

Visual arts and film studies: the designs for an overpopulated planet: no 1, fora...

[Art & Culture](#), [Visual Art](#)



Visual Arts and Film Studies Most of the artists create art with a purpose. Most artists have a goal to mirror the society as it is so as to illustrate an issue requiring attention, to criticise, to educate the society members, or to respond to a situation. Mostly Dune and Raby create designs that answer social, economic and political questions. One notable design they have created and exhibited is the designs for an overpopulated planet. These designs answer the question: what if humans extract diet from non-human foods such as grass and tree leaves when there is no food? In this paper, The Designs for an Overpopulated Planet: No 1, Foragers will be considered for analysis. This design is by Dune and Raby (2009: 1) and is inspired by a futuristic dream of human survival. Asked what inspired them to make this design, the artists said they imagined human beings extracting nutrition from non-human food by combining a synthetic biology and new digestive devices. These digestive devices are presumably designed in the form of digestive systems of other mammals, insects, fish and even birds. In the Foragers design images of human beings are extracting food from the sea by use of synthetic tubes connected to a reservoir. In this design, the artists are inspired by the desire to predict the preferable future of human beings when the population is too high to feed. In the design, images of human beings are seen sitting at the shore of a water body holding synthetic tubes which are dipped into the water body. The pipe heads are fixed into floaters and the images are squatting and their hands as if performing some mechanical operations from their end. At the feet of every image, there is a reservoir that stores probably whatever is being extracted from the sea. The container and its synthetic ' esophagus' and all its mechanism is painted in jungle

green and the sea body is bluish; as usual with water bodies. The persons are painted black that makes them silhouettes or images. The background is white and this emphasises the details of the design. The design elements are synthetic and depict the objective of the designers. There is an assumption that the United Nations estimates the world population growing to 9 billion by 2050. If these estimates are true, then it means the biggest challenge in the world will be food security and thus food production. In this design, the artists did not think of food production enhancement; they speculated a preferable probable extraction of nutrients from the surrounding. They supposed a situation where human beings would be using synthetic systems to extract food from large water bodies like seas and oceans, just as fish do. According to the artists Dunne and Raby (2009: 1) the probable extraction could be done by the use of microbial stomach bacteria created through synthetic biology. This synthetic system would be enhanced functionally by the electronic and mechanical devices. The resultant system will be effective in maximising the nutritional value of the urban environment, and this will solve problems of diet which at the time will be escalating as a result of limited diet and food insecurity. This design impacts on the story of the effects of globalisation and population outburst in the world. The design kick starts a prediction of the state of the world by 2050 and especially the future of food. The artists assume that as the population grows and the food gets scarce, a group of people called foragers would get together. The group will consist of synthetic biologists, horticulturalists, hackers, and guerilla gardeners who will develop external devices as models of digestive systems. Instead of relying on the governments and the industries, the foragers will

design digestive system that will be capable of digesting leaves, grass and other things that human beings bodies can not digest today. This system will convert grass and leaves to fit into the state of human food. The experience of being an audience of this design is inspiring and challenging at the same time. The most interesting part of it comes in the realisation that the viewer can predict the intention of the artists. For example, this piece becomes more of a design than an art because the audience is able to identify with the design and the design's life saving predictions. It is true that the population of the world is going haywire and the earth is becoming a contracted place that may not support a big population in future. As such, it becomes convincing that humans will have to be creative in order to survive. As if not to provide a direct solution to the people when such a time comes, the designers answer a question of " what if?" They suppose a situation where biology, electrical knowledge and mechanics may be used to design a solution. This fact provides the audience with a more critical analysis of the design and the audience becomes part of the proposed solution. However, there are many questions that an audience will be prompted to ask the designers. This is where the design departs from being artistic because the audience has to share the meaning and prospects of the design with the designers. As an audience, I was left with a lot of questions. One of the questions is the future after the foragers design and what will happen when the grass and leaves are depleted in the further future. This means, their design is an open ended and can further pose answers to what would happen if the extracted diet gets depleted. As an audience, this question is left to them so that they can go beyond and propose a supposed solution. In

conclusion, The Designs for an Overpopulated Planet: No 1, Foragers is a prospective design. The meaning of the design as well as its possibility is the significant authenticity of the piece. The form of the design, as well as its structures, is highly synthetic and real, especially the construction of the synthetic protruding pipes. The design provokes a new dimension and interest into the prospects of future impact of food shortage when the world population grows to 9 billion as predicted by the United Nations. The designers foresee a situation where people will take the challenge positively and combine their ideas and knowledge for a solution. The design analysed

Works Cited Anthony Dunne & Fiona Raby. Grass Processor, Tree Processor/Digester, and Augmented Digestive System from Designs for an Overpopulated Planet: Foragers. Dunne & Raby Council of The Museum of Modern Art, 2009.