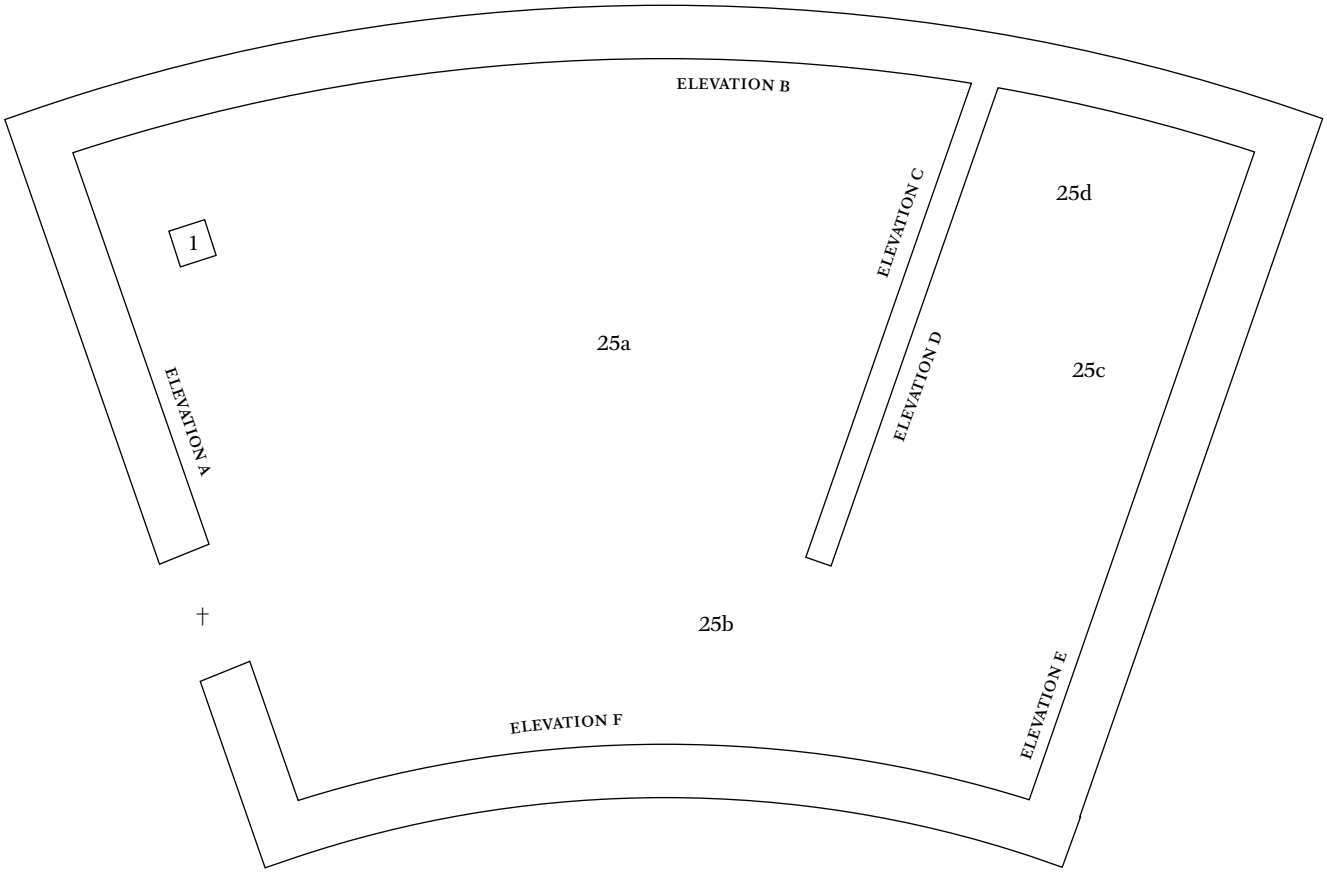
CLAYMORE

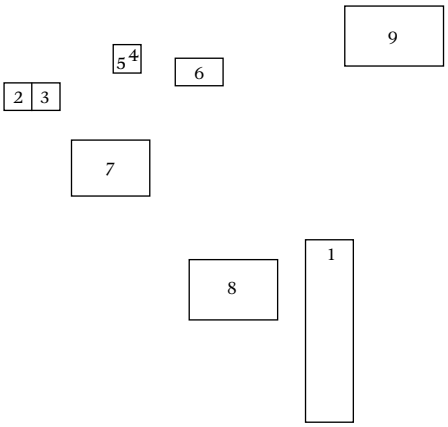
For the Rights of the Soil Not to Be Exhausted

Cooking Sections

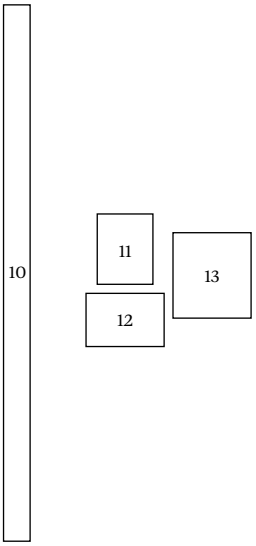


† **Room 31** – Shortly after Bessarabska Square was built as the entrance to Kyiv in the early 19th century, a spontaneous street market began to grow on-site, formed by merchants from the southern provinces and the region of Bessarabia. In 1910-11, architect Henryk Julian Gay built the indoor market on the square, with technical innovations such as a glazed roof, a water tank with compressor, and the first large-scale refrigerator in Ukraine. After the confiscation of peasants' grain decrees in 1932 leading to the Holodomor famine, more and more starving villagers fled to cities desperately seeking food, without success. Hundreds of dead bodies were collected daily, causing the forensic laboratory of the People's Commissariat for Health to move into the basement of Bessarabka market to make use of the refrigerated cellars, where bodies were transported to and temporarily stored. Room 31 has been opened for the first time to let the soil speak.

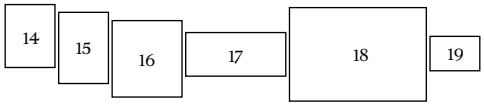
ELEVATION A



ELEVATION B



ELEVATION C



1. Trypillian conic-headed female figurine with 'sown field' sign imprint on the lower belly, Bernovo-Luka settlement, ca. 4500 BC (**replica**) – Trypillian matriarchal economy (5500–2700 BC) was based on steppe agriculture, which worshipped soil fertility. Rituals were carried out in temples, some of which included the process of making bread. Researchers assume that heads for these figurines could be made of breadcrumb and placed on a cone when such rituals were performed. A crossed sign with four dots on the belly alludes to fertility in relationship to the four elements.

2. Order of Lenin – The design of the highest civil decoration bestowed by the Soviet Union features Lenin surrounded by wheat panicles. Established in 1930, the badge was in use until 1991. Throughout the 1990s replicas began circulating wildly.

3. Soviet medal for the 'development of virgin land' – This Soviet badge, awarded to 300,000 people, acknowledged the role of the cultivation of wheat and corn on previously non-agricultural land. Being one of the most important medals, the actions taken in the awarded projects played a key role in the creation of a national imaginary around soil fertility.

4. USSR stamp with Bezostaja grain, 1964 – Engineered by breeder Pavel P. Lukyanenko, this winter wheat could weather extreme temperatures and provide high yield. Other of his 'improved' winter and spring grains, like Skorospelka 35, Predgornaya 2, Aurora and Kavkaz, were designed to resist all climates of the Soviet Union.

5. USSR stamp 'Arable Agriculture - Guarantee of High Yields', 1964 – In support of the agricultural reforms of the 1960s, the stamp depicted one of the early visions for large-scale intensive monoculture productivity, working the soil to exhaustion.

6. Chernozem and Chestnut Soil Extension Boundary Map, 1931 – Running along the Eurasian steppe, the fertile black Chernozem belt has sustained agriculture and life for thousands of years. Different societies settled and cultivated grain allegedly because of the fertile grounds, but recent studies show that Neolithic novel fire practices and the strategically continuous burning of the steppes was what constructed chernozemic soils. Perhaps, it is human care for the soil what created fertility.

7. 'First Bread to the State', grain requisitioned near Odessa, 1933 – A representative of Soviet power carries grain confiscated from Ukrainian peasants.

8. Victim of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine – In the early 1930s the pressure to feed the expanding territory and population of the USSR resulted in the conversion of individual agricultural fields into collective state-owned farms. This transformed society's structure while replacing local grains with unfamiliar crops, such as sugar beet and cotton. Prioritising the Soviet mother state over the needs of the Ukrainian population, citizens lost access to the yields of their fields as dwindling food stocks and rationing expanded. Over 7 million people starved to death. Since 2006, Holodomor has been recognised by Ukraine and 15 other countries as the Genocide of the Ukrainian people carried out by the Soviet Union.

9. Increasing fertility of the soil by sowing ash, 5 April 1946 – Kolkhoz 'Mochegha', Orekhovsky district of Zaporozhye region, Orekhov.

10. Collection of invented winter wheats for specific soil-climatic regions of Ukraine, 2011 – Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. From top to bottom: Astarta, Winner, Gilea, Gift of Podillya, Excess, Goldstone, Colombia, Polyanka, Prydniprovska, Smoglyanka, Nice, Solokha, 130, Spasivka, Favorite, Chernaya, Bohdan, Vesnyanka, Vinnichanka, Soldier, Kalancha, Azure, Lima, Malinovka, Novokyevskaya, Natalka, Niva Kyiv Region, Orika, Pereyaslavka, Partition, Snowman, Sonechko, Trypillya, Choreviz, Hurtovina, Chigirinka, Yatran, Zimoyarka, Hutoryanka, Ballet, Sailor, Quinn.

11. Agronomist Trofim Lysenko looking at grain, 1947 – After graduating from Kyiv Agricultural Institute in 1925, Lysenko worked on the effects of temperature variation on the life-cycle of plants. As President of the Soviet Russian Academy of Agriculture Science, he denied the existence of genes or DNA and promoted his own theory on the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Proponents of Lysenkoism claimed to have discovered that winter wheat could be converted into spring wheat, that rye could transform into wheat, that wheat could transform into barley, that weeds could spontaneously transmute into food grains, and that 'natural cooperation' could be observed in nature as opposed to 'natural selection'. Under his admonitions and with Stalin's approval, many geneticists opposing Lysenkoist methods were executed.

12. Vasyl Remeslo looking at grain, 1974 – Ukrainian plant breeder Remeslo created over 40 varieties of hardy high-yield winter wheats, which contributed to making Ukraine into 'Europe's granary'. His most notable achievement was Myroniv 808, cultivated today in more than 11% of the world's grain fields. Photo: Pirkowski.

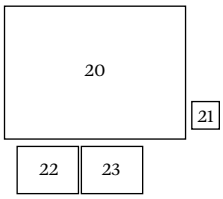
13. Remeslo holding bread, Myronivka, Kyiv region, 1970s – From the Bolshevik cry for *Peace! Land! Bread!* which fueled the 1917 October Revolution, bread was always in demand but never sufficient. Recurring food shortages and the infamous breadlines, which became a stigmatised image of the Soviet Union, pushed for a continuous search for efficient grains that could produce ever higher quantities of bread, regardless of the lifespan of the soil. Photo: Peslyak.

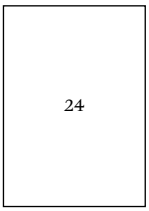
14. Trofim Lysenko in the field, Experimental farm, Academy of Agriculture Science, 1949

15. Trofim Lysenko (left) at an Experimental Farm, 1949

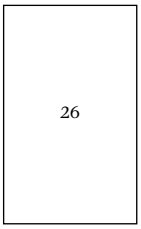
16. Khrushchev performing politics in a wheat field, Moskovsky state farm, Kazakh SSR, 1964 – Leader of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev during a farm visit. The importance of grain and soil to the soviet

ELEVATION D

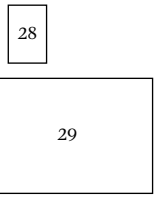




ELEVATION E



ELEVATION F



economy and cultural imaginary meant that notable politicians were repeatedly portrayed in suit amidst cereals. Photo: TASS / Valentin Sobolev.

17. Remeslo performing politics in a wheat field, Myronivka Research Institute of Wheat Selection and Seed-growing, Kyiv region, 3 August 1976 – Photo: Samokhotsky.

18. Remeslo performing politics in a wheat field with Polish delegation, Myronivka Research Institute of Wheat Selection and Seed-growing, Kyiv region, June 1971 – Photo: Pyaterikov.

19. Khrushchev holding corn while visiting the village of Velikiye Luchki in the Mukacheve district, 8 December 1954 – To increase wheat and corn production, Khrushchev launched numerous 'virgin land campaigns' to expand the sown area of the Soviet Union. Photo: Davidson.

20. Stalin's Plan for the Transformation of Nature – In 1948, the Soviet government announced the world's first state initiative to tackle the effects of increasing droughts. Almost 6 million hectares of new forest were planned in the form of 70,000 km of windbreaks all across the USSR to 'improve' the climatic conditions of the changing steppes. Although tree belts did increase agricultural yield in the adjacent fields, their success was based more on better snow retention and increased soil moisture rather than the forest's ability to block hostile winds as initially planned.

21. Plan for State Protective Windbreaks, USSR stamp, 1949

22. A surveyor carries out the measurements to plant windbreaks, Politdepartl collective farm, Dzhulinsky district, Vinnitsa region, March 1949

23. Windbreak panorama, Beryslavsky sovkhoz, Kherson region, 1957 – Newly built road running in parallel to a tree belt. Photo: Mindel.

24. Plan of Pyramiden, Svalbard – Chernozem soil was taken to the Soviet mining settlements of Pyramiden and Barentsburg in Svalbard in the 1930s. Hoping to transport fertility to grow food in the Arctic, greenhouses were filled with imported chernozem from Ukraine. Tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce and peppers were growing in a seemingly impossible location, 78 degrees North. Ukrainian chernozem also formed the largest beautification project in the Arctic to date. In springtime, a large artificial lawn was bursting with colourful southern flowers and green grasses in front of the northernmost statue of Lenin. Pyramiden now abandoned, stands frozen in time.

25. Financialisation of Ukrainian chernozem, circulating in the contemporary global market – Over centuries Ukrainian soil has been at the centre of geopolitical conflicts over agriculture, climate, and fertility. Chernozem has been made into a highly appreciated commodity, exported to places in Europe all the way up to the Arctic, from the alleged soil theft into Nazi Germany to contemporary rural areas being continuously stripped off. Decreasing fertility worldwide, due to climatic or environmental transformations, keep global markets keen on transporting productivity through soil matter. Chernozem is available for sale on roadsides and on olx.ua.
25a Chernozem from Obukhivka, Dnipropetrovsk region
25b Chernozem from Karakurt, Odessa region
25c Chernozem from Obukhiv, Kyiv region
25d Chernozem from Pisochin, Kharkiv region

26. Kurgan, 48°3'43.36"N 33°13'21.24"E, near Lozuvatka, Kryvyi Rih region, 2018 – Kurgans are conical or dome-shaped burial mounds dating back thousands of years. They were constructed by transient populations such as the Cimmerian, Scythian, Sarmatian, Thracian, Bulgarian, Hun, Magyar, Polovtsian, Nogay and others. Rising above the flat steppe landscape, kurgans also served as landmarks for travellers and as territorial boundaries for nomadic non-state inhabitants. Half a million kurgans once populated what is now the territory of Ukraine, of which only some thousands are left and identifiable from above. Interrupting agricultural fields, they nonetheless play a key role as biodiversity reserves to restore the steppe ecosystem.

27. Collection of steppe grasses with different root systems – Habitats are shifting in Ukraine as climatic zones are currently migrating 100-150 km northwards, redefining grass habitats along the way. Increasing temperatures and drought periods are making the northern steppes into what the southern steppes once were, leaving the southern steppes behind as they become evermore arid. Herbarium collection, A.V. Botanical Garden.

28. Vegetation Loss June 2016- June 2018 – Russian-Finnish botanist Christian von Steven first proposed the construction of the North Crimean Canal for irrigation purposes back in the 19th century. It was not until after World War II that the idea was finally adopted. Construction began soon after the transfer of Crimea in 1954, and completed in 1971. Since 2014, water flow to water-dependent Crimea has been interrupted. Photo: MTOT.

29. Soil erosion in central Ukraine, April 2011 – After decades of excessive tilling to work the soil to exhaustion, gullies are starting to appear across the country. Photo: Yuri Kravchenko.

30. The Rights of the Soil Not to Be Exhausted [**ongoing**] – As early as 1972, environmental lawyer Christopher D. Stone questioned something described at the time as *unthinkable*—to grant legal rights to natural objects. His groundbreaking legal essay 'Should trees have standing?', has inspired several contemporary cases in Ecuador, Bolivia, India, US and New Zealand. In response to the exploitation, theft and degradation of Ukrainian soil, this project has initiated a process to recognise the right of the soil to protect itself from exploitation, extraction and exhaustion. This document is being drafted over the course of six public events here in Room 31, as a collaboration between Cooking Sections and lawyers Olga Bezverkha and Mariia Shenknekht, to ground a framework for a future where the soil holds an inherent right not to be exhausted. To sustain life for generations to come.

Descending the stairs of Bessarabka Market, visitors witness the guts of cellar corridors in Kyiv's first refrigerated chamber, that have spilled out food supply since 1911. Just twenty years later, this same cooled underground endured a lesser-known use as an *impromptu* morgue during the Holodomor famine. The rooms of the basement went from proudly storing the city's nourishment to secretly housing the human bodies that had succumbed to a man-made scarcity of food. That short repurposing of the market in 1933 unveils a history of drought, soil exhaustion, and maldistribution of resources.

Round a semicircular corridor and through the door of chamber 31, the installation examines narratives around fluctuating food territories and the emergence of soil appreciation. An archive of soil-related artifacts unpacks the moments that transformed Ukraine into a universal breadbasket. Sifting through Neolithic Trypillian cultures, the conquering of 'virgin land', the commodification of *chernozem* (unique black fertile soil), the engineering of extreme weather-resistant grains, and the ongoing financialization of agriholding interests, the installation lays ground for an understanding of the exhaustion of the Ukrainian soil amidst its shifting climatic frontier. Chernozem has shaped inhabitation in nomadic and sedentary cultures as much as these cultures have shaped chernozem. Yet the soil itself has also been exported abroad, transporting fertility to Soviet Arctic settlements in the 1930s and other places in Nazi Germany during WWII. Black soil in rural areas is still today continuously stripped away and sold in international markets.

Set within a broader body of work around the notion of *CLIMAVORE*, this installation explores how to eat as climates change. Through a series of six public discussions with local experts in the fields of agriculture, history, botany or environmentalism, a new legal document is drafted to grant the soil the right not to be exhausted. Each event concludes with a performative tasting of specially developed *CLIMAVORE* breads made with ingredient mixes capable of restoring the exhausted soil of the steppes after centuries of over-tillage, while inviting visitors to think about future food imaginaries that can recover the soil's structure.

CLIMAVORE is a long-term project initiated by Cooking Sections in 2015. It sets out to envision seasons of food production and consumption that react to climatic events and human induced alterations of the landscape. Different from the now obsolete Eurocentric cycle of spring, summer, autumn and winter, *CLIMAVORE* rethinks the construction of space and infrastructure by focusing on how climate alterations offer a new set of clues to adapt our diet to them.

climavore.org

CLIMAVORE: For the Rights of the Soil Not to be Exhausted is co-produced by Pinchuk Art Center. Special thanks to Svitlana Lavrenchuk and Alexandra Tryanova
Legal advice by Olga Bezverkha and Mariia Shenknekht
CLIMAVORE Breads baked in collaboration with Xlib & Soul
Archival images: Central State CinePhotoPhono Archives of Ukraine

Graphic design by An Endless Supply

Soil Talks

All talks at 3pm,
moderated by Alexandra Tryanova

Holodomor Famine – 9 February 2019
Georgiy Kasianov and Cooking Sections
Taking the 1931–32 famine, its devastating consequences in Ukraine, and the role of Bessarabka market during that period, this session discussed man-made scarcity, new climatic seasons, and the constant pursuit of making soil productive.

Kurgans – 16 February 2019
Ivan Moysiyenko
Kurgans have been perceived as 'inefficient spaces, agriculturally unmanaged'. This session explored their important role as soil reserves and biodiversity refuge in the steppes among intensive agriculture fields and how cultural heritage can prevent the soil from being commodified.

Windbreaks – 23 February 2019
Oleksiy Vasilyuk
Tree belts enrich soil humidity, resist harsh conditions, reduce amount of pesticides, and create microclimates and ecological corridors. The observed dynamics in the flora of windbreaks can be associated with the economic and political transformations of the past decades. They provide clues on how intersection and cooperation between humans and more-than-humans can support a better environment for both.

Water in Crimea – 16 March 2019
Mykhailo Yatsuk
The peninsula of Crimea has been for decades at the centre of a political and territorial dispute. The rapid landscape transformation, increase of aridity, and disappearing vegetation expose how the soil is entangled with fluctuating cycles of appreciation and demarcation of boundaries.

Financialisation of the Soil – 23 March 2019
Lubomyr Shavalyuk and Cooking Sections
Valuing chernozem is a process that has been intensified by contemporary land-grabs and agriholding businesses, toppled by soil exhaustion after centuries of over-tilling. Throughout the 2000s, there has been a concentration of agricultural land in mega-farms situated within super-large corporate agricultural complexes, raising questions about soil efficiency, productiveness and local food security.

Migrant Grains – 30 March 2019
Olena Braichenko
The northward-shifting of the climatic frontier serves to track the introduction of engineered grain varieties that resist new climatic conditions and how they pose a number of challenges to the constructed landscape in flux.