



Sustainable sushi

The “smash and grab” farmer’s market

Chef Puck takes a stand  
on improved animal welfare

Air-powered cars and wave machines

What is environmental art?



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## Who says going green has to be boring?

Let's skip the soporific dissertations on climate change, sustainable living and renewable energy and head straight for the dance floor. Here are some of the coolest ideas from around the globe that honor Mother Earth.

**Rotterdam, Netherlands.** Whether you like to get your groove on with Ludacris or Elvis, your body is both expending and generating energy. Sustainable Dance Club lets revelers light up the dance floor, literally, by converting the movement of dancers into electricity, which is then used to power the lights and interactive visuals inside the dance floor. The floor is modular and can be moved from one club to another. Vids are online at You Tube.



*Sustainable dance floor*

**Luxembourg City, Luxembourg.** Guy Negre has designed nearly 100 new engines, but the one that is making inroads across Europe and the United States is the engine that runs on compressed air stored at high pressure. Hydrogen-powered vehicles, while exciting to a world thirsting for alternatives to fossil fuels, create demand for another limited resource, namely water. Negre's air-powered engines emit zero pollutants and do not require petroleum-based fuel. When more power is needed, for instance in industrial applications, Negre has designed duel-fuel engines that use air and diesel. Zero Pollution Motors in New York is planning a stateside rollout of the FlowAir line of vehicles using Negre's technology in 2009 and 2010.



**Portland, Ore.** An oldie, in 21st-century speak, but a goodie. Greenprint Technologies developed this no-brainer (a.k.a. "Why didn't I think of that?") idea way back in 2006. Its proprietary software, GreenPrint, gives users the ability to eliminate those scurrilous blank pages when printing from the Web. You know the ones we're talking about, the ones with a single line of Web address or banner ad. Zap 'em!

### Plano, Texas.

Walking on broken glass has never been more exciting. From the gazillions of glass and porcelain containers chucked into the waste industry each year, EnviroGlas has built a business that weds practicality with public art. The end products are floors, tiles, countertops and landscaping materials that are decorative and tasteful.



*Glass flooring installation at Jacksonville International Airport*

**Edinburgh, Scotland.** Along the coastline of the Orkney mainland, wave machines are producing enough electricity to meet the needs of thousands of households. Designed and installed by Pelamis Wave Power, the wave machines use the natural motion of the ocean to make electricity that is plugged into the local power grid. The system is low maintenance and creates a minimal visible impact.

**San Francisco, Calif.** Don't boycott, carrotmob! Carrotmobbing is Brent Schulkin's idea to reward businesses that compete to make the most socially responsible decisions. A carrotmob is a horde of people who show up at the winner's location to do business, not shut down business.

**Anywhere, USA** Wildly popular in the 1600s, home gardens are still a chic idea for saving the planet. The good news is that today's gardens require much less time and effort than the old homesteads, and they can be designed to make an artistic impact on the residential landscape. For active people who like the idea of home-grown tomatoes and cucumbers but not the slimy worms and dirty fingernails, boutique firms specializing in the installation of home gardens are sprouting up like dandelions. A small vegetable garden of only 100 square feet can significantly lower grocery bills and reduce greenhouse gases. Another upside is the long-lost taste of food harvested in season at peak ripeness.

*Home gardens are always a great idea for sustainable living.*



# A profusion of terms

By Sami Bower, executive director of greenmuseum.com

Many artists and critics use the words “environmental art,” “eco-art” and even “land art” interchangeably or at times use the same term to mean different things. At greenmuseum.org, we use “environmental art” as an umbrella term to encompass “eco-art,” “ecological art,” “ecoventions,” “land art,” “Earth art,” “Earthworks,” “art in nature” and even a few other less-common terms.

“Environmental art” is an older term that is useful but might best be thought of as a starting point for the further exploration of ideas and, given plenty of sun, fertile soil and water, should be expected to transcend its

There is also the term “art in nature,” which is used more often in Europe, and refers more to creating beautiful forms (usually outdoors) with natural materials found on-site such as flower petals, mud, twigs and icicles. Content-wise, contemporary “art in nature” seems to find more inspiration in a type of Romantic Minimalism, reveling in the abstract beauty and decorative potential of ephemeral natural forms. As such, it usually lacks overt feminist, ecological or political content. What “messages” these works have are much more subtle. Many projects take the form of site-specific performances or installations carefully documented in often stunning photographs which are then sold in galleries or in elegant coffee-table books.

Many of these same artists also describe their work as “land art,” which is an older term from the '60s and '70s that has survived in common usage and suggests art made outdoors on the land. Early innovators created simple lines and geometric forms on the earth by walking back and forth and considered it “land art.”

“Crop art” could be considered a variation of “land art” and typically refers to large images made in agricultural fields visible from the air. Some aerial projects involve large numbers of volunteers and a wide range of objects arranged to form an image or convey a message.

“Earthworks” and “Earth art” are also considered as specific forms of “land art” where the idea is to shape the land in aesthetic ways. Many earthworks have involved bringing soil indoors, carving large shapes into the earth



*“Like a Rock From a Tree?” by Steven Siegel. To view more of Siegel's work, visit [www.stevensiegel.net](http://www.stevensiegel.net).*

in remote places and the creation of monumental cement constructions in the desert that essentially use the earth itself as stage, material and canvas for conceptual art ideas.

Painting and photography addressing environmental issues are also an important part of this movement. “Social sculpture,” “slow food,” “new media art,” “bio-art” and “recycled art” all fit in here, too.

How much the many forms of “environmental art” ends up benefiting the Earth is a matter of further discussion and analysis. If our goal is to create a sustainable human population on the Earth, then I think we are just seeing the very beginnings of where this work is headed. Most art that claims to be “environmental” or “ecological” isn't really helping the worms and watersheds at all. Until we begin to consider art for non-humans seriously as a means of healing our relationship with the natural world, then we will just be scratching the surface of what's possible.

*Rotations: Moore Estates by Matthew Moore sits on 35 acres of soon-to-be developed farmland. Moore planted sorghum to indicate homes and wheat for the roads. Visit [www.urbanplough.com](http://www.urbanplough.com) for more information.*



*“Fields of Salt” by Linda Gass. To view more work by Gass, visit [www.lindagass.com](http://www.lindagass.com). Photo by Don Tuttle.*

roots. The urge is sometimes just to make up a different term, such as “green art” or “sustainable art” or “Post-Carbon Art” and hope that solves the need for freshness. “Restoration art,” another term that appears occasionally, refers to art that “restores” polluted or damaged ecosystems and landscapes. This would be considered a form of “eco-art.”

Then, there is ecovention. Coined in 1999, the term “ecovention” (ecology plus invention) describes an artist-initiated project that employs an inventive strategy to physically transform a local ecology. As an exhibition-based concept, ecovention is steadily becoming more familiar.

And we're not done.

## Sustainable sushi for your pocket

Sushi became popular in the United States about the same time as the macarena, around 1996. But while the pop rumba, worldwide smash hit fizzled the next year, sushi — another worldwide smash hit — was here to stay. Healthy, tasty and perfect for creating the reaching and grabbing mayhem associated with family-style dining, a fashionable new food industry was born seemingly overnight. And why not? Dipped in a bit of soy or ponzu, the stuff is absolutely addictive. In fact, if there is a downside to these aquatic morsels of delight, it is the unfortunate effect that sushi consumption has on oceans that were already in danger of being overfished. But don't despair.

All it takes to be a better sushi connoisseur is a wallet-size sushi guide from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, which can be downloaded at [www.montereybayaquarium.org](http://www.montereybayaquarium.org). The guide lists the Japanese names of fish — sake (salmon), hotate (scallop) and katsuo (skipjack tuna) — then lists best and worst choices based on where the fish came from and how it was caught. There is a column for good alternatives, which are options that have some health or ecological concerns but nothing ominous that would keep you from enjoying them.

Of course, the best strategy is to have the pocket guide handy and ask the itamae, or sushi master, what's up with his fish. This exercise can be a lot of fun. You might start with asking what kind of tuna is in, say ... the tuna roll.



Hon maguro (bluefin), while exceptionally tasty and easily identified by its high price, is a no-no. The reason: Today's bluefin population in the Atlantic is 3 percent of what it was in 1960. Hon maguro is in the red column of your sushi guide. But katsuo (skipjack tuna), which is in the blue column, is a great choice.

Experience has shown that this type of conscientious ordering, driven by lucid research and a fierce passion for the Earth's environment, can draw a blank stare from the waitstaff or chef. Again, don't despair. Simply offer your sushi guide as a gift and enjoy your meal. You have made one more person aware that savvy consumers want sustainable sushi.

## Still uneasy about ordering sushi? Here's a primer.

Aside from the notion of eating raw fish, there is more to brace yourself for if you've never eaten in a sushi restaurant, but you are in good company. There are plenty of people who haven't mustered the courage to give sushi a try.

One event in particular awaits the sushi newcomer with twisted glee. That would be the time you first look at a sushi menu that, of course, is often doubly complicated by the fact that it is copiously written in Japanese. Rest assured, if you can make it through placing the order, a real treat awaits your confused and anxious taste buds. You can, like some well-heeled gourmands not wishing to expose their total naiveté, simply let the person who dragged you to the restaurant in the first place do the ordering. But why miss out on the fun?

[Sushifaq.com](http://Sushifaq.com) is a great place to spend 10 minutes in order to become an expert. Sushi can be served a number of ways, but the most popular way is fish and veggies rolled in rice and seaweed wrappers. This is maki zushi. Then, there are those longer pieces of unrolled fish fillets that curiously look as if they might crawl off the table at some



point. They won't. These fillets sit atop a small finger of rice and are called nigiri sushi — also very popular. If the sushi looks like a miniature ice cream cone with food morsels where the nuts and whipped cream ought to be, that's called temaki zushi. Exquisite.

By the way, sushi is actually the name for the rice preparation that is ubiquitous to rolls, bowls and cones of sushi. Without this special, medium-grain Japanese rice, the dishes are called sashimi. Sushi, with Japanese sticky rice. Sashimi, no rice. Japanese rice is essential because of its translucence, and it is very sticky, yet it falls apart easily when cooked properly.

Sushi etiquette is pretty simple for a first timer. Don't ask if the fish is fresh and enjoy yourself. If sushi is going to be your new hobby, there are other dos and don'ts that can be rather tedious. For instance, sticking your chopsticks straight up in your rice resembles incense sticks and brings to mind a Japanese funeral. Not polite. In the typical American eatery, however, having fun is the name of the game. And when you are done, simply say, "Arigato."

# Animal welfare no laughing matter



*Chef Wolfgang Puck*

There is more to being a celebrity chef than raking in the dough, and Chef Wolfgang Puck has made plenty of that.

But let's be serious. The ethical treatment of animals in our food chain is no laughing matter, and Puck doesn't think it's funny either. That's why his far-reaching foodservice enterprise adheres to some rather strict guidelines, ones not easily embraced. Just two years ago, the announcement was made, and here are the finer points of Puck's commitment. Bear in mind this was the first animal welfare program of its kind and that the new standards cover all Wolfgang Puck Cos. (WPC) including fine dining group

restaurants, express franchises, catering and consumer products.

- The elimination of foie gras from the menu of all WPC dining establishments. Foie gras is produced by force-feeding ducks or geese to the point where their livers swell up to 10 times their normal size.

- The elimination of eggs from laying hens confined in battery cages. Caged laying hens are kept in such restrictive conditions, they can't spread their wings.

- The elimination of pork from producers that confine breeding sows in gestation crates. These devices restrict animals from even turning around or performing many of their other natural behaviors for nearly their entire lives.

- The elimination of veal from producers that confine their calves in individual veal crates. This inhumane intensive confinement prevents calves from even turning around or walking for months on end.

- WPC will feature delicious vegetarian options on its menus because many consumers want to eat well and not add to the unethical treatment of animals.

- WPC will feature certified organic selections on its menus because many consumers are concerned for the environment and health and want this option.

- WPC will ask chicken and turkey meat suppliers to consider controlled atmosphere killing, a slaughter method involving dramatically less suffering than typical methods.

- WPC will only serve chicken and turkey meat from farms that comply with progressive animal welfare standards.

- WPC will only serve certified sustainable seafood. WPC looks to the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California and its Seafood Watch Program to identify endangered fish species and find sustainable alternatives.

Clarifying the motivation behind this nine-point program, Puck stated, "I have regularly spent weekends at my local farmer's markets and farms, getting to know my vendors, their animals and their animal treatment programs. As my companies have grown much bigger, we must now develop formal policies to maintain our exacting standards. I want to be certain that only animals who are able to freely engage in natural behaviors are used to provide the products for our tables. If consumers could see how abused these animals can be, they would demand change."

## Mini burgers with cheddar cheese and remoulade

3/4 pound prime ground beef

Pinch of kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

12 small slices of cheddar cheese

12 mini sesame brioche buns

Remoulade (recipe below)

Arugula leaves

6 cherry tomatoes, sliced

3 cornichons, sliced

To make 1 cup of remoulade, combine 3/4 cup of store-bought or homemade Thousand Island dressing with 2 tablespoons of bottled barbecue sauce and a little bit of diced red onion. Stir to combine. Set aside.

Preheat grill or grill pan.

Put the ground beef in a bowl and season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Mix together with your hands to combine. Take about 2 tablespoons worth of the ground beef and roll it in the palm of your hand like you are making meatballs. Flatten the top slightly and put the mini burger patties on a side plate. Drizzle the burgers with oil and season the tops with salt and pepper. Turn the burgers over and season the other side.

Place the burgers on the hot grill. Cook for 3 minutes, then turn them over with tongs. Place slices of cheddar cheese on top of the burgers, allowing them to melt.

While that's cooking, put the buns on the grill. Let them toast slightly on both sides, about 2 minutes total time.

Put the toasted buns on a platter. Top each with a small spoonful of remoulade. Put the burger on top (cheese side up), followed by an arugula leaf, a slice of tomato and a slice of cornichon.





*"Arbor Lace II" by Michele Brody*

## Natural expressions

In the past decade, environmental issues have become more publicized than ever before. As a result, many people are recycling and using earth-friendly products with the genuine intention of reducing their eco-footprints. These acts of compassion are being embraced by concerned citizens in every aspect of their lives, whether it's getting recycling bins for the company where they work, recycling at home, carpooling or using earth-friendly paints and materials in their artwork. Art is slowly, but surely, becoming a new vehicle for motivating communities to help save the Earth. Referred to as green artists, these creative sculptors, painters and creators of art installations manage to successfully combine passion and imagination with their desire to help the environment.

These qualities can be easily found in the work of green artist **Michele Brody**. Brody was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., where she developed a passion for art at a very early age. Her abilities are wide ranging, as she has created and performed in dance, music, poetry and theater. Though she embraced many areas of the artistic world, Brody's true passion is creating art that is tangible, fills a space and stimulates all human senses. The visceral work of Ann Hamilton and Jenny Holzer, combined with her own organic lifestyle, is what moved Brody to begin producing the type of art she creates today.

As a teenager, Brody felt sensitive to ecological issues and chose to become a vegetarian. As she became older, her perceived connection among people, nature and the man-made environment became more pronounced.

Brody's three works portrayed in this issue are part of a series of hydroponic sculptures that incorporate soilless plantings in fabric. The staining and entwining of the roots and plants are left in the weave of the cloth. By this, Brody means to illustrate the passage of time and the possible bleak future of agriculture if dangerous pesticides continue to be used in soil.

**"Arbor Lace II"** is an architectural passageway where people can witness the growth process taking place within its walls. It is meant to create a transformational experience, giving viewers the opportunity to develop an awareness of the tenuous relationship between themselves, nature and their environment.

**"Grass Skirt IV"** is made from a lace skirt and a galvanized steel tub. It recycles water from an irrigation system that also waters the grass. The seeds are sewn into the pockets for support. This piece reflects Brody's interest in expressing the scope of feminine nurturing in contrast to constructed forms.



*Michele Brody*

*"Grass Skirt IV" and "Shepherd's Lace" by Michele Brody*





"Cat Hat" by Stefan Thompson

"**Shepherd's Lace**" is made from lace curtain fabric hung from a copper support over a sheep trough. It was inspired by how water falls onto shower curtains. Brody has placed seeds into pockets sewn into the curtains. The seeds are nurtured by a hydroponic irrigation system that recycles the water as it drips down into the trough. After the seeds flourish into grass, they are later dried out and left fallow, completing an entire life cycle.

**Stefan Thompson** of Ottawa has had an interest in art since the tender age of 3. Creating imaginary worlds through drawing, it wasn't long before he was supporting his education with art shows. Yet, the profound change in his technique came after learning about the consequences of using toxic chemicals common in paints and other art materials. Studying biology, chemistry and environmental science at Carlton University made Thompson aware of

"Flicker" by Stefan Thompson



Stefan Thompson

the polluting effects of art. On the subject, Thompson recalls, "I wondered what good can come of any message expressed in a toxic medium. Art of the past was created in a time before major ecological pollution. Paint and many tools of our modern society are harmful to the environment."

When confronted with these issues, Thompson sought a way to resolve them by spending many years researching and experimenting with environmentally friendly art materials. Over the years, Thompson has completely phased out harmful mediums used to create art. He uses only fabric and paper that are secondhand and he makes his own paints from nontoxic mediums, solvents and pigments. He uses canvas stretchers made from salvaged wood or old picture frames.

Thompson's Web site is dedicated to showing others how to create eco-friendly art and asks artists and house painters alike to work in harmony with nature. Samples shown here are painted with homemade nontoxic oil paints, acrylics and beeswax crayon.

Animals and the natural world are a consistent theme of Thompson's work. Many of his animals, like the one shown in "**Cat Hat**," wear articles of human clothing and have human emotions.

"**Flicker**" is Thompson's interpretation of the Yellow Shafted Flicker, which is a common forest bird in Eastern Canada. The

artist's re-use of old paper is obvious.

"**Old Buck**" refers to the legend of an old buck so wise and slow moving that moss has grown on its body. Relying on the myth of deer as shape shifters, Thompson portrays the buck as taking many forms. The surrealist quality of this work shows Thompson's versatility.

Brody and Thompson have optimistic expectations, a commonality among green artists. Believing his transformation into eco-art a matter of will, Thompson says, "You can do anything if you really believe in it."

For more information on the artists and their works, visit Michele Brody at [www.michelebrody.com](http://www.michelebrody.com) or Stefan Thompson at [www.stefanthompson.com](http://www.stefanthompson.com).



"Old Buck" by Stefan Thompson



# Time to smash and grab

By Milan Pham



Milan Pham is a North Carolina-based writer and a principal at NicholsonPham LLC.

Every Saturday morning, growers gather under cover of the wholesale wing at the State Farmer's Market in Raleigh, N.C., known colloquially and affectionately as the "smash and grab" farmer's market, to sell locally grown food to local people. Some consumers are buying for their families (bulk at low prices), some will burst into spontaneous entrepreneurship reselling immediately at small profit margins and some buy to resell in their local grocery stores. Shoulder to shoulder people browse and barter, bargain, dicker and sell, knock into one another with nary an excuse or "pardon me," speak in multiple languages and gesture wildly. Standing in the middle of the market bustle, it's easy to feel slightly crazy and as if you've walked into some other country. Both are true.

Loca (meaning "crazy" in Spanish) and local share a common root, but that is where the commonality ends. In fact, local (as in "buy local," "locavore," "localvore," "local living economies," etc.), is all the latest rage in food, fashion and politics, and perhaps, it is the most sane thing created since the last time it was created. During the early 20th century,

the United States experienced nearly universal demise of family farms and unprecedented growth of farms owned by large corporations. These corporations placed greater emphasis on mass production and less value on food quality, taste, environmental



Floating markets have always been popular along the river banks in Vietnam.

impact and workers' rights. Ultimately,

corporate farms gave rise to the "back to the land" movement, community supported agriculture (CSA), farmer's markets, sustainable agriculture, community gardens and sustainability/buy local movements not necessarily in that order. The sanity of buying local is almost indisputable. Buying food locally means affordable, better tasting, more nutritious food, supporting local farmers and reducing negative environmental impact. And while it might be new



The local farmer's market is the best place to support sustainability.

to us, it isn't new to everyone.

Local food and sustainability aren't specific to the United States nor were they invented by Americans, they are a global phenomenon deeply rooted in the native history of humankind. In antiquity, Mayans and Incas developed black earth, regenerative soil that made it possible to grow food sufficient to feed millions. From the Caloocan palengke in the Philippines, to Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, to the floating markets of Can Tho, Vietnam, the global buy local movement has, well, finally moved across time and space to come home to us, and we're grasping it with all our might. Our tenuous hold on the past is challenged daily by a tide of change willing to sacrifice planet, community, health and nutrition for cheap food, growing obesity, diabetes and shrinking local economies.

Local foods aren't new and they might be the most sane thing that modern society has rediscovered since bell-bottoms. OK, maybe not bell-bottoms, but you get the gist. Some things fall by the wayside that are worth keeping and are waiting to be rediscovered: walkable communities, front porches and local food. Smash and grab these remnants of our time on a green planet with abundant produce by buying locally. Smash and grab the future where we are able to grow so abundantly that no one goes hungry by buying locally.

See you at the market?

Seaside communities cherish their fresh fish markets.



Cover photos: Top, fruits from the farmer's market; center, environmental artist Stefan Thompson; bottom right, wave machine collecting energy for an electrical grid; bottom left, Chef Wolfgang Puck in the kitchen. *Unity* is a celebration of food, art and culture. Published six times per year, *Unity* is exclusively distributed to clients of Thompson Hospitality and Compass Group, both world leaders in foodservice. To contact us, send an e-mail to [unity@thompsonhospitality.com](mailto:unity@thompsonhospitality.com).

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