

Susan Leibovitz Steinman

MANIFEST

FOR ARTISTS AS CITIZENS & CITIZENS AS ARTISTS: GROW ART FOR SURVIVAL

FOREWORD

Manifesto = »Hit by the Hand« = a public declaration of intentions, motives, views.

Manifest = 1. Readily perceived by the senses, especially the sight

2. Easily understood or recognized by the mind.

dare (synonym) = To have sufficient courage to try it = To confront boldly.

PROLOGUE

»We are Nature, Seeing Nature, With a concept of Nature.« Susan Griffin

In the beginning the earth was a tumultuous wild garden—volatile, shaking, evolving, dangerous, mysterious, verdant, luxuriant, plentiful, and beautiful.

Humans emerged out of nature as part of nature, embedded in the bigger picture, the living landscape of the global garden.

Over centuries (exponentially in the past 200 years), humans waged war on themselves as nature.

Standing outside of themselves as nature, they poisoned the air and water, and pillaged the garden.

CANTO I.

NOW IS THE TIME

TO MAKE ART.GROW GARDENS.
 STOP. RECONSIDER. RETHINK.
 REDESIGN. RECREATE.
 DARE: MAKE INDIVIDUAL STEPS
 TOWARD COLLECTIVE SURVIVAL.

CANTO II.

THE URBAN SURVIVAL GARDEN MANIFESTO

This is an urban manifesto to redesign cities as living gardens.

Use the sun—not oil—to grow clean air, clear water,
 and safe food for all.

Live closer together in the city. Plant closely and densely together. Protect open space
 for all species. Summon individual and collective creative forces to move toward
 creative solutions for survival.

THE SURVIVAL GARDEN

is not a romantic garden (although it could be that, too).

This is not a manifesto to plant alone, in an isolated private garden,
 but to plant as a citizen, to plant as art, as a creative force, to plant publicly,
 to plant communally.

This is a manifesto to plant NOW. It is a call to immediate action.
 We have reached peak points in multiple environmental disasters;
 each a cause and effect of the other. Work now, starting at any point.
 Start where you are standing, think, and move forward with intent, with others.
 Act locally AND globally together.

CANTO III.

PRACTICING ART WITH INTENT

»Art is not a mirror of reality but a hammer with which to shape it.« Bertolt Brecht

See like an artist, who sees not one shade of green, but thousands of variations on the theme of green. Look for minute details and the big picture.

IMAGINE SOLUTIONS.

Reshape content. Reshape intent. Experiment with process. Look. Listen to others.

IMAGINE. CREATE. PLANT CLEAN AIR, CLEAR WATER, HEALTHY SOIL.

CANTO IV.

ARTIST/CITIZENS, CITIZEN/ARTISTS

THE ARTIST BRINGS SPECIALIZED SKILLS TO THE COMMUNITY TABLE.

THE CITIZEN BRINGS LOCAL KNOWLEDGE TO THE ARTIST'S TABLE.

We are collaborators, urban gardeners, activists for nature within community and community within nature. We are innately connected locally and globally to the Big Picture. We are allies in the WAR OF DISTRIBUTION.

CANTO V.

THE WAR OF DISTRIBUTION

Patriarchal Colonization vs. Ecofeminist Theory

It is hard to escape analogies of war—dominant patriarchal theories that analyze how we live and die.

Ecofeminist theories seek horizontal alignment, not vertical power structures.

This manifesto reflects ecofeminist deep ecology theory.

This is not »women as mother earth« theory.

This ecofeminist theory seeks social and ecological justice for all people, all species, and all life. Ecofeminists struggle against patriarchal power structures that treat people, animals, and resources as property to be bought, sold, and dominated. This is a fight against discrimination and unequal distribution of life essential resources. While hundreds of species go extinct by the minute, a few select powers control the distribution, quality and quantity of deteriorating, diminishing, endangered natural resources—AIR, WATER, LAND, FOOD—for rest of the planet.

There are ways for local communities to organize to take control of the distribution and quality of regional water, land, food, and even air.

THIS MANIFESTO DARES YOU TO CREATE CHANGE NOW.
 THIS CALL IS FOR CONCEPTUAL PERFORMANCE ART
 AS COMMUNITY SURVIVAL ART.
 PICK A SITE. GATHER YOUR NEIGHBORS.
 START NOW. MODEL SURVIVAL AS ART.

CANTO VI.

ENVISIONING ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
 THE URBAN GARDEN AS SOCIAL JUSTICE
 PUBLIC SPACE FOR PUBLIC USE
 GREENING PUBLIC SPACE = GREEN ECONOMICS = GREEN JOBS
 A CALL TO GARDEN IN PUBLIC FOR THE PUBLIC AND INDIVIDUAL GOOD:

Healthy organic sustainable food is a human right
 Land use must be for the good of all life—not just humans,
 but plant/animal/air/water
 Survival of human species depends on collaboration, cooperation,
 and civic involvement in cleaning the air, cleaning the water, and
 protecting food sources for all.

CANTO VII.

ART AS TOOL FOR ECOLOGY AND COMMUNITY ACTION

1. MAKES VISIBLE INVISIBLE ACTIONS AND CONSEQUENCES
2. CALLS ATTENTION TO ISSUES OF PUBLIC CONCERNS
3. MAKES LIFE MORE INTERESTING
4. GENERATES DISCUSSIONS, PRIVATE & PUBLIC, NECESSARY FOR
DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
5. PARTICIPATORY CARROT. (Start and others will join you.)
6. ENCOURAGES CREATIVE THINKING
7. CREATES NEW IDEAS »OUT OF THE BOX« LEADING TO NEW SOLUTIONS.
8. BRINGS TOGETHER AT SAME DISCUSSION TABLE THOSE WHO WOULD
NORMALLY NOT HAVE THE CHANCE TO INTERACT WITH
EACH OTHER—CIVIC LEADERS & GRASSROOTS GROUPS.

CANTO VIII.

EAT AN APPLE.

GROW AN URBAN FOREST

EAT AN APPLE. INSIDE ARE 5 SEEDS. PLANT THEM.

EAT ANOTHER APPLE. PLANT 10 SEEDS. 10 SEEDS=10 TREES.

ASK 5 FRIENDS TO EAT APPLES & PLANT 25 WILD TREES.

5 FRIENDS ASK 5 MORE FRIENDS TO EAT APPLES & PLANT SEEDS.

NOW YOU HAVE AN URBAN WILD APPLE FOREST.

GROW URBAN FRUIT TREE FORESTS

ON VACANT PUBLIC LAND, ON MEDIAN STRIPS,

EMPTY LOTS, PUBLIC PARKS, SCHOOL YARDS,

IN FRONT OF CITY HALL, AT THE TRAIN STATIONS

ALONG THE URBAN RIVERS, CANALS, STREAMS:
 CREATE NEW HABITAT & WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
 RIVER EDGE FORESTS (PERENNIAL PLANTS)
 KEEP RIVERS CLEAN BY ABSORBING RUNOFF

URBAN FOOD FORESTS (PERENNIALS)
 SEQUESTER CO₂, CLEAN THE AIR,
 DECREASE GLOBAL WARMING,
 FEED URBAN POPULATIONS
 HEALTHY ORGANIC FOOD AT REASONABLE COST.
 DECREASE DEPENDENCY ON TRANSPORTED FOOD.
 REDUCE THE USE OF OIL/GAS TO BRING FOOD TO CITY.
 THE CLOSER THE FOOD, THE HEALTHIER IT IS.

NOW IS THE TIME TO TRAIN A NEW GENERATION OF URBAN GARDENERS AND
 URBAN ARTISTS AS GARDENERS. WORK LOCALLY. GROW LOCALLY. EAT LOCALLY.
 BREATHE BETTER. LIVE BETTER.
 INCREASE HABITAT FOR ALL LIVING THINGS.

CITIES SAVE MONEY BY HAVING URBAN GARDENERS
 GROW FOOD ON PUBLIC LAND.
 FOODSCAPES ARE COST EFFECTIVE.
 PROMOTE URBAN BEAUTY.
 PROMOTE MENTAL HEALTH.
 PROMOTE PLANETARY HEALTH.
 GROW ART.
 GROW TREES.
 GROW ART FOOD FORESTS.
 NOW.

DON'T WAIT.
 SIT DOWN AT THE TABLE & EAT TOGETHER AND
 TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS AND
 YOU WILL FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO NEXT TOGETHER.
 HARVEST FRUIT FROM THE URBAN GARDEN.

CANTO IX.

PUBLIC ART ACTIONS

PLANT a roof. PLANT every roof on one street.
PLANT the medians, alleys, vacant lots where you live.
PLANT every balcony in a high-rise building.
TAKE OUT a lawn. Take out more lawns.
TAKE OUT concrete, asphalt, barriers to growth.
LEAVE THE ROSES.

PLANT food crops in laundry baskets, filling cabinet drawers,
garbage cans, stacks of tires, abandoned cars.
No space is too small or too large.
PLANT healthy organic food in every vacant space.

IMITATE NATURE which plants seeds in minute pockets of soil collecting in crevices
and cracks of Crumbling walls, sidewalks, old bricks, and between the rocks.

IMITATE NATURE. Forget the chemicals.
Use the sun and the wind and the power of water.
COLLECT YOUR OWN SEEDS. Share them. Exchange them.
PLANT to replenish soil, protect the rivers, feed, and be fed.

IMITATE NATURE. Be inspired. Clues are everywhere.
Circumvent a barrier,
Recreate the conditions for life,
SOLVE AND PLANT FOR LIFE.

LIVE CLOSE TO EACH OTHER. Cherish open space.
Save other species. We are dependent on their survival.
NURTURE YOUR NEIGHBORS.

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS AT NIGHT. SEE THE STARS.
IMAGINE THE UNIVERSE.

PLANT so that your city disappears.
Under a canopy of green when seen from space.
CREATE a million shades of green. Leave only a hint of gray.
PLANT ART. SURVIVE.