

Feast on the Bridge

Clare Patey with The Thames Festival

2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 / London / UK

www.clarepatey.com

An urban harvest feast on Southwark Bridge, London

Feast on the Bridge ran from 2007 to 2011 as part of The Mayor's Thames Festival. For one Saturday each September Southwark Bridge across the Thames in central London was closed to traffic for an urban harvest meal enjoyed by over 35,000 people. The emphasis of the project wasn't on spectacle, ownership or even entertainment, it was simply to explore the cyclical story of food production from soil, reclaim the space from traffic and invite people to take part and share food and conversation.

Feast on the Bridge brought together an interdisciplinary team, from artists and campaigners, fishermen and archaeologists to poets, thatchers and chefs.

People baked bread, learnt to make mayonnaise, decorated cake, churned butter, foraged, gutted fish, made jam, told stories and proposed toasts. There was a mass fruit salad toss made from fruit destined for landfill, pop-up restaurants serving discard fish, a showcase of ethical food producers, local wine, music and dancing.

We collected all the food waste generated, experimented with anaerobic digesters and ran composting and wormery workshops. We tried grape treading, salad hats, apple bobbing, pumpkin carving and collected and illustrated thousands of personal food stories.



About the team

Clare Patey is an award winning artist and curator who creates participatory art projects and social spaces. She has worked nationally and internationally on commissions including: the London International Festival of Theatre, Channel 4 (winner of RTS award), Southbank Centre and The National Theatre. She is currently director of The Empathy Museum and part of the Edible Utopia collective creating an urban farm at Somerset House, London.

Image credits and license

1. Diners on the bridge / Tim Mitchell
2. Mass fruit salad toss – using fruit destined for landfill / Barry Lewis
3. Public toasting with the Toast Mesdames / Barry Lewis
4. The annual hay fight / Tim Mitchell
5. Salad Hats / Tim Mitchell
6. Making mayonnaise / Tim Mitchell

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Space typology Other / Street / Waterfront

Intention Celebrating / Educating / Enjoying / Exchanging / Experimenting / Gathering / Raising awareness / Reclaiming

Action Cooking food / Eating food / Growing food / Recycling food / Serving food / Sharing food