

local
vegan
seasonal

*research by Annelie Dalglish
for Van Gogh National Park*

The Potato Eaters

Vincent van Gogh (1853 - 1890), Nuenen 1885

Credits: Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

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Van Gogh National Park

The Van Gogh National Park is a proposed national park in development, consisting of several natural and cultural areas in the South of the Netherlands. In addition to protecting nature, the intention behind the park is to promote cultural heritage, sustainability, and the local economy.

The park is named after painter Vincent van Gogh, who was born in the province and was inspired by the local people and landscapes. My starting point for this project was Vincent van Gogh's painting *The Potato Eaters*, which he painted in Nuenen in 1885. Looking at the painting made me realise how much we in present-day life are disconnected from the food we eat. Therefore my intention was to promote cultural heritage, sustainability, and the local economy through addressing the topic of food within the Van Gogh National Park.

The Van Gogh National Park consists of several natural and cultural areas within the province North Brabant. This province is known for its industrialised farming and counts more farm animals than humans.

Noord-Brabant is home to:



The province's industrialised farming creates a point of friction with the intentions of the Van Gogh National Park, which is why I considered this to be an interesting starting point for my project.

One of the intentions of the Van Gogh National Park is to enhance the liveability of the area. At mid-terms I presented my critique about the formation of a national park surrounding an area which includes unsustainable farming.

The Van Gogh National Park includes the largest slaughterhouse of the Netherlands: Vion in Boxtel. At mid-terms I compared the painting by Van Gogh of a couple carefully skinning a sheep, with a photo taken in the slaughterhouse in Boxtel.

Both women wear blue clothes and a hat, however the connection between the women and the animals could not be more different.



Industrialised farming

Industrialised farming has proven to be a reliable way to produce food at a large scale, at a relatively low cost. However it is not as ethical as we once believed it to be. Unsustainable farming contributes to climate change, decreases the biodiversity, and pollutes our water and soil.

The World Health Organisation has warned that the chemicals and pesticides that are used in unsustainable agriculture are potentially toxic to humans. And if that were not enough, the emergence of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 can be traced back to the way humans interact with animals.

As industrialised farming contributes to climate change, decreases biodiversity, pollutes water and soil, and increases the risk of spreading diseases and pests, the objective to enhance the liveability within the Van Gogh National Park cannot be achieved without rethinking the human connection to food and farm animals.

Instead of addressing this topic from the top to bottom (from government to farms to citizens), I believe that a fundamental shift towards a more sustainable consumption behaviour can only take place from the bottom to top (from citizens to farms to governments). Therefore my main research question is the following: how can the human citizens of the Van Gogh National Park be inspired to shift towards a more sustainable diet?

Local, vegan, seasonal

At mid-terms I presented
one of my conceptual
ideas: what about a
VeGaNP, a park for
vegans?

What if the Van Gogh National Park would have a department named the VeGaNP, which would promote a healthy living environment with sustainable forms of food production and consumption by inspiring the human citizens to shift towards a more local, seasonal, and vegan diet?

In the end I did not take the idea of a park for vegans further, as it would be too much on the conceptual side and I wanted to make it more practical. However, I did focus on the shift towards a vegan diet. Why vegan?

Philosopher Peter Singer has argued that the interests of animals should be considered because of their ability to experience suffering. He has argued against speciesism: discrimination on the grounds that a being belongs to a certain species. What if the Van Gogh National Park would become a park where farm animals would be treated with respect and dignity?

In addition to studying the
benefits of a vegan diet, I
also studied the benefits of
consuming locally grown food.

Why local?

The existing food production systems are responsible for 60% of biodiversity loss, 25% of changes to our climate, and 50% of carbon emissions. Environmental philosopher Hanneke Muilwijk has argued for a more conscious approach to food production and consumption, enabling us to minimise carbon emissions by consuming more local, non-packaged food and minimising our food waste. Consciously consuming local food would enable countries to import less food, minimising the carbon footprint.

As a third eating principle,
I researched the advantages
of consuming seasonal foods
within the Van Gogh National
Park. Why seasonal?

There is only a small overlap between what Dutch farmers produce and what Dutch citizens consume. 75% of the foods that are produced by Dutch farmers will be exported. To extend the lifespan of food, pesticides are used in agriculture to protect crops against insects, fungi, and weeds. However, the World Health Organisation has warned that pesticides are potentially toxic to humans. To minimise our exposure to these chemicals, a shift towards a local production and consumption of seasonal foods will be essential.



January



February



March



April



May



June



July



August



Sustainable food consumption

In my project I have placed a strong emphasis on the role of citizens of the Van Gogh National Park, because offer and demand are closely related. I therefore believe that a fundamental shift in consumption behaviour starts with the citizens.

The Van Gogh National Park
can encourage citizens to
become catalysts of change
by experimenting with locally
grown foods from the seasons,
radically reducing the carbon
footprint of food.

One example of a citizen within the City Circle of Eindhoven who practices a sustainable form of consumption is illustrator Lieke. She lives together with her dog and rescued chickens, and cooks vegetarian and seasonal foods. She shares her illustrations and food on her instagram account with 176.000 followers. I visited Lieke in her studio and took this photo of her.



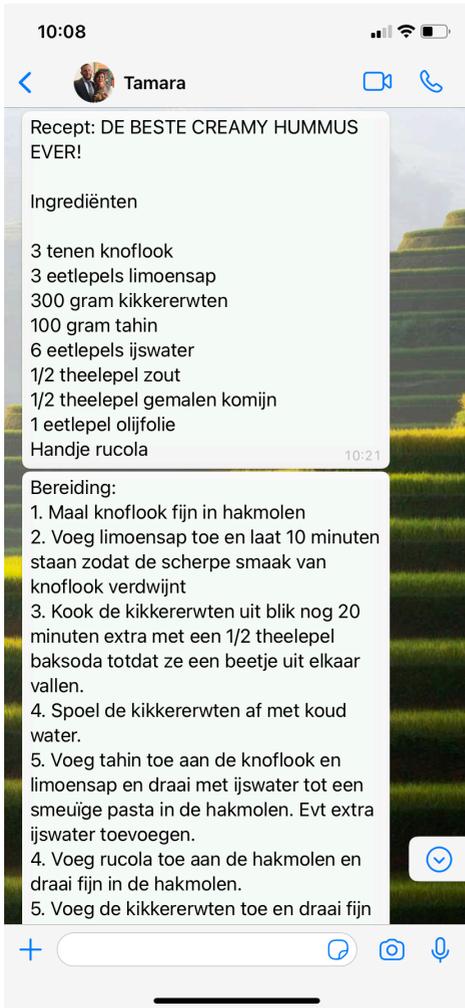
Notes from my conversation with
Lieke: the soil of the province Noord-
Brabant is suitable to grow walnut
trees. Her neighbour has three walnut
trees and he sometimes gives her some
walnuts. She roasts them, which gives
them a crispy taste similar to bacon,
and uses them in her salads.

Lieke inspired me to develop
vegan and seasonal recipes
based on what the area has
to offer.

Another example of a citizen within the City Circle of Eindhoven who practices a sustainable form of consumption is cook Tamara. She used to have a small vegetarian food store in Philipsdorp called Eten zonder Streken. Besides from preparing her famous vegetarian burgers for restaurants, she also prepared vegetarian take-away meals. People from Eindhoven and beyond would often come here on a weekly basis to experiment with alternative vegetarian dishes with local ingredients. Unfortunately she had to close her store as a result of COVID-19.



The store was known for the delicious
vegan hummus, which we can now
make at home as Tamara was so kind
to share the recipe with me.



Sustainable food production

Besides from addressing a more sustainable food consumption, the intention behind my research was also to explore a more sustainable food production.

What could an alternative,
more sustainable food
production look
like?



Genneper Hoeve
Tongelreepad 1, Eindhoven

One initiative that paints a picture of what human-, animal-, and nature friendly farming looks like is the Genneper Hoeve in Eindhoven.

Horticulture, milk cows, chickens, pigs, and bees come together into this ecological farm. The Genneper Hoeve grows fruits and vegetables such as **strawberries and spinach.**

The pigs eat the edible left-overs of the farm and live a natural life as much as possible.



Philips Fruittuin
Oirschotsedijk 14a, Eindhoven

The Philips Fruittuin is a farmstore within the city circle of Eindhoven that sells **apples and pears** from their own orchard. Instead of using harmful pesticides, the orchard stays close to nature by letting insects do the job. The farmstore also sells seasonal products from other local farmers, bakers, and bee-keepers close to Eindhoven. They enable customers to know where their food comes from by being transparent about the suppliers. For example, the bread comes from Bakker Bekkers in Veghel.



De Haas
Soeterbeek 3, Nuenen

Tuinbouwbedrijf De Haas is a horticulture farm in Nuenen with a small store for its locally grown **asparagus and raspberries**. It paints a picture of what a local, seasonal, and ecological production could look like on a larger scale. By highlighting the health benefits of the foods which are in season, De Haas encourages people to consume local and seasonal foods. For example, the raspberries contain ellagitannins, which are valuable antioxidants. In addition, the locally grown asparagus contain Vitamin K, C, B1, B2, and E.

*Concept:
recipes for eating local at home*

Visiting the farm stores inspired me to develop recipes based on the foods the local stores in Eindhoven had to offer.

The recipes would inspire people to experiment with seasonal vegetables and fruits, grown close to home.

The Genneper Hoeve is known for their strawberries, De Haas produces asparagus and raspberries, and the Philips Fruittuin has an orchard full of apples and pears. My final concept is to design three menu's with recipes based on the food offered by the three farmstores in Eindhoven.

Genneper Hoeve Menu

Strawberry gazpacho
Strawberry spinach salad
Vegan strawberry cheesecake

Philips Fruittuin Menu

Pear balsamic salad
Apple potato mash pot
Apple crumble muffins

De Haas Menu

Asparagus soup
Raspberry asparagus salad
Raspberry crumble bars

The booklet with research and recipes
inspires citizens of the Van Gogh

National Park to visit local farmstores
to buy seasonal ingredients, and to cook
with locally grown foods at home.

The booklet could be sold at the local farmstores and bookstores to give people inspiration for recipes. However they could also be bought by companies such as Philips and ASML to give away to new employees moving to the Van Gogh National Park as an introduction to what the area has to offer, promoting a local production and consumption.

Through this booklet, the Van Gogh National Parks' intention of promoting cultural heritage (food), sustainability, and the local economy can be realised from the perspective of food.

Reflection

During the past semester I enjoyed focussing on two projects and diving into my topics. I have discovered that the conceptual or philosophical sides of projects appeal to me the most. The intersection between design and introspection is something I would like to explore further, especially how to make conceptual ideas communicable.

My next studio semester with Nacho Carbonell will begin with weeks of conscious introspection, after which we will continue to make our thoughts physical through sculptural objects. I believe that the leisure approach to design - including the continuous questioning of 'why' - will be a valuable foundation for my future work.

Annelie DalGLISH