



## Editorial

**Opportunities and spaces for change in food environments**

Ellen Desjardins

The contributions to this issue of *Canadian Food Studies* manifest a keen insight: with different media, methods, and voices, we continue to reimagine spaces for food—where and how we consume and grow food, and how we position it into an increasingly democratic, commensal domain. The more food plays a central role in various spaces, the more opportunities arise for multiple transformations in other aspects of human interaction.

How better to represent a food space than through the voices of eaters? The 10-minute soundtrack in the audiovisual work by Mélanie Binette features several Francophone regulars at Le Chic Resto Pop, expressing how this affordable restaurant in their low-income Montreal community has affected their lives. When they don headphones and listen to a half-hour recording of other patron's stories, it encourages them to make contact with others and reduce their isolation. This “installation” was the brilliant idea of the author, an example of *relational art*, aiming to extend meaning in a social context.

Picture the contrasting spaces of land: an urban area dominated by lawns as opposed to an area in which much has been cultivated to produce vegetables and fruit. The research by Schneider and Fast presents these Calgarian case studies by providing greater depth of information: quantifying the potential amount of food that private urban spaces can yield, and, above all, renaming it as *climate smart food* (rather than urban agriculture), acknowledging its significant environmental impact.

Now imagine schools as spaces of learning, practice, and networking around food. This is not a new idea in itself, but the field report by Rojas et al., about the Think&EatGreen@School project in Vancouver, paints a detailed picture of the multiple relational layers that aim to achieve no less than a “transformation of local school food systems”. A key finding, after 6 years, was the flexibility and iterative learning required to make an inter-disciplinary, inter-

organizational group of academics, community groups, and local stakeholders work together to make a difference towards health and environmental sustainability.

This issue also includes book reviews that offer intriguing insights into three diverse and fascinating works. They range from historical culinary adventures (Cooke & Lucas, 2017) to exhortations for “ecological nutrition” (Mason & Lang, 2017) to an edited collection of essays on food studies (Anderson, Brady, & Levkoe, 2017). I will sum up this editorial by quoting reviewer Wayne Roberts, who first applauds: “I am delighted to find this book (Anderson et al., 2017) shows signs of the same rebellious, inspired, and collaborative spirit so eager to ‘break on through to the other side’ (*The Doors*, 1967) of food issues,” and then later justly critiques by noting that, “I have always hoped that the Canadian food movement would ripen in the manner of its first blooming: as a co-production of lay intellectuals and civil society leaders who first brought food studies to public attention, including public health practitioners, faith activists, social entrepreneurs, and many others. Academics did not cultivate this field, and they should not own it now...”. Thank you, Wayne—you have characterized food studies by the diverse food spaces and voices with which it can flourish.

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## 2017 Editorial Team

Ellen Desjardins, PhD, Editor  
[edesjardins@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:edesjardins@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

Wesley Tourangeau, PhD, Managing and Associate Editor  
[wtourangeau@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:wtourangeau@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

Natalie Doonan, PhD, Associate Editor  
[ndoonan@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:ndoonan@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

Alyson Holland, PhD, Associate Editor  
[eholland@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:eholland@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

Phil Mount, PhD, Associate Editor  
[pmount@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:pmount@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

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[dszanto@canadianfoodstudies.ca](mailto:dszanto@canadianfoodstudies.ca)

Rod MacRae, PhD, Associate Editor  
[rmacrae@yorku.ca](mailto:rmacrae@yorku.ca)

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