

SCHPENSA<https://schpensa.ch>

Written by

Pauline Doutreluingne

ART / STORIES / DESIGN

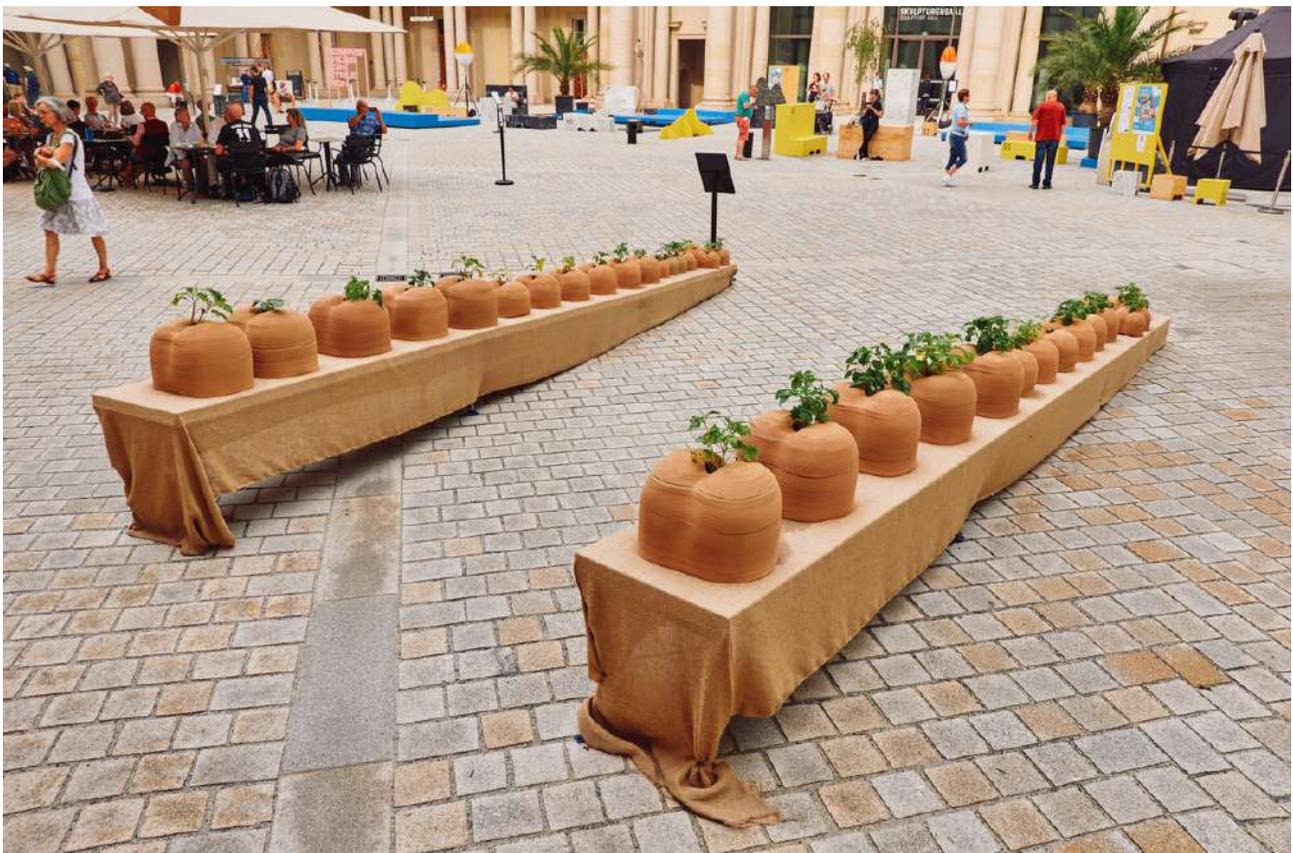
CULO DE PAPA BY ANNE DUK HEE JORDAN

In the courtyard of the Humboldt Forum in Berlin, the artist Anne Duk Hee Jordan installs a new commissioned work called CULO DE PAPA (2021). It investigates critically the origin of the potato plant and its manifold effects after it was taken in the Colonial European era from the Inca Population and brought to Europa. The fruit symbolizes the diasporic effect of native species during the colonial exploitation period.

While nowadays these stories are mostly overlooked, the artist shines new light on forgotten histories and neglected connections. CULO DE PAPA (2021) shows a vendor stall with in front of it an installation of thirty-three identical 3D prints of a potato butt (Spanish translation: culo de papa). On the back of the kiosk the earlier work Disembodiment (2012) is on display, which is the forebear of the installation, a stop motion video of a potato plant growing out of a human butt, accompanied with a soundtrack rendition of Ella's Fitzgerald „Let's call the whole thing off“.

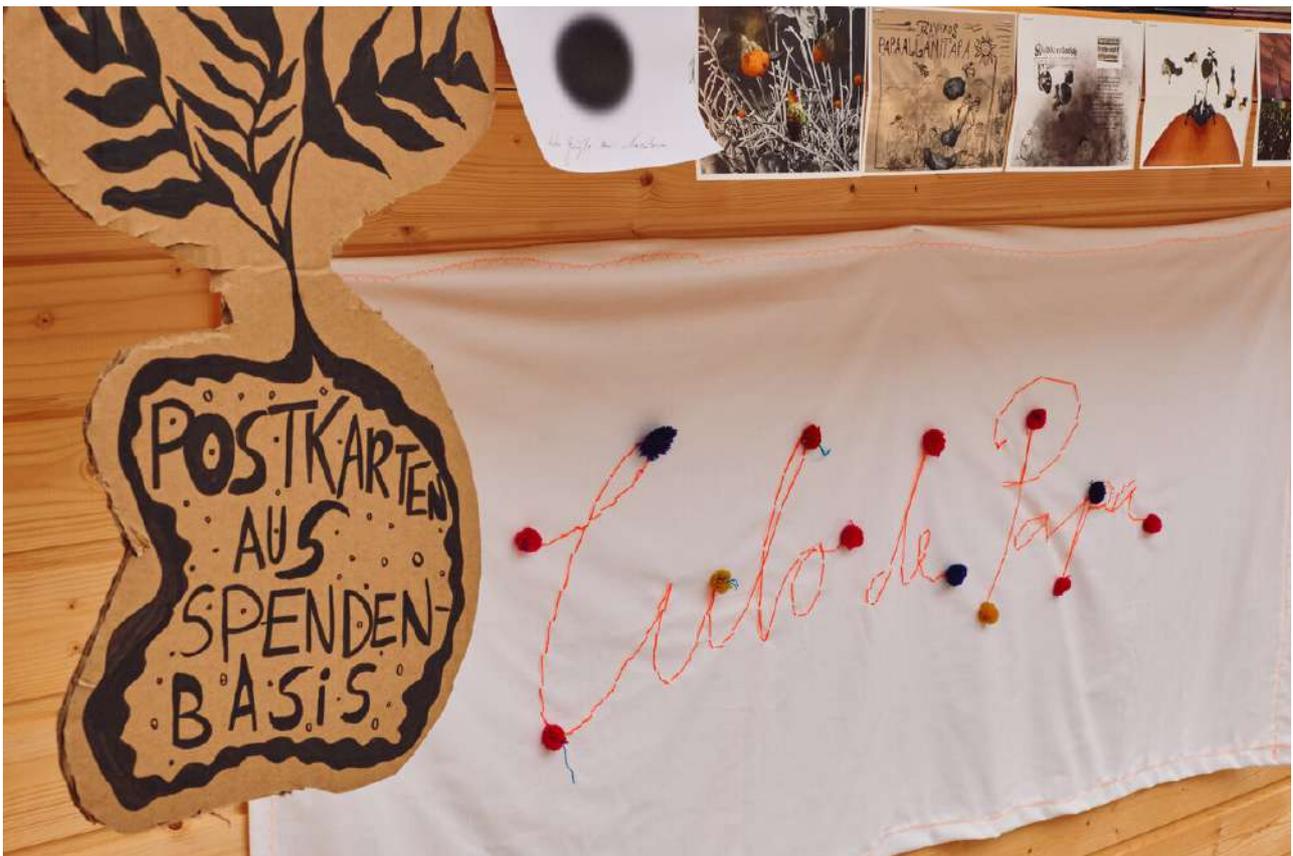


The potato as food embodies not only a wide range of symbols and rituals, but also functions as a traditional food of an entire culture. Jordan called this work Disembodiment to express the complex feeling of not belonging to a certain culture. Also the potato is not native to Germany.



The potato is a nightshade plant and comes originally from the Incas. The Spanish Conquistadores introduced the potato to Europe in the second half of the 16th century. In

Prussia King Friedrich II formally flogged his compatriots to accept it as staple food, as there, they stubbornly refused recognizing the potato. The potato was slow to be adopted by distrustful European farmers, but soon enough it became an important food staple and field crop that played a major role in the European 19th century population boom. However, due to its lack of genetic diversity, and the very limited number of varieties of species initially introduced, the crop was vulnerable to disease. In 1845, a plant disease known as late blight spread rapidly through the poorer communities of western Ireland, resulting in the crop failures that led to the Great Irish Famine. Half of the Irish population got reduced; a million died of famine and up to two million immigrated to the USA.



The work explores the metabolic process of how the potato plant was embodied and disembodied throughout history and played a major role in important demographic and ecological imperial exchange waves, also called the Columbian Exchange which was the widespread transfer of plants, animals, culture, human populations, technology, diseases, and ideas between the Americas, Europe, and West Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries.



