

Stephanie Gagne

## 1. OVERVIEW

**I propose to organize a private picnic event, located within Vancouver's Stanley Park, during the *Landmarks 2017* exhibition. The picnic, planned for June 23, will last about 1 hour and have approximately 20 participants. The event is composed of 3 main elements: culinary art, visual installation and performative recreation. Additionally a poster will be produced consisting of a photographic research of picnics held within Stanley Park.**

## 2. RESEARCH

Terminology, park regulations, culinary establishments, ecological information and historical documentation have been the main sources for my research into picnics.

### **Picnic Terminology:**

Traditional and contemporary definitions of the term picnic narrow my conception of the event. The earliest picnics were medieval hunting feasts in England. The word picnic first appeared in French texts in 1692 and described a group of people dining in a restaurant who brought their own wine. The word first appeared in English texts in 1748 and described card-playing, drinking, and conversation. Today, a picnic is an excursion, where a meal is eaten outdoors during the summer, in a scenic landscape, such as a park or lake. Picnics are family-oriented, intimate occasions or large get-togethers. Picnics usually incorporate a combination of grilling and baking, baskets, blankets, and games. The food eaten is rarely hot and takes the form of deli sandwiches, finger food, fresh fruit, salad, cold meats, cheeses and soft drinks. In established public parks, a picnic area generally includes tables, grills, water faucets, garbage containers, and restrooms. Background research on similar events creates distinctions between these events and the event. A potlatch is a gift-giving feast and ritual practiced by the indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada and was traditionally their primary economic system. A potlatch can also be defined as an opulent ceremonial feast, where possessions are given away or destroyed to display wealth or enhance prestige. Potlatches were once banned by the Canadian federal government, but have recently re-emerged in some communities. A potluck dinner is a gathering where each guest contributes a different homemade dish to be shared as part of a multi-course meal. Potlucks are often organized by religious or community groups since they simplify meal planning and distribute costs. There seems to be a recent growth of themed dinners for parties and special occasions.

### **Site Regulations:**

As an artist, I often use restrictions as generative tools, therefore the necessary restrictions of the site will aid in my playful and respectful interpretation of the park rules. *The City of Vancouver* and the *Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation* websites, which contain a large amount of historical information and protocols on appropriate public conduct in the park, have been an inspiration for the planning of the picnic. These constructed systems are obviously in place for organizational and safety reasons and are solid starting points for my research into public picnics.

**Culinary Establishments:**

Researching menus give me a better sense of how the public is currently consuming food within the park. The official map and guide to Stanley Park, recommends that visitors purchase take-out food from concession stands, trucks, gift shops, commercial grocery stores, hotels or pack their own picnic from home. I am also looking into fine dining services already available within Stanley Park, to inform my own menu. Casual, seasonal concession stands exist, such as *Railway Café*, *Lumberman's Arch*, *Second Beach*, *Stanley Park Information Booth*, *Third Beach*, *Totem poles*, *Third Beach*, *Totem poles* and *Brockton Visitor Centre*. Current food carts are called *BerryMobile*, *Candy Meister*, *Cup a Corn*, *Fijian Fusion*, *Japadog*, *Jim's Ice Cream*, *Lemon Heaven*, *Potato Tornado Shack*, *Roaming Popcorn*, *San Juan Family Farm* and *Vancouver Beach Nuts*. Some of the park's classic restaurants are *The Teahouse Restaurant*, *Prospect Point Cafe*, *Stanley Park Pavilion* and *The Waterfall Cafe*.

**Park Ecology:**

Information and practices surrounding native plants and species greatly advance my knowledge of the site. The menu, ironic green plastic theme, environmental and social considerations are formed through this research. *The Stanley Park Ecological Society's* literacy, programming, and research about the restoration of the park's natural environment has greatly informed the picnic's culinary, aesthetic development and safety limits. *The Stanley Park Ecological Society's* website has useful information on Stanley Park's ecosystem. The society aims to inspire the park's harmony between nature and people and empower communities to make choices that sustain healthy ecosystems. The current, biggest threats to the natural biodiversity in the park are habitat and species loss, invasive species, disruptions to ecological processes, climate change, environmental contaminants, and direct impacts to wildlife. Humans, mammals, insects, cars, noise pollution, foraging, and disease greatly affect this location.

**Park History:**

While I will not be educating or solely highlighting multicultural, colonial, or indigenous histories during the event, I still think it is important to be generally aware of the settlement and local knowledge of Stanley Park. Originally, Coast Salish ancestors arrived in North America from Asia around 16,000 BCE. This seasonal hunting and gathering place has been the territory of the Coast Salish people of three First Nations communities: the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh. Explorers Jose Maria Narvaez and Captain Vancouver briefly visited the site in 1791-2. Contact with European peoples transformed the human presence and further modified the ecology. European peoples introduced new industrial technologies and methods for exploiting natural resources, especially through lumbering from 1860-80.

By the mid-1880s, with Canada's first transcontinental railway and increasing European resettlement, Vancouver decides to reserve the site as an urban park. In 1889, the Park is dedicated by Lord Stanley, the governor general. The zoo, aquarium, lagoons, lakes and beaches were established throughout the 1900's. The earliest park advocates sought to construct and tailor a space which unifies art and nature. The city and board worked for decades to evict residents in order to reconstruct the landscape as a wilderness park. Today, we still see a lot of manicured lawns, gardens, trails, courts, playgrounds, and cultural attractions along

the seawall. This rainforest in the city has been struck with many storms and fires, but now aims to become a balanced and resilient park.

### 3. CONCEPT

The picnic is composed of 3 main elements: culinary art, visual installation and performative recreation. The happening incorporates aesthetic and social concerns since picnicking is also a collaborative action.

#### **Date and Time:**

The proposed picnic would take place from 2-3pm on June 23, as part of the *Landmarks* schedule.

#### **Location:**

*The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation* designates approximately 6 official picnic areas within the park. The main locations are *Third Beach, Prospect Point Picnic Area, Brockton Point, Lumbermen's Arch Picnic Area, Second Beach Picnic Area* and *Second Beach Swimming Pool*.

For the proposed picnic, the ideal site would be in viewing distance of any of these designated picnic areas, but the typical bench stations provided will not be used. The picnic's food station will be the size of two tables, while recreational activities will take place on the surrounding grass.

My favourite sites are the Siwash Rock Trail (near Merilees Trail, down from Prospect Point), the Ceperley Meadow Playground (between Second Beach and the A-frame), the field near Lumberman's Arch (and the Brockton Oval), the Hollow Tree Picnic Area, and the field near the Prospect Point. I will be making multiple site visits to narrow down the chosen site, but the location of the picnic will definitely be one of these 5 favourite spots.

#### **Audience:**

Picnic invitations will be sent to the *Laboratory Landscape* class. Making the head count definitely under 25 people. If the invitees exceed 45 people, there could be possible issues with catering and licensing. This specific selection ensures casual social interactions within the private event and surrounding public in the park.

#### **Culinary Art:**

The food planned for the picnic is inspired by the environment. The menu will be based on wildlife and edible plants currently growing in Stanley Park, however, the sources (local grocers in Vancouver) and production of the home-made food, will not be tied to the specific site. There is definitely no foraging planned in Stanley Park, I am simply inspired by the different tastes present in this location. Plant knowledge and information on foraging in the Pacific Northwest wilderness, still greatly informs my knowledge of the sites current flavours.

The structure of the picnic is similar to buffets, *Whole Foods* pre-packaged lunches, and English high tea service. There will be salad, sandwich, dessert and drink courses, as well as plastic containers and thematic table settings. Every dish will incorporate one specific and thematic ingredient growing in the park (native or invasive species). Controlled servings based on the number of invitees will ensure everyone is able to taste each mini tapas.

This project brings up notions of generationally taught culture such as migrational, colonial and indigenous food practices, especially considering the location's multicultural history (without having to concentrate on one sole style of cooking). With this picnic, I also aim to create a multi-sensory experience, because I feel that scent, taste, and touch are often unconsidered within public artworks.

### **Visual Installation:**

The temporary picnic installation in Stanley Park will have an excessive green colour scheme. The main aesthetic theme for the picnic is green plastic, as the picnic comments on waste services and environmental concerns in the city. The picnic is inspired by *neo-futurism* since the installation ironically incorporates modern technology and the use of synthetic materials. The cultural heritage present in the park is so complex, that the installation will contain a mix of designs based on multiple traditions. All of the decorations for the picnic, which ironically celebrates 150 years (+) of Canada, will address both contemporary and historical techniques. The constructed and bought, plastic decorations and settings, mimic plants in the park. This creates an interesting contrast between conceptions of natural and human-made environments. The temporal and portable installation is dictated by the natural and built spaces already in the park. A very small, partition or nonfunctional fence could outline the food station, making the audience more aware of their simultaneously private and public situation. A picnic is plain, basic and uncomplicated in nature and design. There is usually very little decoration or ornamentation incorporated into these types of events. I aim to subvert these traditional picnic aesthetics. I will utilize elaborate visual elements to emphasize the notion of visual spectacles and allude to indoor parties. This detailed installation will contrast the overly manicured natural environment surrounding the picnic area. The celebratory accessories, the sculptural and functional objects, will be manufactured or altered to match the picnic's green plastic theme. The picnic is comprised of commercial products and handmade decorations made of synthetic materials. The act of highlighting the dichotomy between natural and altered materials will satirically contribute to stereotypical representations of nature. Through the spectacle of this celebratory event, participants might consider human influences on the environment, climate, and era.

### **Performative Recreation:**

The 150-year commemoration of the Canadian Confederation is complicated by the nation's problematic colonial establishment and layered cultural heritage. The picnic will thus subtly pay homage to patriotism and human excess in a critical and ironic manner. The local politics of the site will not be obviously represented during the event, however, the collaborative youth games performed will indirectly relate to the park's more serious social history. Picnic participants will celebrate together through food consumption, cliché party accessories, interactive recreational activities and casual social discourse. The small selection of delegated activities will be participatory, resemble school ice-breaking and summer camp bonding games. Due to the size of the picnic, I could potentially collaborate with culinary, visual, and performing artists to manage the event. Characters such as a club style bouncer, main host, party police, and server may help with the happening. Human relations and interactions are integral to how the event is run. The invitees consist of friends from an institutional setting, therefore there is some autonomy to the selectively invited picnic participants. The happening is technically both public and private

since the complete monitoring or closing off of the site from passers-by is not optional. The temporality of the event is also informed by the regulations of the site itself, so I aim to make the park and event's administrative systems apparent to the attendees.

**Public Artwork:**

Miwon Kwon's description of the three different categories of public artworks relates to this proposed project. The picnic is similarly composed of three main elements: culinary art, visual installation and performative recreation. Firstly, a large element of the picnic is an aesthetic installation, making it artwork "in public place", especially considering the thematic sculptural accessories which decorate the picnic area. Secondly, the project is also artwork "as public space", seeing as a fence delineates the space. The layout connects to human-made architecture within idealized natural landscapes. Finally, the project could also be defined as an artwork "in the public interest", seeing as it is a temporary event which presents recreational activities and food services to a small community.

## 4. CONTEXT

American art historical depictions of picnics after the 1940's are aesthetically interesting, so I will be pulling from these more contemporary references while I construct the installation. When it comes to the picnic menu, European dishes and a large buffet style presentation are the most fitting contexts. Notions of delegated performance, relational aesthetics and community engagement could also contextualize the performative elements of the picnic.

**Social Significance:**

The contexts of global histories and politics have been shaped by many important picnics. After the French Revolution in 1789, royal parks became open to the public for picnicking. Early in the 19th century, a fashionable group of Londoners formed a high-class picnic society. Romantic American landscape paintings from the 1830s often depicted picnickers. The image of picnics as a peaceful social activity can also be utilized for political functions, as a temporary occupation of significant public territory (example: the Pan-European Picnic held in 1989). A 600-mile-long picnic took place in France in 2000, to celebrate Bastille Day. In the United States, the 4 July celebration of American independence is a popular day for picnics. In Italy, a favourite picnic day is Easter Monday.

**Popular Culture:**

Picnics in fine art: *Bayeux Tapestry* (1070), *Picnic En La Ribera Del Manzanares* by Francisco Goya (1776), *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe* by Édouard Manet (1862), *Un dimanche après-midi à l'Île de la Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat (1884), *Sunday on the Banks of the Marne* by Henri Cartier-Bresson (1938), *I Love You with My Ford* by James Rosenquist (1961), *Pie Counter* by Wayne Thiebaud (1963), *Good Enough to Eat* by Margaret Harrison (1971), *Sandwiches* by Jeff Koons (2000), *Dropped Cone* by Claes Oldenburg (2001), *Picnic* by Banksy (2005).

Picnics in literature: *Rubaiyat* by Omar Khayyam (12th century), *Robin Hood* (1377), *Emma* by Jane Austen (1815), *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* by Isabella Beeton (1861), *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Charles Dickens (1870), *The*

*Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Grahame (1908), *No Picnic on Mount Kenya* by Felice Benuzzi (1947), *Picnic on the Battlefield* by Fernando Arrabal (1960), *Roadside Picnic* by Boris and Arkady Strugatsky (1972).

Picnics in cinema: *Picnic* (1955, 1986 and 2000), *Powers of Ten* (1968), *The Office Picnic* (1972), *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), *Stalker* (1979), *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993), *Blissfully Yours* (2002). Picnics in music: *Teddy Bears' Picnic* by John William Bratton (1906), performed by Arthur Pryor Band (1908), Henry Hall (1932), Big Jon and Sparkie children's radio show (1940), AHL's Hershey Bears hockey club, *Stone Soul Picnic* by The 5th Dimension, *Malcolm's X-Ray Picnic* by Number One Cup, *June Afternoon* by Roxette.

### **Picnic Themes:**

For the picnic's main conceptual and aesthetic theme, I wish to reference contemporary installation art, since I want the audience to be sensorially immersed. The dichotomy between the natural and synthetic is underlined by human food consumption, materials, and garbage bins. Definitions of recently delegated performances also contribute to the context of this excessive, celebratory leisure. The fence subtly connects to thoughts of borders and globalization, as the private invitation reminds the public of unwelcome guests and how private events are managed.

### **Food Practices:**

Documented picnics are historically rooted in European traditions. The fact that I have European and Canadian ancestry, the methods and ingredients will most likely still reflect my francophone upbringing.

However, the menu planned for the event will not concentrate on any specific cultural food practices, and instead, address all of the cultural histories of the site. The menu will be informed by indigenous, colonial and fusion dishes. It is hard to avoid creating a menu inspired by just one specific culture's food practices, considering how much globalization and migration have affected consumption within the city of Vancouver. Ideally, I would take a poll of favourite picnic dishes, habits and diets from the students involved in the *Laboratory Landscape* course.

### **Local Artists:**

Photographic archives, community field houses, public artworks and musical events within the park are some contexts in which I consider my project. There exist some photographs of independent picnics from 1880-1980 in the Vancouver archives. There are multiple established artists who have displayed exclusively sculptural artworks in the park: Pat Beaton, Shirley Wiebe, Tania Willard, Elek Imredy, Harry Jerome, Jack Harman, Bill Reid, Kristine Kavalec, Ellen Neel, Tony Hunt and Davide Pan. An unsanctioned *Human Be-In* was organized by SFU and UBC in 1967, on Easter Sunday at Stanley Park, which included live music and picnics. Current events with entertainment and food services (movie nights and concerts) contribute to the continuing tradition of visual art and picnicking within Stanley Park.

### **Playing in the Park:**

There are multiple ways of planning recreation activities within the context of the park. I do not wish to incorporate traditional sports into the picnic, but instead, have participants move and collaborate in leisurely youth games. The games are non-educational and participatory. Cue cards containing a general script are useful for

the performers and hosts of the event. The script could introduce the participants to the historical meaning of picnics, the chosen site, the symbolism behind the menu, and the instructions for the group youth games. Vancouver parks host arts and cultural happenings to enrich the community, such as music, dance, new media, theatre, festivals, film, design, exhibitions, galleries, museums, and special events. The park recommends visitors to ride in Stanley Park's train, go on site tours, dine, visit the aquarium, plan a special event or sporting event.

## 5. FEASIBILITY

Since the picnic is temporary and small in nature, ideally there are no political or ethical issues with the proposed project.

### **Protocols:**

There are multiple policies and guidelines to consider when organizing a picnic in Stanley Park. Certain picnic tables located on park property are available on a first-come basis when groups are less than 50 people and designated picnic areas are not used. Adjacent grass areas beside the picnic tables are also first come first serve. Priced permits and designated areas are reserved in advance. Designated picnic areas offer shelters, kitchens, access to water and electricity, and bathrooms. Booked picnics may include blankets, lawn chairs, and a small table. Lunch picnics are from 9am-4pm and dinner picnics are from 4pm-9:30pm. *The Vancouver Parks Board* requires two months to process special event applications. Items that are not permitted: tents and canopies larger than 10 feet, sound systems, rental tables and chairs, alcohol, inflatable structures and driving on grass and service roads (wheel in from parking lots). Only cold food will be present during the picnic, so there will be no need for barbecue equipment.

### **Management:**

It is important that during the event, participants know to sort items (garbage, recycling, food scraps) for waste collection, therefore colour-coded bins will be supplied and managed during the event. The city plays a role in fostering, maintaining, and controlling the animals, plants, trees, gardens, and wildlife in Vancouver. It is committed to helping citizens enjoy a good quality of life by regulating and enforcing property use, noise, graffiti, and safety issues. Concerns with urban planning, zoning, building development and renovation are governed by Vancouver. The city also overviews water, sewer, neighbourhood energy and waste management systems. I will be sure to use recycling bins and cart out everything brought into the park.

### **Qualifications:**

Past projects and artist talks have contributed to my experience as an exhibiting artist, curator, panelist, workshop mentor and volunteer. I currently have *First Aid* certification, which contributes to the safety of the event. My mother who owned a french bakery for 4 years and currently has *Food Safe*, will overlook the culinary aspects of the project. I am a visual art student that can skilfully form the material installation. I have access to school networks which also makes outsourcing for performative elements a possibility.

### 6. IMAGES

(a side project will consist of a photographic poster of picnics held within Stanley Park)







## 7. REFERENCES

- 1000 Games For Youth Groups*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.games4youthgroups.com](http://www.games4youthgroups.com)>. Bishop, Claire. *Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity*. October 140 (2012). Web.
- Carruth, Allison. *Global Appetites: American Power and the Literature of Food*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge UP, 2013. Print.
- City of Vancouver Archives*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[searcharchives.vancouver.ca](http://searcharchives.vancouver.ca)>.
- Community Arts Council of Vancouver*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.cacv.ca](http://www.cacv.ca)>.
- Comprehensive Guide to Stanley Park*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[stanleyparkvan.com](http://stanleyparkvan.com)>.
- Duffek, Karen, and Tania Willard. *Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun: unceded territories*. Vancouver: MOA, 2016. Print.
- Heritage Vancouver*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[heritagevancouver.org](http://heritagevancouver.org)>.
- Hopkins, Candice. *Outlawed Social Life*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.documenta14.de](http://www.documenta14.de)>.
- Illustrated Vancouver*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[illustratedvancouver.ca](http://illustratedvancouver.ca)>.
- Instant Coffee*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.instantcoffee.org](http://www.instantcoffee.org)>.
- Kheraj, Sean. *Inventing Stanley Park: An Environmental History*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2013. Print.
- Kuhnlein, Harriet and Nancy Turner. *Traditional plant foods of Canadian indigenous peoples: nutrition, botany, and use*. Gordon and Breach Publishers: Canada, 1991. Print.
- Kwon, Miwon. *Public Art and Urban Identities*. Public Art is Everywhere (1997). Web.
- LandMarks2017*, Partners in Art. Web. Apr. 2017. <[partnersinart.ca/landmarks2017](http://partnersinart.ca/landmarks2017)>.
- Latour, Bruno. *Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene*. *New Literary History* 45.1 (2014). Web.
- Laws Publications*. Province of British Columbia. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.bclaws.ca](http://www.bclaws.ca)>.
- Matthews, Major James Skitt. *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 4. Vancouver: City of Vancouver, 2011.
- National Historic Sites*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.historicplaces.ca](http://www.historicplaces.ca)>.
- Olver, Lynne. *Food Timeline: food history research service*. Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.foodtimeline.org](http://www.foodtimeline.org)>.
- Open Learning in the Urban Forest*. The Stanley Park Project. Web. Apr. 2017. <[stanleyparkproject.com](http://stanleyparkproject.com)>.

*Our City. Our Art. Our Vancouver.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[ourcityourart.wordpress.com](http://ourcityourart.wordpress.com)>.

*Parks Canada Agency.* Government of Canada. Web. Apr. 2017.  
<[www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs](http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs)>.

*Province of British Columbia.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[www2.gov.bc.ca](http://www2.gov.bc.ca)>.

*Stanley Park Ecology Society.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[stanleyparkecology.ca](http://stanleyparkecology.ca)>.

*Stanley Park & Vancouver Women's History Events.* Web. Apr. 2017.  
<[stanleyparkhistory.wordpress.com](http://stanleyparkhistory.wordpress.com)>.

*The Vancouver Sun.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[vancouver.sun.com](http://vancouver.sun.com)>. *Tourism Vancouver.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.tourismvancouver.com](http://www.tourismvancouver.com)>. *Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, City of Vancouver.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[vancouver.ca](http://vancouver.ca)>. *Vancouver Heritage Foundation.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org](http://www.vancouverheritagefoundation.org)>. *Vancouver news, food, events, and things to do.* Web. Apr. 2017. <[www.vancitybuzz.com](http://www.vancitybuzz.com)>.

\* Discussions, work, and research by visiting collaborators in the *Laboratory Landscapes* class, including Selena Couture, Jinhua Ko, Marie Lopes, Jeneen Frei Njootli, Lauraleigh Paul (BigHeart Bannock Catering), Kathleen Ritter, Celina Starnes, Jill Weaving, Cease Wyss and Jin-me Yoon.