



THE ZINE !!!



**PERMACOUNTERCULTURE
THE ZINE!!!**

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MADE IN WASHINGTON, DC
www.wowsugi.com/permacounterculture



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(SUB)CULTURE SHOCK: NOURISHING

COMMUNITY THROUGH PERMACOUNTERCULTURE

JOSEPH SHAIKEWITZ

What is the medium of a community? How does it figure itself in the world? What makes up its singular nature—what makes it breathe?

appear radioactive. The wheatgrass juice is served to attendees and performers as a potable shot, dense with nutritious chlorophyll and an aftertaste of fresh lawn clippings.

The ongoing project Permacounterculture(2016-), initially cited in Washington DC, invokes these questions by tracing an overarching hypothesis: playing music catalyzes the growth of plants. The work builds on this thesis through a series of invitations: to the local artistic community; to DC natives and newcomers alike; to consumers and conservationists; and to punk musicians—the heartbeat of the project—who fill a garage-like venue inside a local gallery with their tinny, raucous sounds. Lining the exterior of this crowded plywood cube are rows and rows of wheatgrass plants that glow the same neon purple as the LED lights around them. Periodically, the plants are trimmed and their tall blades blended into a liquid so bright and green that it may initially

Permacounterculture embodies artist and orchestrator Naoko Wowsugi's participatory and collaborative practice. For more than a decade, she has called upon the ordinary, oftentimes overlooked prose of a place—everything from its sounds and celebrations to relationships and gestures—as a way to re-cast commonplace behaviors in unfamiliar configurations. By positioning herself as both insider and outsider, acolyte and agitator, Wowsugi weaves connections within communities that had once lain dormant just below the surface of the pavement.

The relationship central to Permacounterculture is that between punk music and wheatgrass plants. Similar to the agricultural concept of 'permaculture'

(the project's namesake), Wowsugi posits a connection that is cyclical, ethical, and poetically infinite in nature. For instance, the collective presence of visitors who mosh and thrash to the live performances increases the level of CO2 in the atmosphere, which the artist understands to accelerate the growth of wheatgrass. In turn, the blended juice of these plants fuels the music, musicians, and concertgoers, prolonging the energy of these latter two groups and increasing their deep, breathy exhalation of CO2 into the space (fig. 1).

The role of this self-sustaining ecosystem is peculiarly twofold. For one, it enables Wowsugi to unearth the cultural attributes that surround her two subjects (punk music and wheatgrass plants) and examine the ever-evolving nature of community. The event's punk soundtrack, for example, harkens back to the height of DC's DIY music scene in the late-1970s and 1980s—sometimes referred to (with a capitalized callout to its city of origin) as "hardCore." Conversely, the stretches of wheatgrass allegorize a more recent trend-conscious, superfood-obsessed, privileged

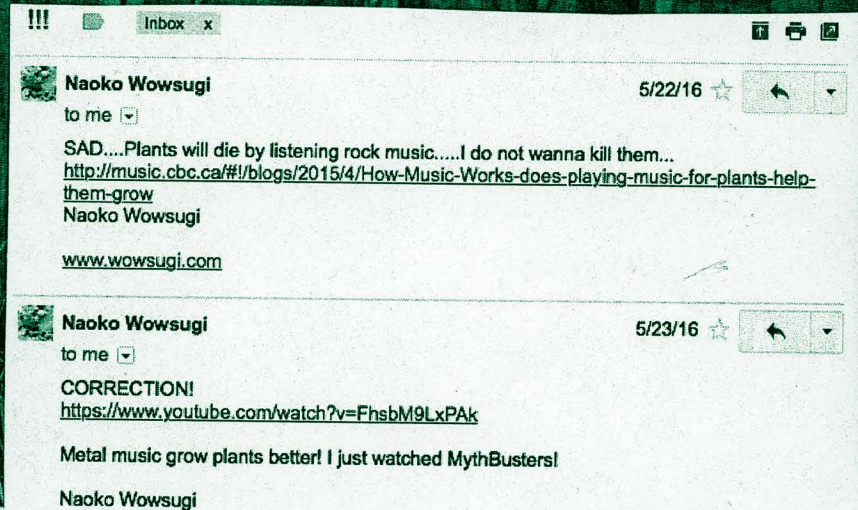


fig. 1. Email from Wowsugi to author.

millennial attitude. Questions of displacement and access surface with disquieting precision, particularly as they relate to DC's rapid and continuous history of gentrification over the last half-century.

And yet, innate within Permacounterculture is a resistance toward attaching judgement to either subcultural bent. Instead, the two temporarily co-exist within this city and interval of time, achieving what may be seen as the project's second objective: the formation of alternative moments for connection, cooperation, and social change. Wowsugi, for example, engaged multiple DC-centric hubs, resources, and collaborators throughout the run of the project. She sourced historical background through research at the MLK Library's DC Punk Archive and gleaned agricultural know-how through volunteer work at the local non-profit Bread for the City; here, she and a small team of coconspirators participated in the organization's initiative to harvest produce for communities with inequitable access to fresh foods. (After

its culmination, earnings from the Permacounterculture performances all went to benefit Bread for the City.) Graciously, the lumber for the venue, the labor for its construction, the piles of pizza for the musicians, and the rainwater for the plants were all donated to Permacounterculture, creating widespread stake in the project from multiple pockets throughout the community. The turnout of support, as illustrated within this zine, speaks to the number of lives that this project touched alongside Wowsugi's uncanny ability to push groups outside of their comfort zones—or perhaps, into a new zone of collective celebration.

Permacounterculture inherits much of its spirit from 'social sculpture,' an expanded vision of artistic practice coined by artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s wherein form carries the potential for utopian social change. A number of contemporary practitioners, including Rick Lowe and Theaster Gates, advance Beuys's initial proposition, yet Wowsugi diverges in the inherently collaborative and democratic nature of her forms from their very inception. In fact, her approach more closely mirrors artist Kimi Hanauer's concept

of the blob. Hanauer explains in three parts:

"(1) The blob is radically open, and by virtue of its openness, it de-isolates arts practices; (2) it is democratic, and thus opposes the logic of instrumental rationality and social institutions that are animated by it [...]; (3) it is alive, and thus requires a reconceptualization of art away from the art-as-object thesis that is encouraged by the spectator-engagement paradigm."

By layering Hanauer's theory of the blob onto Permacounterculture, a radical quality of porousness and elasticity comes to light. For one, the project spreads beyond the walls of the gallery where it is presented, seeping into the everyday lives of a single community and its constituent subcultures. In its execution, Permacounterculture acts as a tether through which coexistent populations—who otherwise encounter one another on sidewalks, in transit; their gazes adamantly elsewhere—traverse intimate paradigms for interaction and perform the value of cooperative and communal space. Simultaneously, the project subjugates its own objecthood, privileging instead the architecture

of relationships—be they personal, social, or institutional. In this effort to reimagine the meaning of collectivity, Wowsugi intersperses joy, spectacle, and nourishment as a way to animate the broader civic impact of reciprocity and goodwill.

Counterculture, in its historical roots, is a movement of revolt. It identifies mainstream social behaviors if only to upturn them, rejecting familiar means of relating and being. Its terms—the invention of secondary structures and fringe cultures—are inherently liberating and evolve through a certain measure of rebellion. And so, the 'counterculture' in Permacounterculture aptly appends the project's title, calling forth the defiant nature of Wowsugi's proposal. She refuses a definition of community defined by its fractures and divisions and instead gathers residents around a shared sense of belonging and growth. What better, Wowsugi seems to ask, than an environment filled with punk and sweat and juicing and germination and music—loud music—and a great deal of euphoria to help cultivate a community and bring it into its own?

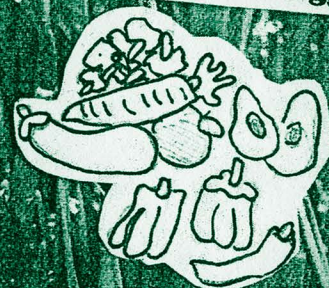
**WHEATGRASS IS INTENSE, AND SO ARE IT'S BENEFITS
GET THIS hardcore GREEN LIQUID**

IN YOUR BODY !!!

-
- Prevents grey hair!
 - Treats dandruff!
 - Combats depression!
 - Treats a hangover!
 - Clears up congestion!
 - Apply to eye to ease irritation!
 - Chewing wheatgrass prevents tooth decay!
 - Treats acne!
 - Gargle for sore throat!
 - Eliminates toothaches!
 - Relieves heartburn!
 - Boosts immunity!
 - Gets rid of nasty B.O.
 - Purifies the liver!
 - Heals sunburn!
 - Reduces food cravings!
 - Vegan and Gluten-Free!
 - Helps regulate blood sugar problems!
 - Improves digestion!

1 ounce of wheatgrass shot

2 pounds of green veggies!



Opens bowels!

Increases fertility!

Eases menstrual pains!

Treats vaginal infections!

Reduces fatigue!

Removes heavy metals from the body!

Dab on open wounds to treat!

Anti-itch properties for poison ivy and bug bites!

Cats love wheatgrass!

Stabilizes lipid levels!

Treats arthritis!



The Deadly Effects

of non-inclusive

Sustainability Practices

TEF PAIGE REESE

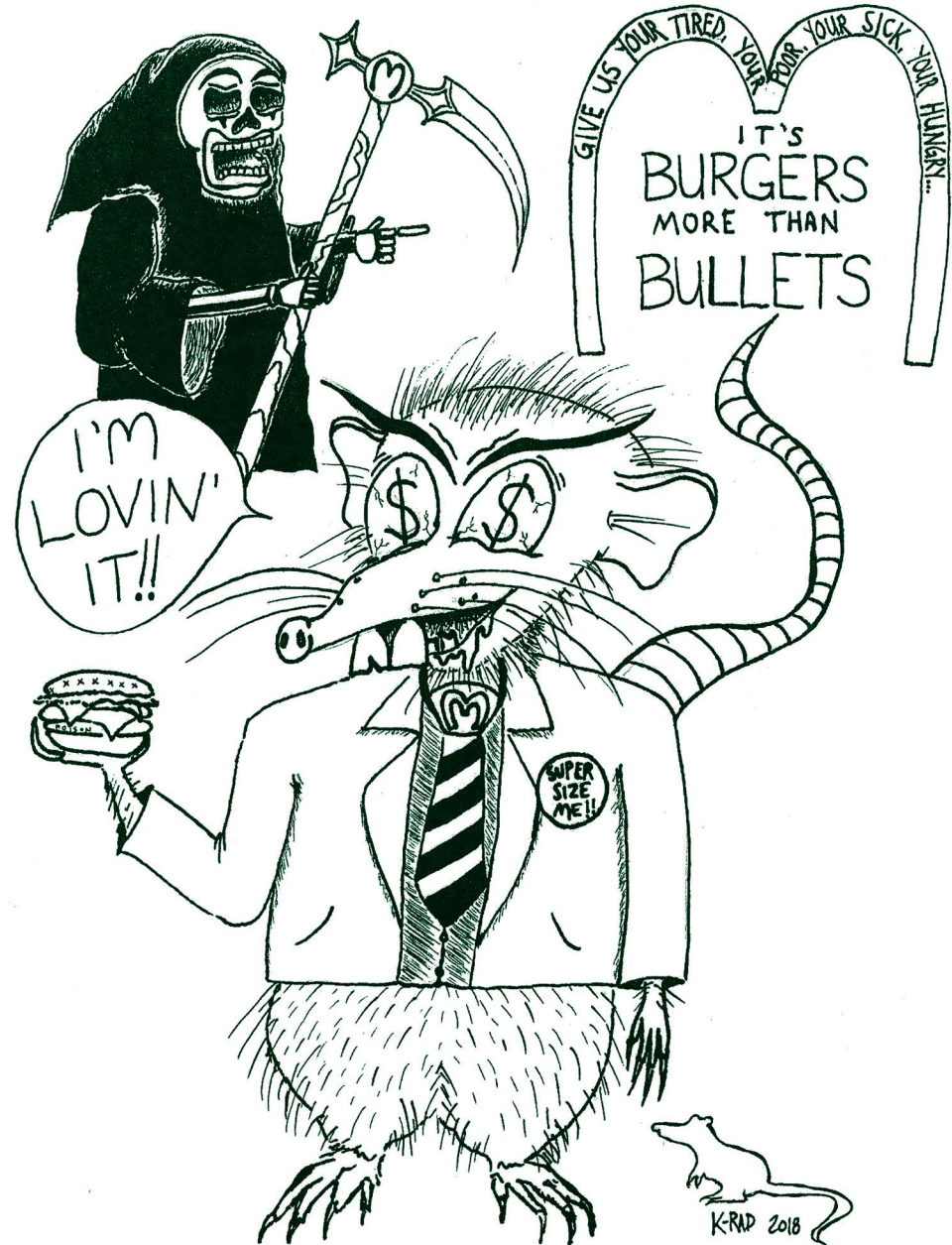
The state of one's healthfulness is determined and impacted by the kinds of fuel provided to the body. If this is true, wouldn't it seem a natural right for all people to have access to foods that provide nutritious benefits?

Diet related diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, hypertension, heart disease, kidney failure, liver failure and cancer, disproportionately affect bodies living within the black experience in America. These bodies, due to political, economic and socio-cultural factors, disproportionality experience barriers to accessing high quality nutrient rich food. On the contrary, low quality nutrient poor foods are disproportionately located in low income areas where black people disproportionately live. See a disproportionate problem?

From America's onset of colonization, there has been a devaluation of people based on perceived race and class. Those indigenous to this land, those experiencing poverty and those who were forced to labor in captivity to build America's economy have been targets of systematic and systemic oppression in peculiar ways. When all people are not valued in a given place, some people are essentially marked as expendable, dispensable and martyrs for something else of more value. This tends to be the case for black bodies in America which are sacrificed in order to maintain capitalism, white supremacy and other socially controlling, destructive and oppressive systems at any expense.

Systematic and systemic oppression are weapons used to severely wound and kill those devalued within the system by establishing values and standards for society that only support the well being of a select few. These systems create self-sustaining pathways that allow these values to flow into every sector of society, such as our food systems, housing and zoning development, financial institutions, healthcare, environmental protocols, and more.

A great deal of food within our food system is already of inhumane quality and it just so happens that black bodies, through political and social-economic factors, have been contained to areas supplied with low quality nutrient poor foods. The truth of the matter is that when compounded with other disparities facing those living the black experience and when in isolation, food has the power to kill.



PEOPLE USED TO CALL NEIGHBORHOODS
THAT LACKED GROCERY STORES
"~~FOOD DESERTS~~"

BUT A DESERT IS
A NATURAL PHENOMENON.

FOOD APARTHEID

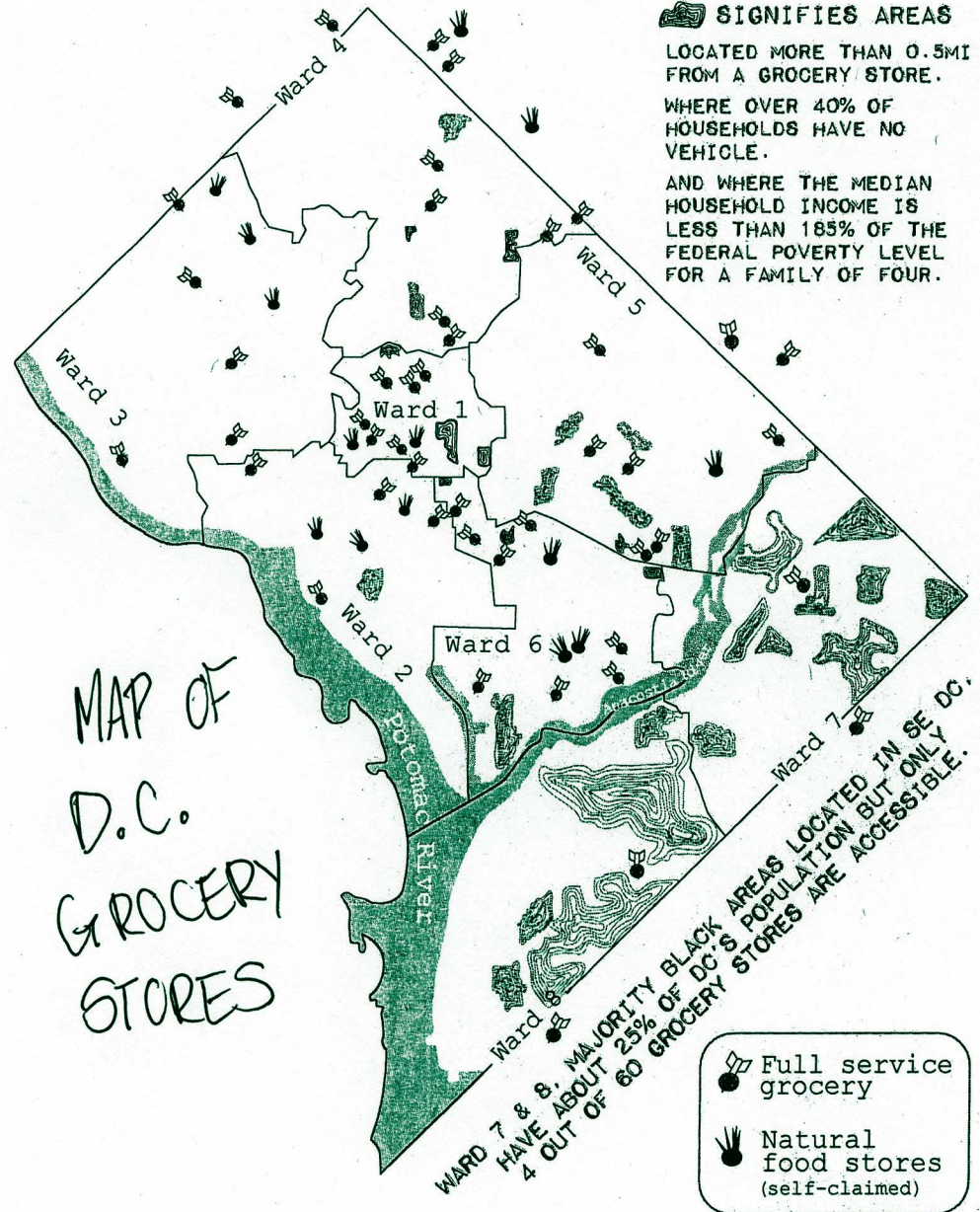
IS A FORM OF

SYSTEMIC RACISM

THAT PLACES FEW GROCERY STORES AND

MORE FAST FOOD
AND CORNER STORES

IN BLACK NEIGHBORHOODS.



DAY ONE

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 13TH 2016**

PERMACOUNTERCULTURE



LITERALS HEATWAVE

UNKNOWN THREAT SMART HEARTS

1353 U STREET NW, WASHINGTON DC

HAMILTONIAN GALLERY

ALL AGES PUNK SHOW

DOOR 6:30 / SHOW 7PM

\$5 - \$10 SUGGESTED DONATION

*Organizer: Sarah O'Donnoghue
photographer: Fannah Steiky*



THURSDAY FREE WHEATGLASS SHOT!!!
25TH
AUGUST 2016 DOORS 6:30 SHOW 7PM SHARP!
EARTH GIRLS (CHICAGO)
SEM HASTRO (WASHINGTON DC)
BBC (WASHINGTON DC)
 1353 U ST NW, DC
 HAMILTONIAN GALLERY
 \$5-\$10 SUGGESTED DONATION
 ALL AGES

PEAK COUNTER CULTURE




SEM HASTRO



EARTH GIRLS



BBC

DAY TWO

ORGANIZER: CHRIS MOORE
 PHOTOGRAPHER: ALEX SCHELLDORF

DAY THREE

FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 9TH 2016

FREE
 WHEAT GRASS
 SHOT

ALL
 AGES

\$5-\$10
 SUGGESTED
 DONATION

DISINFECTANT
 PINK
 FILM
 SEDATIVE

DOORS 6:30P
 SHOW 7PM

HAMILTONIAN GALLERY
 1353 U STREET
 NW, WASHINGTON DC

organizer = Kohei Urakami
 photographer = Chris Suspect



SEDATIVE



PINK FILM



DISINFECTANT



WHAT WE DO IS GENTRIFICATION

BY AMBROSE ADAMS

My first unchaperoned trips into the city came in 2004. As a 13 year old, getting into punk opened me up to new worlds; new communities, new environments, new sets of ideals including veganism, DIY, Straight Edge -- critical thought about intoxication, etc. Making treks from Gaithersburg, the very diverse but isolated suburb in which I was raised, into Washington, D.C., was part of that experience. Physical space is precious in punk and claiming the area in which your scene is centered is almost as important. Thanks to the groundwork laid by the Dischord Records camp, the emphasis on all ages shows lies in the fiber of D.C. hardcore, granting even access to all spaces. Early experiences in the city brought me onto college campuses, into poorer neighborhoods and into a variety of nightlife spaces--with an X'd fist as a requisite for minors--that most don't see before legal drinking age. Soon enough, I thought of myself as versed in the city: I could give advice on shortcuts, point out the vegetarian restaurants; the record stores; the venues--makeshift or "legitimate"--and thought of myself as one with the people. There was an easy sense of comfort and belonging in claiming "D.C. Hardcore" as my scene and although I'd never lived in the city, when away or in social media profiles, I still claimed it as mine.

The concept of artwash was introduced to me only recently and, with exception to the versions of it that involve corporate collusion from the onset, I can now see the ways the scene I call home is culpable in the gentrification of this city; a punkwash. Some of the predominantly black neighborhoods that I once attended house shows in are now white young professional playgrounds, with yoga studios across the street from biergartens. An example being the Petworth neighborhood, once home to Bervin Haus, 666 House and a variety of scattered punk houses, whose beat up basements were foundational to my early punk experience and

now have rental asking prices almost triple to then. The illegitimate venues we went to in the more destitute parts of town have been knocked down and replaced with high-rent spaces that capitalize off the creativity of its previous tenants. An example being the Bobby Fisher Memorial Building, an art space, renovated to be a small--and seemingly unused--apartment building adjacent to a bar with a large outdoor patio. Or even more despicably, the case of Union Arts, scalped of its studio spaces that held artists, practice spaces and concerts to become a boutique hotel that touts solidarity with the arts.

This gentrification is spurred by the sight of a predominantly white subculture occupying and multiplying in certain neighborhoods on the quest for cheap rent. Along with that, attracting a multitude of people like myself, who--while black and not exactly of money--are still apart of a demographic that make underserved neighborhoods our backdrop for weekend fun while claiming it's identity. From here, developers capitalize off the slowly changing neighborhoods; providing context that paints a glamorized picture for possible monied--or otherwise of privilege--future tenants; and using devious tactics to undermine and replace the neighborhood's natives. Also, ironically, the slow death of cheap spaces through gentrification have relegated punk to bars, and other nightlife spots, that are hesitant to uphold the commitment to all ages shows imbedded in the culture.

Although D.C. punk might have a long history of social activism, conversations about our affect on gentrification are often stifled by those afraid to face their own privilege; ignorantly aligning themselves as one with their neighbors based on a obtuse understanding of poverty. Resistance to punkwash is to face it head on; to recognize positioning in society and to be invested in uplifting the communities that you move into. It is to understand the space you take up when you claim areas that are not yours, to never forget that cities are not just the backdrop to your punk scene or coming of age story. It is to actively protest and work against developers, joining in arms with people who are already in that effort and remembering to not speak for, or over, the people affected by gentrification. The tide might be strong and it may even be too far gone, but it is forever important to do the work.



About Permacounterculture:

Washington, DC is one of the fastest gentrifying cities in the country, which has accelerated the displacement of longstanding DC natives and local cultural centers. Recognizing DC as a cross-cultural city, the project seeks to activate creative solutions to empower the identity of respected local cultures and people.

Taking its namesake from the notion of 'permaculture,' an agricultural ecosystem characterized by its reciprocal self-sufficiency and community ethics, "Permacounterculture" synthesized DC punk music, urban farming, and diverse local communities to advocate for food justice in the city. The project catalyzed points of connection between a unique swath of local subcultures to convey the strength of community through both its history and its potential for regrowth.

In summer 2016, the project hosted punk shows in a garage-like greenhouse in order to raise funds for a local food bank. The concerts created a unique ecosystem in which intense sound waves from the live music coupled with the increased exhalation of carbon dioxide from the audience stimulated the growth of wheatgrass blanketing the venue. The plants were juiced into nutritious wheatgrass shots and offered to all participants. By drawing from the shared intensity and raw energy of punk and the wheatgrass, the project energized wider DC communities.

Orchestrated by Naoko Wowsugi

Project Management by: Nicole Dowd and Rebekah Pineda

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Donors: Paul So, Philip Barlow, Monica Bose, Stephen Hrutka, Victoria Reis, Reed Dunlea, Christine Bang, Erik Moe, and Jeremy Ney

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