

Cattle in Print: The Changing Pastoral

A Virtual Exhibition
Curated by Beth Shepherd

+ Aim of the Virtual Exhibition

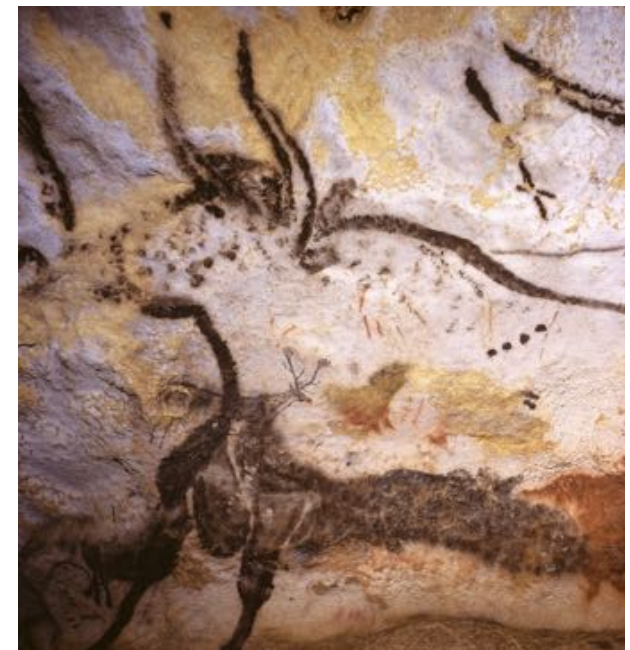
- The virtual exhibition addresses the subject of cattle and consumption in the last two hundred years as depicted in the medium of print in a pastoral tradition with the aim of increasing public awareness of the realities of animal-based food production, particularly beef, veal and dairy.

+ Pastoral – A Unifying Theme for a Difficult Subject

- A style or genre of poetry, literature and art reflecting the relationships between humans and their environment.
- A recurring theme since Antiquity, pastoral art has a subject the idealized rural life where humans and animals live in harmony in a beautiful natural landscape (i.e., bucolic setting) reminiscent of Arcadia in the Golden Age.
- Often used as refuge in times of war, revolution, cataclysmic change and loss: Escapism, Elegy or *Memento Mori* -“*Est in Arcadia ego*” read as “Even in Arcadia I, Death, am present.”
- It has been a contested term due to association with political, socio-economic, sexual and other exploitative subterfuges (Gifford)
- Can be useful as a conceptual tool revealing artistic, social and political practices (Skoie & Velázquez).

+ Long History of Cattle Representation

- Bovid importance is signified in their frequent appearance in art from earliest times (now greatly diminished, Baenninger).
- Cattle provided power, milk and meat, clothing, shelter, tools for thousands of years. They were an integral part of human's agrarian existence.
- From settler times in North America, cattle were the easiest way to convert land into wealth.
- Modern cattle breeding was born in Britain in the 1760s. British paintings and prints of idealized beef cattle set standards for breeding and meat production (Broglia, 104-6).
- Breeds embody standards of perfection correlated with intended purpose – cuts of beef/ quantity of milk.



Aurochs at Lascaux



Group 1: The 19th Century European Pastoral

Myths of idyllic rural lifestyles were used to cloak the devastation of war, revolution and industrialization in Europe.

Herbert, *Peasants and "Primitivism"*

- By the 1800s much of Europe was experiencing the effects of industrialization including urbanization
- France experienced revolution, war and upheaval.
- Ownership and land use was affected by modern transportation, new agricultural techniques and more commercial interests.
- 1840s brought a “depopulation of the countryside” as many peasant-farmers left for urban employment.
- The pastoral in both France and England took on a more naturalistic look as all citizens mourned the loss of simpler times.
- Printmaking made nostalgic pastoral scenes available to the wider public.

+ 19th Century French Prints:

“Helping to create a new 19th century version of the Arcadian myth” (Rix)



Jean Louis DeMarne (French,
1752/1754-1829)

Les Deux Vaches se Léchant
(date unknown)

Etching, 16.3 cm x 24.9 cm



Charles-François Daubigny
(French, 1817-1878)

Le troupeau de vaches
(1873)

Photolithograph on beige chine
collé, 16.4 x 25.6 cm

+ 19th Century British Prints

The British identity is steeped in the rural life and the roast of beef



William Blake (English,
1757-1827)

*'And Unyok'd Heifers, Loitering
Homeward, Low'* (ca. 1821,
printed 1830)

Wood engraving, 3.3 x 7.7 cm



Samuel Palmer (English,
1805-1881)

The Early Ploughman
(1861, printed posthumously
1924)

Etching, 12 x 19 cm, final state



Group 2 – Edward Hopper and the American Pastoral

Factory Farming in America – the worst of industrialization – was the result of a sense of entitlement to cheap meat

Ogle, *In Meat we Trust*

- From settler days Americans had sense of entitlement to cheap meat. 7
- By the end of the 1870s, with the advent of rail transportation, beef production moved to the mid-west and beyond.
- End-to-end processing was increasingly in the hands of big business by 1900 (e.g., Swift, Armour).
- Population growth, urbanization, poor agricultural practices and resulting pressures on land, and the changing attitudes of city-dwelling consumers led to the birth of confinement agriculture or factory farming.
- The U.S. experienced a food crisis in the 1920s, when prices soared due to inefficient retailing.

+ **Hopper's Prints: Foreshadowing his enigmatic style in exuding a disquietude of a time gone by**



Edward Hopper (American, 1882–1967)
Cow and Rocks (1920)
Etching, 17.6 x 20 cm (plate)



Edward Hopper (American, 1882–1967)
American Landscape (1920)
Etching, 18.6 × 31.3 cm (plate)

+ *In Meat We Trust*

An unexpected history of carnivore America,
by Maureen Ogle, 2013



The quintessential American Cowboy

- The images of the lone cowboy and the cattle drive across open country became the American pastoral



The Union Stock Yard & Transit Co., circa 1920

- Cattle were loaded on trains and shipped to central stockyard centres like Chicago and Toronto, where they were fattened, slaughtered. Packed and reshipped to market.



Group 3 - Warhol's Cow, Consumerism and Fast Food

Economic prosperity lead to increased consumption and the rise of consumerism

60% of all meat eaten was beef

Advertising and Media maintained the American Pastoral

- Post-War America was a meat dream: Off-the-shelf meat in grocery stores, prepared foods foods such as TV dinners, barbeques, and fast food outlets made meal preparation easy and convenient.
- Industrial practices were applied to all stages of beef production. End-to-end processing was removed from cities to the feedlot – boxed beef.
- Advertising by the marketing boards and government agencies dispelled any concerns that a meat-rich diet was unhealthy.
- TV Westerns kept the myth of the American Pastoral alive
- Environmentalism and consumer activism were also on the rise



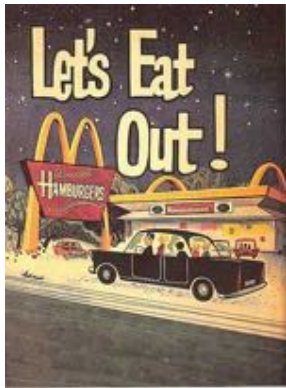
Cow as Celebrity?
+ Cow as Product?
Or Both?

Andy Warhol (American, 1928–1987)

Cow (1966)

Screenprint, 116.7 × 74.5 cm

+ Where's the Beef? Everywhere!



- In post-World War II America, eating red meat was promoted in American Meat Institute ads like these from 1956 and 1946 and the MacDonal'd's ad campaign of 1960-65.

- The American pastoral was maintained through burgeoning TV Westerns in the 1950s and 1960s





Group 4 - Where Have All the Real Cows/Cattle Gone?

Animals have mysteriously disappeared from art and (adult) TV shows.

Animal images that remain are unrealistic and anthropomorphized, making it easy to disavow the suffering our meat-rich diet causes.

- Canadians think factory farming is an American problem.
- The Canadian Pastoral is of rural family-owned farms with cows and cattle in the pastures and pigs and chickens in the barnyard.
- Few city-dwelling adults ever encounter animals as they have disappeared from the landscape, art, media, and other places of significance (Baenninger).
- Only remain in kid's books and cartoons where they are heavily anthropomorphized and rarely petting zoos.
- We are all (perhaps willing) victims of Disneyfication -- "the application of simplified aesthetic, intellectual, or moral standards to a thing that has the potential for more complex and thought-provoking expression." (The Disney Project)

+ Nostalgic View of Cows on Family Farms in Rural Canada



Joe Fafard (Canadian, b. 1942)
Pieta (1980)
Silkscreen print, 58.6 x 73.8 cm



Joe Fafard (Canadian, b. 1942)
Canadian Stamp
In 2012 Canada Post printed 4 M of Joe Fafard's Cow stamp, one of 3 motifs in the series.

+ Are we still eating up the pastoral myth?



Iogo Dancing Cow



Old MacDonald Had a Farm e-i-e-i-o

- The Canadian Pastoral is the image of the family farm but factory farming is a Canadian problem too



Group 5 – The New Pastoral

Mishka Henner's work is reminiscent of Edward Burtynsky's damaged landscapes, and is equally as revealing.

While meat and especially beef consumption is dropping slightly in North America, it is booming elsewhere.

The industrial models of agriculture are spreading like a blight across the Earth.

- Feedlot and intensive/ confinement agriculture is widespread in the U.S. and Canada.
- Ag-gag legislation threatens public scrutiny.
- The intensive agriculture model is being transplanted wherever land is available – Australia, South America, European Union, China, etc.
- Our obsession with eating meat is like our demand for fossil fuel – and has an equal or greater impact on greenhouse gas emissions.
- Awareness of issues of animal cruelty, environmental and health impacts of excessive meat eating have led to pockets of sustainable agriculture.

+ Texas Feedlots from Satellite



Mishka Henner (Belgian, b.1976)
Coronado Feeders, Dalhart, Texas
(2012)
Archival pigment print,
150x180cm



Mishka Henner (Belgian, b.1976)
Tascosa Feedyard, Texas (2013)
Archival pigment print,
150x216cm

+ View of the Feedlots at Ground Level



- Coronado Feeders (capacity 67,000 head) is a subsidiary of JBS Five Rivers, which has combined feeding capacity of more than 980,000 head



- Tascosa Feed Yard (capacity 25,000 head), a subsidiary of Champion Feeders, is located 15 miles west of Amarillo



Final Panel: Is Eating Beef the Right Thing to Do?

“The case against using animals for food is at its strongest when animals are made to lead miserable lives so that their flesh can be made available to humans at the lowest possible cost.”

*Peter Singer, Moral
Philosopher,
Princeton University*

Beef and Veal Slaughtered Annually:

- United States 33 million head
- Canada 3.5 million head
- Worldwide over 300 million

- According to a UN Report, agriculture, particularly meat and dairy production, accounts for:
 - 70% of global freshwater consumption
 - 38% of the total land use
 - 19-25% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions
- Over 50% of antibiotics worldwide are used in agriculture, leading to resistant strains of bacteria. Water contamination, meat contamination and zoonotic diseases like BSE also threaten health.
- Beef has a high feed conversion ratio of 5 to >20 kg feed per kg of meat compared with 2 to 1 for chicken.
- Switching from beef to chicken could reduce green house emissions by 90%; switching to beans, 99%.



Consumers Have the Power to Make Change Happen

Sustainable Agriculture is not only a viable option, it may be the only option for long term survival.

[provide a display of handouts from these organization]



+ *“Meating” of Minds* – participatory exercise

What you eat makes a big difference. How might you eat differently and why?

Paper, pencils and crayons will be provided for participants of all ages to write ideas, draw pictures, post recipes or photos, etc. in response to the question.

All comments can be taped to the wall.

+ A cow sheltering her calf at
Mariposa Farms, Ottawa 2014



Photo by Beth Shepherd, 2014