the body to combat the scorching temperatures in the Yucatan Peninsula. I can’t remember eating chili-covered candy for the first time; growing up in Mexico, these candies were always present: at school, at parties, in the grocery store, and so on. Now I realize how these intense sensations of first trying out various spicy flavors as a child have had a lasting impact.
The experience and memories of Rebanaditas, Rellerindos, and Pulparindo encapsulate and reflect a large part of my childhood in Mexico and its ties to my identity. Early exposure to an ingredient like chili powder has encouraged me to have an adventurous food palate and to try new, unexpected combinations such as chili-covered, dried grasshopper tacos. But the most important thing about my relationship with these candies is that they remind me that even though it’s been a long time since I’ve broken a piñata or lived in Mexico, certain snacks will forever connect us to home. 🍴
SNACKS THAT FUEL A CREATIVE PRACTICE
Snacks on Deck, Again and Again

They say that it takes about two months—66 days, to be precise—before a new behavior becomes a habit. For artists, habits are driven by mastering a material or movement—a physical action turned into muscle memory. A dancer practicing the same choreography until it conveys the exact moment when body, mind, and heart connect. A basketweaver bending and molding natural, found material until it has transformed into an astonishing vessel. Over time, cravings become habitual, too, an unconscious tending toward the same flavor, texture, or smell for their comforting familiarity. This chart demonstrates artist-approved, tried-and-true snack staples.
that Smash Creative Blocks

Struggling with blocks inevitably happens at some point or another. Writers stare at their laptop screens for hours trying to string together one more sentence for a story. Painters are confronted by their blank canvas, unable to lay a stroke of paint onto the surface. Ceramicists continuously remake their vessel on the wheel, unsatisfied with the form it’s taking. What kinds of snacks help artists move past their creative blocks?
“During creative blocks, I like to go for a massage or go swimming. If I don’t have time, then I just take a shower or a warm bath. Water has healing energies. To be submerged in water helps me think more clearly and solve problems.”
— Sylvie Courvoisier

“For creative blocks, I simply need to go on a walk, but ultimately I end up with a drink in my hand to sip on. It can range from a coffee to a lemon honey ginger tea or an Arnold Palmer. It is the act of walking outdoors and sipping as sensory stimulants.”
— Mary Ping
“I try not to eat when I have creative blocks. When I feel blocked, my favorite thing to do is to go to one of three go-to thrift shops in my neighborhood. It’s retail therapy that’s cheap and eco-friendly, and thrift shops often have incredible and timeless book choices.”
— Edwidge Danticat

“Reading books: of poetry; poetics; applied philosophy; beauty and justice. This, to move the heart and mind (imagination).

Out of doors: walking rural roads through wooded land; standing amidst the trees; looking for a stream of sun that reaches through the canopy. This, to be in the body and belong. Going to the studio. This, to keep making it home.”
— Linda Sikora
“A coffee from the shop nearby. This has less to do with the coffee and more to do with the fresh air and the exercise that the round trip entails. Change of context really helps me get through blocks.”
— Surya Mattu

“I keep secret stashes of beef jerky in my studio, house, and car for when things get dire.”
— Martine Syms
“It could be a few different things, but I think when I’m feeling stressed I’ll get a snack that involves leaving the studio. We live pretty close to downtown, and I can hop on my bike and be at a bakery or a coffee shop in a few minutes. Our favorite bakery in town has an amazing chocolate chip walnut cookie. I only get one once every few months, and it feels like a big treat—and a comfort. Growing up, I spent a lot of time with my mom in coffee shops. As much as anything, it was about the culture and community of the cafe. I still find those kinds of spaces comforting—so as much as the snack, I think it’s about being in a kind of space.” — Del Harrow
“We are fueled by books and visual culture more than snacks.” — MOS (Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample)

“Ceramics is a medium made for food. I think about what pairs well with what form, and this has naturally led to which food helps me when I am trying to conceptually resolve a piece. I favor more savory snacks like dried okra and mesquite cashews during daytime studio work sessions (the prototyping, researching time) and sweet pastries like almond croissants and butter shortbread cookies for evening studio time (production, making, building).” — Jennifer Ling Datchuk
“If I need to stay up late to finish a deadline, dark chocolate is key, key, key! It’s rich, sweet, and has just enough caffeine to help me push through a creative block.”

— Nicole Mitchell

“Cake or sweet bread made from scratch. I think the baking is more a part of this than the eating. I am most in touch with my dream state and can dive deeply into my writing after I’ve meticulously measured out a cake or banana bread or zucchini bread using one of my grandmother’s recipes. I keep a rusty, metal recipe box that I’ve had for over 40 years in my kitchen that contains my grandmother’s recipes. The meditation of baking allows me to access doors in my memory or imagination that would otherwise remain closed. Often by the time the smell of the good thing baking is wafting through the house, I’m back at my desk in a writing fury.”

— Crystal Wilkinson
Connecting Mind, Body, and Spirit

“Gummies. From gummy bears to snakes to rings, this snack provides me with a resilient texture to wrestle with, which provides my brain permission to do the same.”
— Laurie Woolery

“Buttery popcorn and Cherry Coke—maybe because they remind me of going to the movies and losing myself in these other cinematic worlds. Indulging in it during rehearsals has somehow gotten me back on track during difficult moments.”
— Abby Zbikowski
“Water is really the best snack during creative blocks! I feel hydrated, renewed, and balanced. I don’t generally eat while working but use hunger to let me know it’s time to stop or to take a long break.”
— Sara Zewde

“Dried and lightly smoked hooligan (eulachon). It is a small, locally harvested fish that is very rich in omega-3 oil. It’s tasty and makes your brain work more efficiently!”
— Lani Strong Hotch
Charcuterie: A Spread of Recommendations

Think about the last time you visited an artist’s creative space. Did they have a spread of snacks for you to dig in on? If not, we think they should have! Here, the Fellows offer an abundance of options for when a friend stops by, an artist comes to visit, or a loved one wants to catch up. This spread is the perfect compilation of recommended snacks for the next time you play host.
SNACKS THAT SMASH CREATIVE BLOCKS

1. SOPHIA NAHLI ALLISON, TATSU AOKI, AARON MCINTOSH
2. HANIF ABDURRAQIB, NATHALIE JOACHIM, CLINT RAMOS, JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, CRYSTAL WILKINSON, PAMELA Z
3. SOPHIA NAHLI ALLISON, JENNIFER LING DATCHUK, NATHALIE JOACHIM, DIANNE MCINTYRE, MARY PING, JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, PAMELA Z, SARA ZENDE
4. SOPHIA NAHLI ALLISON, CHRISTINA ANDERSON, DOM FLEMONS, DIANNE MCINTYRE
5. COURTNEY BRYAN, PATTY CHANG, SYLVIE COURVOISIER, JENNIFER LING DATCHUK, AARON MCINTOSH, MOS, JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, HAMID RAHMANIAN
6. COURTNEY BRYAN, WILL RAWLS, PAMELA Z
7. TATSU AOKI, MARY PING, JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, CLINT RAMOS
8. CHRISTINA ANDERSON, SARAH BROOM, CRYSTAL WILKINSON
9. NATHALIE JOACHIM, CRYSTAL WILKINSON
10. DIANNE MCINTYRE
11. SYLVIE COURVOISIER, JENNIFER LING DATCHUK, BING LIU, AARON MCINTOSH, MOS, JAUNE QUICK-TO-SEE SMITH, MARTINE SYMS, PAMELA Z
12. HAMID RAHMANIAN, SARA ZENDE
13. SOPHIA NAHLI ALLISON, PATTY CHANG, JENNIFER LING DATCHUK, HAMID RAHMANIAN, PAMELA Z
14. DEL HARROW
15. BING LIU, MOS, MARTINE SYMS
16. WILL RAWLS
17. WILL RAWLS
18. LANI STRONG HOTCH
19. DIANNE MCINTYRE
20. DOM FLEMONS
Animal Crackers

I liked to bite the hindquarters off the hippopotamuses, and the humps off the camels. I loved tails, and ears, like those of the hollow chocolate rabbit who appeared in my house when Jesus rose. The indented spots on the leopard sent me, the deep engravings in the zebra’s side...
Sometimes I liked to save the head, then pop it in and attend, to feel that brain of dumb sugar and flour added to mine. And now that I am half old, I want some poet crackers, some Smarts, some Whitmans, little busts or cameos of everyone, to eat. I ate Christ, and the bunny, I want a Levine matzoh, I want Dickinson by her own recipe, and Keats, bright oatmeal brooch. I need to read, lip-read, tooth-read, Ruth Stone, Miss Gwendolyn Brooks, oh sweet salty Rukeyser cracker! And I would like to be one, to be in those little boxes with woven handles like shed snakeskins—edible Kinnells, Cliftons, and Kunitzes! I wish, when I am dead, I could be among the English and American animal crackers.

—Sharon Olds, 2019
The Places to Snack

In 1989, sociologist Ray Oldenberg pioneered the concept of a “third place” in his book *The Great Good Place*. A third place is a hangout spot, community center, or home away from home that provides an essential zone outside of your domestic space or workplace. These places could be a coffee shop, a gym, a library, or even a favorite thrift shop, and they help artists connect with themselves in a setting that is unlike the traditional studio or rehearsal space. This notion of a third place is something we wanted to explore further because these spaces offer such an element of relaxation and connectedness to ourselves and our community. What are the preferred places where artists find moments of refuge and escape from a routine day?
Any Kind of Fruit Is Best

By Kevin Locke
The Answer Is Grapes
By RaMell Ross

grapes. without seeds. washed. but not peeled. cool grapes, not warm. nor too cool, near cold.

grapes. they have water, and firm shape. they have skin, and can peel. they hold flavor, and smush sloppily.

grapes

i would recommend grapes. you don’t even need teeth.

grapes in the grocery store. the gangs of grape groups gathering glaring guests.

in season grapes. heavy ones, that are gluttonously green.

not grapes

grape-ish, grapey, grapious, graphonic, grapelogical, grrrrrrape

near grape gaggles
The Time to Snack

Our lives are not linear. There are quiet and busy times and moments of clarity and inspiration mixed in with the business of life. After a long day, sometimes all we want is to decompress with the aid of a cup of chamomile tea, a bag of Doritos, or ice cream straight from the pint. It is these little moments that eventually become part of our routines. We asked the Fellows to think about when they partake in snacking. Their top answers reflected times when they wanted to relax: snacking while spending time with friends or after a stressful day.
Food can trigger and evoke strong sensations, feelings, and even memories—it can help us to relive a past moment, experience a kind of déjà vu, or embark on a form of time travel. The artists in this section shared stories about themselves, family, and places connected to the foods they snack on.
Floating in Jell-O

By Hyun Jung Jun

Memories of Jell-O:
(year/memory/music I was listening to at the time)

2000: Clear blue Jell-O cut in cubes in a Tupperware on the way to Universal Studios
♫ “S Club Party” by S Club 7

2001: Clear gelatin used for synchronized swimming
♫ Britney album by Britney Spears

2011: Gelatin art tutorial videos on YouTube
♫ “The Black Swan & Promise” by CocoRosie w/ the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra

2014: Rainbow Jell-O shots infused with vodka
♫ Joyland album by TR/ST

2019–20: Recent trends on Instagram
♫ “Doin’ Time” by Lana Del Rey

In the summer of 2000, I traveled from South Korea to Los Angeles to visit my aunt’s family. I remember this being the first time I was introduced to Jell-O. The night before our trip to Universal Studios, we mixed a box of it up in a large Tupperware bowl and threw it in the refrigerator. In the morning, we cut the hardened liquid into all sorts of shapes and slurped them down on the drive over. The way it danced and slipped down my throat tickled me
and filled me with wonder. There was something magical about mixing powder from a box with water to make colorful, jiggly slime.

My interest in Jell-O was recently reignited when I fell down a YouTube rabbit hole of video tutorials for gelatin flower art. Originally from Mexico, this process uses long, slender needles to inject neon liquid into a perfect sphere of gelatin. Stripes, blooms, and ribbons are meticulously layered on top of one another, eventually forming a latticed illusion of petals and leaves. Before you know it, a freshly bloomed flower unfolds in front of your eyes—suspended and still. As an artist, I was not only seduced by the craft but also felt conceptually drawn toward this image of a flower, trapped in a bubble, frozen in time and space. This perfect bloom describes our desire to be suspended in an idyllic fantasy, an unachievable utopia. And yet the object itself is perishable and consumable. Why would we make a thing of such perfect beauty, only to cut it apart and ingest it, piece by piece?

In the Middle Ages, what we know as Jell-O started out as aspic, a specific method of preservation using gelatin. Meats, vegetables, and fruits were placed into molds filled with meat stock that eventually cooled into gelatinous shapes. Aspic’s main purpose was to preserve food by keeping air, bacteria, and other contaminants out. However, it also indicated one’s social status, as the process was known for being so time-consuming and laborious that it required a kitchen staff with the expertise to make it. Meat alone cost a great deal and was reserved for those who could afford it. Through the ages, gelatin-formed food continued to carry weight at
celebrations, feasts, and meals, eventually making its way from European society into the American colonies. In 1845, New York industrialist Peter Cooper developed a powdered mix of gelatin with preserved lemons, eggs, and sugar to make the first patented dessert. Some 30-odd years later, with the addition of food coloring and other recipe modifications, Pearl B. Wait coined the name “Jell-O,” at the suggestion of his wife.

Jell-O’s continued success through the early to mid-20th century greatly relied on its radical ability to adapt to the needs of the American housewife and the dinner table. After World War I, many women who joined the effort remained employed, and Jell-O solved the needs of a “quick meal” when little time was left for the kitchen. Even into the Great Depression, Jell-O was further marketed as a way to stretch leftover food into multiple meals. The success of Jell-O lay not in its ability to transform dessert into an elegant delicacy but in its utility, which could be applied to every part of the meal, including casseroles, salads, and meatloaf. Fantastic collisions between the dinner table and Jell-O continued through the years, changing with the times and adapting to cultures across the world.

In today’s world, food has taken on new radical roles outside of its primary use at the dining table. Thanks to the internet and globalization, more and more people are able to carve out unique communities surrounding food, art, and self-expression. Younger generations today have enormous access to the outside world through the food they eat, whether because of the variety of cultures in
their local community or the global spectrum of culinary experiences available on their phones and computers via YouTube recipe tutorials, celebrity chefs, and cooking channels. Because of this, food is increasingly a complex collection of personal experience and shared identity.

Food has become a stronger form of expression and identity than ever before. Since the 1980s, visual artworks such as *Identical Lunch* and *Make a Salad* by Alison Knowles, candy installations by Félix González-Torres, and *Enemy Kitchen* by Michael Rakowitz have utilized food as a tool and conceptual framework through performance and site-specific installations. Artists incorporate food as a bridge to create community and start critical conversations around identity and culture by directly inviting viewers to participate in the piece. As a result, the distance between the viewer and the piece shrinks, allowing the audience to experience each piece on a more personal level.

Sharona Franklin, a disabled artist based in Vancouver who shares her work on Instagram, creates unique sculptures by suspending wildflowers in gelatin. The sculptures are mesmerizing, almost magical in their appearance, but the depth of her work exceeds the spectacle of social media. Franklin uses gelatin deliberately to reference her use of bio-related medications and challenge the one-size-fits-all mentality of wellness culture. She intentionally collects the plants over time while on long walks and works out of her kitchen instead of a studio in order to call attention to the more human aspects of living, rather than pure design or aesthetics. Gelatin provides her a
safe space to talk about disability in a provocative and honest way.

Even beyond its purpose as a food, gelatinous dessert has found its way into niche cultures, such as today’s ASMR (autonomous sensory meridian response) community. One aim of ASMR videos is to replace the viewer’s reality with a fabricated one, letting them live vicariously through the actor. The videos focus on materials and movements from everyday life, such as soap, jelly (snack), sand, peeling, and whispering, to name a few. The content explores the physicality of the selected material—its surface, texture, weight, sound—activating different senses by physically manipulating the material itself and creating repetitive sounds until it’s destroyed or depleted. For instance, the sound of someone eating food—with all its intricate pops and smacking ricocheting dramatically off of the roof of the mouth—is slowed down and amplified, making the viewer feel as if they themselves are the ones chewing. The heightened sensory experience of these substances draws viewers into an isolated space suspended in the strangeness of the process, which brings comfort for some and helps relieve anxiety. Like a flower suspended in molded gelatin, the audience is suspended in the mesmerizing sensation of ASMR.

Food has the ability to reflect cultural and social shifts, to mark a particular moment in history. Whether used as nourishment, a form of entertainment, or an art form, Jell-O demonstrates how culture is a malleable form tied to labor, class, and gender. The wet, plastic, formless quality of Jell-O has captivated the public imagination and
pushed the boundaries of the everyday and functional. When so much of our world takes place in the virtual world and is consumed by quotidian rigidness, gelatin is a jiggling, bouncy, material reminder to break free of our constraints, take a step back, try something different, and be wholly in the moment.

REFERENCES


A READING LIST

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SNACKS THAT TAKE YOU BACK
“My father was a foodie and a very good cook. He was known for his **carrot cake** at Christmas and his **muffins** and **rolls**. We were both born in April, so we would go to a 5-star restaurant to celebrate, such as Le Bec Fin in Philadelphia, where he lived. When my mother was alive, they would go to Paris and rented an apartment from a retirement organization. After she passed away, he would go alone to Paris and go to 5-star restaurants. My father also made his own ice cream, hand-cranked and hand-churned. His best flavor was **peach ice cream**...better than Häagen-Dazs. He also bought a huge freezer and would buy bushels of **vegetables**. He would freeze them so we had fresh vegetables all year long.”
Delores Churchill

“Razor clams. I used to dig them commercially, I really like the taste, and the beach is so beautiful when the waves are coming in. It’s really a unique place because, according to our family stories, the Haidas came ashore in a clamshell. And the raven was so full that he didn’t eat the Haidas who came in the clamshell. But our very, very favorite fish is this smoked fish that we get that is dried. That is our very favorite food. And not many people know how to make that dried fish anymore. In fact, we have to buy it because nobody in our vicinity makes it. A man comes in, brings it, and sells it to us.”

Patty Chang

“My mom’s dried persimmons and deep-fried fava beans.”
Will Rawls

“Orangina reminds me of summers at my grandmother’s house in rural New Hampshire. Grits and bacon remind me of family reunions in rural Georgia.”

Hanif Abdurraqib

“Joyva raspberry bars remind me of the kosher market near my childhood home. My parents would go there to get meat and cheese and sometimes those candy bars to make the car ride home bearable.”
SNACKS THAT TAKE YOU BACK
“Senbei reminds me of road trips our family took when we were kids. We piled into a PV544 black Volvo and drove to Colorado with a tub of rice crackers. I remember it like it was yesterday. AND it also reminds me of my first trip to Japan, when I went to a temple festival and came across a rice cracker booth where they were making these big round crackers right there. I thought I had died and went to heaven.”
Nicole Mitchell

“I make special desserts using nuts, dates, fruit, and sometimes cacao. When we have company, I enjoy making a fruit pie with these ingredients. You can’t get it anywhere else.”
“Sucking on hard candy. My favorite are sugar-free Life Savers. It reminds me, always, of my Grandmother Lolo. Boiled seafood always reminds me of home. We are a seafood-loving family. When we snack, it’s usually boiled shrimp, crab, sausage, or crawfish. We pour it all out on top of a plastic table covering and stand around the table eating together. A warm memory.”
Elizabeth Streb

“Buffalo chicken wings with blue cheese dressing and celery because it reminds me of Buffalo, NY, where streetlights were first prominent and also because of Niagara Falls and the cliff I have always wanted to dive from in my own built machine like Annie Edson Taylor, who went down in her specialized barrel and survived.”
“My sisters and I used to like to make **cinnamon toast**. Our version involves buttering the bread, sprinkling it with a generous amount of granulated white sugar, covering that with a layer of ground cinnamon, and toasting it under the broiler in the oven until it bubbles and caramelizes on top.”
SNACKS THAT TAKE YOU BACK
Surya Mattu

“One from my grandmother is vodka-soaked tamarinds. I don’t really remember how this started, but it has become a family staple.”

Matthew Angelo Harrison

“I’m a big eater and I take food very seriously. Mac and cheese—my mom cooks a mean mac and cheese. Any kind of breakfast cereal reminds me of my mom. We would always have 12 boxes of every kind of cereal at our house. Cap’n Crunch, Cinnamon Toast Crunch… you name it.”
Del Harrow

“Anything with blackberries or hazelnuts. I grew up in Oregon in the Willamette Valley. My grandparents had a Filbert orchard, and in the fall we’d eat blackberries off the bushes by the side of the road until they made us sick.”

Bing Liu

“I remember when I was a young child, my family members would sit around eating sunflower seeds and drinking jasmine tea to pass the time.”
Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

“A **flan** reminds me of the mom-and-pop Mexican cafes around town.”

Guadalupe Rosales

“**Hot Cheetos**! My upbringing in East Los Angeles.”
Dianne McIntyre

“Mango lassi is a special drink that I love. It reminds me of a hot summer day under the shade of a palm tree.”

Clint Ramos

“Rice cakes and mangoes. It reminds me of the Philippines.”
Lisa Nelson

“I am a forager by nature. When there’s no garden to browse, I go hunting for something down in my environment, what’s on offer serendipitously. In the past, I would say tobacco is the ultimate snack.”
Snacks
What Is the Snack that Speaks to You?
By Rebecca Haley

There is an undeniable boom in the personality quiz business. Determining our selfhood from any variety of arbitrary choices—from astrological sign to most quoted sitcom to favorite historical period—is so commonplace that we compare notes and ascribe our actions to these tendencies without batting an eyelash. But why are we so quick to believe that answering a series of decidedly unscientific questions gives us some insight about ourselves we weren’t capable of arriving at otherwise? Cultural writer and literary critic Merve Emre writes in her 2018 book The Personality Brokers that these tests “strike a delicate balance between the challenges of pure, trailblazing individuality and the comforts of belonging to a social class that surpasses the individual—a clan of people who speak the same language of selfhood.”¹ This notion of balancing ourselves between individuality and community strikes right at the heart of how we think about snacking.

Do you think you know everything there is to know about your personality? Have you taken all the personality quizzes, read every astrology guide, followed the map to self-realization…and still want more? Go ahead, take this quiz to figure out what snack speaks to you, and maybe glean some new insights into your personality as well!

Is your book club picking books that are...

A whirlwind romance, breezy, juicy, and light

A leftover museum map or performance program

An expired transit card

Is your ideal artist pet...

Blistered shishito peppers with a dash of parmesan
You’re willing to put in the work to figure out the big picture. Taking the time to char some shishitos will pay off tenfold when you can keep popping one after another while the plot thickens.

Freshly baked French baguette with a tart goat cheese and sweet berry compote
You enjoy being caught up in the moment. Let that excitement guide your snacking toward this perfect mix of cheese and fruit, sweet and savory—each bite a moment unto itself.

Oatmeal with peanut butter and bananas
You might venture out into your yard or around the block, but staying close to home keeps you by the ones you love—your pups. A nutritious and hearty oatmeal bowl reminds you what it means to feel at home.

Images, left to right:
Pick a meme to get you started…

Lots of unstructured time to think through your next moves

Ursula K. LeGuin’s cats, cats, cats

A full rotation of “Housewives” for every night of the week

Does your pop culture diet consist of…

Endless episodes of “Great British Bake Off,” “Master Chef,” and “Chopped”

Is the most useless thing in your bag…

Does your pop culture diet consist of…

Do you need…

Black tea with milk and a touch of honey, plus some ginger cookies on the side

Avocado toast with feta and pepitas

Apple tart with (or without) a scoop of vanilla ice cream

You can set up on an armchair for an afternoon of productive or not-so-productive time, but either way you’ve got the particulars of leisure time down to a science. Making time for the perfect cup of tea and spicy-sweet cookies is exactly what you need for these dedicated armchair hours.

You know how to give yourself the time you need for a reset. Foster a feeling of satisfaction with a deliciously decadent but easy-to-whip-up avocado toast so you can sit back and enjoy your shows.

You love to deliver a winning moment as much as you love to cheer on other people in their winning moment. A sweet treat for when you’re strategizing a contestant’s best next moves will keep your head in the game.
Pick a meme to get you started…

- When you tell them you’re an artist and they say, “Yeah, but what’s your real job?”
- We’re going on a living wage.
- Endless episodes of "Great British Bake Off," "Master Chef," and "Chopped" Do you always win…
- March Madness brackets
- Harry Potter trivia night with friends

A to-do list that details today, tomorrow, and the week to come
- Do you need…
- Escaping with a full spin of true crime tales

- Popcorn with a sprinkle of nutritional yeast
  You like feeling engaged and on your toes, so you need your snack to give you that extra oomph. Savory popcorn is the perfect treat to chomp on while you check all the boxes on your list.
- Crunchy sourdough pretzels and cheese dip
  You utilize both strategy and instinct to guide you through your work, your friendships, and your life. Chew through the down-time with a rich, salty, crunchy treat.
- A tall glass of prosecco and a handful of mixed nuts
  You’re all about the mix of high and low, a decadent treat and a utilitarian snack. The best of both worlds. This pairing of bubbly and salty is exactly what you need to satisfy that craving.
Quiet, sun-lit, and immaculately clean
Filled to the brim with all the necessities
Are you currently obsessed with...
Parked next to your friends, close to the free wine
Chatting away with everyone who walks through the door

At gallery openings, can we find you...

Digging into reality with a daily news podcast

Vanilla yogurt with cinnamon raisin granola
You love to keep your life organized and use your time efficiently. Get on the right track with a filling and nurturing yogurt-granola combo that will keep you checked in to the work of the day.

Truffle parmesan french fries
You’re social but not that social. The best complement to your evening of locally brewed beer is some decadent truffle parmesan french fries. Dig in!

Veggie sushi roll
You like making the most of your time, whether it’s dedicated to working or socializing. Sushi rolls are perfect for you to maneuver while multitasking, and the veggies will boost your brain.
Afterword

At United States Artists, we believe that advancing the livelihoods and perspectives of the country’s most compelling thinkers and makers is critical to our future. Similarly, we believe that fostering the passionate voices of emerging, young arts professionals is vital to our field. As such, USA’s internship program places living artists and young people in direct conversation to illuminate the significance of these perspectives in the world today—two groups that we believe advance society forward by challenging convention through curiosity and experimentation.

During this yearlong process, our interns are tasked with producing an issue of *Anthology* that highlights each year’s class of awardees in an effort to deepen the connections between them and expand the way their work connects to the world around us. This second iteration, *Grazing: A Nationwide Study of Artists and Their Snacks*, uses the frame of snacking to examine the fleeting and unseen moments of artistic daily life. Informed by USA’s working relationships with artists, our interns took a playful and personal approach to learning about artists’ processes, tendencies, preferences, and, of course, their favorite snacks. As the project evolved, snacking quickly became about the transitional ways artists engage with time, site, place, memory, struggle, boredom, and joy.

The 2020 USA Fellowship cohort, comprised of 50 visionary artists from across the country, offered grace, humor, and humility when working with our intern team on this publication. They shared anecdotes, personal stories,
funny bits, and a genuine love for food. In this process, Rebecca, Hyun Jung, and Onyx learned that placing artists in unexpected contexts or conversations helps us appreciate the world differently. And, through this publication, they created a lens by which we can acknowledge our own humanity and find humor and joy in the mundane. We are incredibly proud of Rebecca, Hyun Jung, and Onyx, who spent an academic year crafting their creative vision, actively learning from our staff, and embodying practices of generosity and care. We hope you’ve enjoyed ruminating on these pages as much as we’ve relished in making them.

Lynnette Miranda

*Program Director*
Contributors

Rebecca Haley, Editor and 2019–20 Intern
Rebecca Haley is a second-year graduate student in the Arts Administration & Policy and Art History dual degree program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago who envisions her career working to directly support artists and their livelihood. Originally from Philadelphia, she received her BA in the History of Art and Architecture from Boston University and worked in Research and Strategic Engagement at Pace Gallery in New York. Rebecca recently interned at Philadelphia Contemporary, where she split her time between Programming and Development. Currently, she is a 2020 Graduate Curatorial Fellow at Sullivan Galleries. Rebecca’s research is focused on the relationship between artists and institutions, she has a keen interest in both the social conditions of art making and the economic position of artists. Outside of her studies, Rebecca loves to read fiction, talk about reality television, and—above all else—cheer on her Philadelphia 76ers.

Hyun Jung Jun, Editor, Photographer, and 2019–20 Intern
Hyun Jung Jun is a working artist living in Chicago. In her work, she explores the relationships among everyday life, the body, boundaries, and cultural landscapes through a multidisciplinary practice involving cooking, collecting, categorizing, recording, and list making. Originally from South Korea, she moved at age 18 to the United States, where she later received her BFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014 and an MFA in Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University in 2019. She has participated in a number of artist residencies, including the Vermont Studio Center and Alchemy in rural Canada, and has worked directly with a number of artists and galleries in Chicago over the years. Outside of her role as an artist, Hyun Jung is very into cooking and often hosts dinners, cooking workshops, and recipe swaps. She believes that by investigating food and culture, we can understand each other better.

Onyx Montes, Editor and 2019–20 Intern
Onyx Montes was raised in Mexico and lived in Amsterdam and Seattle before moving to Chicago in 2015. She studied Art History and Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies at the University of Washington in Seattle. She is currently pursuing her MA in Museum and Exhibition Studies at UIC and is part of Americans for the Arts’ inaugural Arts & Culture Leaders of
Color Fellowship. Onyx works as an educator at the Art Institute and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and manages the social media presence of the Hyde Park Art Center. She is an avid reader and well traveled, with 19 countries visited and counting. Her interests include swimming, grunge music, eating tacos, and thrift shopping.

Wyatt Grant, Illustrator
Wyatt is an artist and musician originally from Memphis. Now based in Chicago, he received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he specialized in Painting and Fiber & Material Studies. The work he makes exists between painting, illustration, and sculpture, and his recent projects have included poster design, illustrations, and mural commissions. It’s important for him to make art that exists in an “applied” way, where it becomes accessible and part of an accessible economy of visual language. Consequently, he often draws patterns, people, and everyday objects and finds himself in the enjoyable role of an illustrator. His practice is a long-stemming process of cataloging imagery rooted in his stream of consciousness, with each image building from the last. He is especially interested in crafting vocabulary—building upon it and taking it away—and examining new ways to tell stories and share imagery.

Nadine Nakanishi, Designer-in-Residence
Nadine fancies herself a proud print nerd. Born in Santa Monica, CA, to immigrant parents, she spent her youth in Switzerland, where her Swiss/American/Japanese background has shaped her understanding of the modern world. Her passion for art started as a young adult following all things music and exploring the graphic arts that eventually led her to study both type and graphic design in Switzerland. In 2006, she established Sonnenzimmer, a collaborative graphic arts practice with her partner, Nick Butcher. Without a doubt, she believes graphics serve as a cornerstone for understanding the arts and our times.

Sydney Veverka, Illustrator
Sydney Veverka is a freelance illustrator and muralist currently working in Chicago. She primarily paints murals and enjoys finding work that brings her closer to the communities around her, especially while the weather’s warm. She received her BFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design.
The 2020 USA Fellows

About the USA Fellowship
USA Fellowships are $50,000 unrestricted awards recognizing artists for their contributions to the field and allowing them to decide how to best support their lives. Fellowships are awarded to artists and collectives at all stages of their careers, working all across the United States and its territories. Since our founding in 2006, we have awarded over $30 million to more than 600 artists in 49 states and Puerto Rico!

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