

# The Creators Project

United States ▼



## An Exhibition Made of Unlikely Elements Turns Food Policy on its Head

*Abby Ronner — Jul 24 2016*



In their newest exhibition, *So Much Dirt But Not Enough Soil*, NYC-based artists Loney Abrams and Johnny Stanish (<http://theretherebiz.biz/>) challenge the superficial and highlight inherent conflicts in global systems and societies through a material mash up of ingredients like THC oil, human hair, Subway sandwich wrappers, and body odor. At the Knockdown Center (<http://knockdown.center/>) in Queens, the art is dwarfed by the surrounding ruins of an old marble and door factory. Soap reliefs created with consumer materials such as hair extensions, cigarette ash, Forever 21 jeans, and Smirnoff Ice hang side-by-side on an old brick wall exposed to the elements, allowing for the possibility of rain to lather them and juxtaposing the idea of sterilization with that of chaotic, dirty consumption.

“I loved the idea of filthy soap,” Abrams tells The Creators Project. In the same outdoor space are birdseed sculptures molded from bundt pans. With this Americana symbolism and the tail of woven corn husks trailing below each piece, the work portrays, a blending of ideologies of traditional America besides being the largest agricultural commodity in the world. The artists are hoping the birds will come out to nibble the seeds, creating collaborative works of art.



*Gamefowl*, birdseed, corn syrup, jello, flour, corn husks, ribbon

Another outdoor room houses handmade paper with fibers of product wrappers and pages from carefully chosen books. Abrams continues, "When we select ingredients we try to question the global economics and systems behind each item."

One piece of paper entitled *Let's Move!* contains sandwich wrappers, genetically modified corn husks, and the pulped index of *American Grown* by Michelle Obama, her 2012 book promoting healthy eating. By breaking down each of these ingredients to their basic elements and creating a unified object from their fibers, Abrams and Stanish seek to highlight the underlying contradictions in Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* campaign. Specifically, the artists point to the Obama administration (<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/critics-slam-obama-for-protecting-monsanto/>)'s support of GMOs and the *Let's Move!* initiative's partnership with Subway (which was deemed as unhealthy as McDonald's by one UCLA study (<http://www.takepart.com/article/2013/05/17/breaking-subway-just-unhealthy-mcdonalds>)). "Under the guise of 'let's make America healthier' they're actually burdening the consumer," Abrams says.



*Cafe con leche con pants, soap, coffee, hair extensions, chewed Nicorette gum, Forever 21 jeans*

Beneath the paper works, gargoyles perch atop plastic containers of homemade plant food created from mixtures with such ingredients as volcanic ash, probiotics, seaweed, and ginkgo biloba. Abrams referred to the gargoyles as symbolic guardians over the natural world and the liquid beneath them as representative of “elixirs.”



*So Much Dirt, soap, HD makeup, Smirnoff Ice, cigarette ash*

A third room houses a large-scale model depicting the artists' interpretation of the colonization of Mars. Miniature landscapes share the table with square gardens of genetically modified plants, which have begun sprouting vegetables since their installation a couple of weeks ago.

*So Much Dirt But Not Enough Soil* embodies challenging concepts to current food consumption and global policy.



*Let's Move!*

*Index of American Grown by Michelle Obama (pulped), Subway wrappers, GM corn husks*





*GRDN Doc's® Organocide® All Natural Plant Fertilizer: Prescription Formula 1 + Prescription Formula 2, custom plant food (worm poop, Bud Light Lime, free range egg shells, Los Angeles tap water, fish bones, volcanic ash, seaweed, Yogi Pure Green Tea, aquarium water), gargoyles, five-gallon beverage dispensers*





*Wargame Terrain Board, wood, cinder blocks, soil, foam, plaster, miniatures, water bottles, genetically modified food plants, Mars surface prints on vinyl, canned beans, Subway restaurant wrapper, Miracle Gro*



Check it out at the Knockdown Center through August 7, 2016. For more information, click [here](http://knockdown.center/event/so-much-dirt/) (<http://knockdown.center/event/so-much-dirt/>).

Related:

*[Surrealist Collages Probe Materialism, History, and Home Furnishings](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/ben-branagan-collages)*

*[\(<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/ben-branagan-collages>\)](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/ben-branagan-collages)*

*[A Hilarious New Exhibition Slays Banking and Big Business](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/big-business-economy-lulz-exhibition)* (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/big-business-economy-lulz-exhibition>)

*[An Indigenous Art Exhibition Examines America's Roots](http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/american-exhibit-much-wider-than-a-line-biennial-SITElines-native-american)* (<http://thecreatorsproject.vice.com/blog/american-exhibit-much-wider-than-a-line-biennial-SITElines-native-american>)

Abby Ronner

Tags: [Knockdown Center](/tag/Knockdown+Center) (</tag/Knockdown+Center>), [Loney Abrams](/tag/Loney+Abrams) (</tag/Loney+Abrams>), [Johnny Stanish](/tag/Johnny+Stanish) (</tag/Johnny+Stanish>), [Materialism](/tag/Materialism) (</tag/Materialism>), [Michelle Obama](/tag/Michelle+Obama) (</tag/Michelle+Obama>), [THC](/tag/THC) (</tag/THC>), [Mars](/tag/Mars)