

**Foraging for planetary health:  
exploring multispecies metabolism in postindustrial landscape**

**Date: 3 - 6 October 2024**

**Locations:**

**Day 1: Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Jilská 1, 110 00  
Prague 1**

**Day 2: Prague-Klánovice**

**Day 3 and 4: Kafkárna - Centre for Art and Ecology UMPRUM; Buštěhradská 2, 160 00  
Prague 6**

**ORGANIZERS:** Lukáš Senft and Tereza Stöckelová (Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences) and Will LaFleur (University of Helsinki)

**CONTACT:** Lukáš Senft; [lukas.senft@soc.cas.cz](mailto:lukas.senft@soc.cas.cz)

**Working languages: English, Czech**

**All welcome.**

The event will begin on Thursday, October 3, with a public lecture by Will LaFleur at the Institute of Sociology, titled “Rethinking Beer: Histories and Futures of Tastes, Practices, and Reproduction for a Post-Growth World.” Registration is not required for this lecture. The following 3-day workshop focuses on using the methods and concepts of social sciences and arts to explore foraging as a mode of coexistence in multispecies relations.

**Registration for the workshop is required. Registration must be submitted by  
September 23.**

⇒Register at: <https://forms.gle/4xGuMjC1WzdLNAAAt9>

**The event is organised with the financial support of the AV21 Strategy Research Programme “Resilient Society for the 21st Century.”**

Foraging involves activities that not only complement but also subvert existing distribution chains and encourage the search for non-industrial food production. “Edible commons” are sometimes proposed as a measure against crises threatening conventional industrial food distribution chains (Sardeshpande et al. 2021). It was suggested that the practice of collecting crops may be understood as an activity that reconnects humans to their environment (Pontius 2020) and co-creates the identity of the foragers (Simmonds 2021).

Furthermore, Chang and Bai (2020) contrast foraging to “capitalistic food culture” since the industrial production and buying of food off the shelf obscures the chain of activities needed to create a product. The concept of the “metabolic rift” enables the examination of the forms of distance and alienation that emerge between humans and the environment, how consumption and production processes become separated, and how the cycles of nutrients and materials within ecosystems and human bodies are disrupted (Foster 1999; McClintock 2010). Consumers often ignore the conditions under which products are made due to the disconnection between production and consumption, as scholars of feminist commons observed (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2001; Federici, 2012). Foraging, in contrast, makes the food production processes visible and tangible.

The workshop will take the form of a foraging walk in the countryside nearby Prague and, later, processing of the crops found. Participants will collect forest crops, wild herbs, and fruits on Day 2. On Day 3, they will prepare food and beverages using crops and herbs collected during Day 2 and articulate and reflect on their experience (Day 4). The workshop will contribute to developing methods that can be employed in thinking about relationships of people, landscapes, plants, and other non-human lives.

Annemarie Mol (2021) noted that during the act of eating, the world moves through the body. While building upon her approach, the workshop will pursue the following questions: What is metabolised when we eat food that we have gathered, prepared, and reflected on together? What new entanglements between people and non-human forms of life emerge when food is obtained through foraging? How does eating change if the labour and joy—and, perhaps even pain—of foraging is part of the food preparation?

**Prior to the workshop, participants will be tasked to:**

1) Read a preselected paper analyzing the landscape as an outcome of interspecies relationships and encounters. Gan, E., & Tsing, A. (2018). How Things Hold: A Diagram of Coordination in a Satoyama Forest. *Social Analysis*, 62(4), 102-145. PDF download: <http://elainegan.com/files/gan-tsing-hth.pdf>

2) Participants are invited to send a one-pager capturing their relationship to foraging in a more-than-human landscape. The one-pager can be a text, a series of photos or drawings, an excerpt from the diary, or a combination of formats. **Send the one-page entry by September 30 to [lukas.senft@soc.cas.cz](mailto:lukas.senft@soc.cas.cz).**

## Activities by day:

### **Day 1:**

#### **Lecture by Will LaFleur**

**Place:** Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences

#### **Rethinking Beer: Histories and Futures of Tastes, Practices, and Reproduction for a Post-Growth World**

Speaking from the perspective first of an amateur home-brewer and forager, and second as a social anthropologist, this lecture takes a historical view to consider beer-making as a practice of household reproduction in which beer was generally considered also food and/or medicine, in which various herbs other than hops were used, where wild yeasts were gathered or recycled to induce fermentation, and where the sensuous experience of making or tasting beer was incredibly diverse from place to place. Starting from the 16<sup>th</sup> century with laws and edicts describing which herbs were allowed to be used in beer making, and accelerating with 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrial and technological trajectories of standardisation, there has been a transition of beer-making from homes and villages to large-scale, growth-oriented production that has significantly reduced the diversity of beer in terms of ingredients, yeasts, and tastes. As such, many of the older elements of beer-making remain somewhat relegated to the past, linger in niche corners of the beer-making world, or are otherwise completely invisible—especially to a Western gaze and in regards to certain types of grain-based alcoholic beverages not generally considered “beer”. Fermentation revivalists and visual anthropologists have helped to shine a light on not only the revival of some of these practices, but also on the fact that in the majority world, home and village-level beer-making practices continue to persist. Overall, the lecture outlines these historical trajectories of beer-making and contemplates the rise and continuation of these “new-old” home-brewing practices in relation to the mass industrialization of alcohol making, the homogenization of taste, and the potentials of re-enslaved, DIY beer production for a post-growth world.

### **Day 2:**

**Venue:** Klánovický les (50.0861°N 14.6855°E)

**Activity:** Foraging crops and herbs

**Time:** 10:00 - 16:00

**Refreshments:** Participants should bring their own snacks for the day.

**Meeting point:** 10:00 AM at Praha Masarykovo nádraží. If you don't have a Prague public transport card, purchase a return ticket to the station Praha-Klánovice.

**Bring notepads, cameras, sketchbooks, and any art supplies to capture your observations for later reflection.**

Participants will attend a guided field trip into the countryside outside Prague. The group will be instructed and guided by two experienced foragers who will introduce participants to the basic skills and knowledge necessary for picking forest crops. Participants will be divided into two groups. The first group (in Czech) will be led by Eva Francová, a forager, cook, and

author of books on collecting crops and food preparation. Her group will focus on collecting crops and herbs that can be used for cooking. Will LaFleur, an interdisciplinary PhD researcher in Global Development Studies at the University of Helsinki, will guide the second group (in English). His research interests are future-oriented and include thinking with political ecology of the body, more-than-representational theories, and doing sensory ethnography. The second group will focus on collecting plants that can be used in beer brewing instead of hops.

Participants will be encouraged to notice the ecological relationships between fungi, plants, and animals in the foraging process. Collected crops will be evaluated on-site by instructors who will also offer explanations of the ecological relationships that make particular crops identifiable.

### **Day 3**

**Venue:** Kafkárna

**Activity:** Food and beverage preparation

**Time:** 10:00 - 18:00 **Refreshments** will be provided.

This day will begin with deliberation on what food and beverages can be prepared from the crops found. The first group will prepare the food, the second group will brew the beer. Instead of hops, the group will use collected herbs. The preparation of food and drinks will also include tasting, i.e., getting to know the sensory qualities of food (e.g., comparing forage versus bought produce).

### **Day 4**

**Venue:** Kafkárna

**Activity:** Textual/audiovisual/embodied reflections

**Time:** 10:00 - 16:00 **Refreshments** will be provided.

Participants will reflect on their experiences from the workshop through their own collected documentation (texts, photographs, audiovisual recordings) and additional performative exercises. The introductory talk will be given by Markéta Dolejšová, an interdisciplinary researcher specializing in interspecies art, design, and social research. Her inspiration-provocation will aim to open a space for creative reflections that draw not only on rational and conceptual premises but engage also sensory and embodied ways of knowing. Following the talk, participants will be invited to engage in a co-creative activity and forage for further inspiration on how to make sense not only *of* but also *with* their multispecies surroundings. The co-created reflections materialised in various formats will later feed into an English-language publication.