



Research Cluster: Trans-Form – exploring design, art and social practices for political and eco-social transitions | Timespan: 2017 – ongoing

## What Could A Farm Be?

Towards viable agri-cultures for small European farms through inter-disciplinary design, art and social practices.

### Team

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CI: Erica Boito

External collaborators: LEADER group managers South Tyrol, Innovation department of Südtiroler Bauernbund, BAU, NOA, various individual farmers.

Websites: Network and platform, <http://www.muu-baa.org> and Blog, Diversescape, <https://diversescape.wordpress.com/>

Last update: 08/08/2018

What Could A Farm Be? is a two-year research project centred on how small farmers, designers, artists, rural entrepreneurs and others can collaborate, experiment and prototype new approaches and practices to find viable livelihoods while revitalizing our European countryside. This is especially challenging given contingent realities such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and rural depopulation.

What Could A Farm Be? believes that an agro-socio-ecological approach is essential to maintaining healthy viable agri-cultures (where agriculture and culture inform each other) to address key European Union concerns about rural development.



Figure 1. Participants at the workshop on Open Farm(-ing) enjoying locally prepared food at Sockerhof, Malles Venosta, South Tyrol as part of the Hier und Da festival, March 2018.



Figure 2. A workshop developing a collective "Food Timeline", past, present, future, for South Tyrol. Aspmayrhof, Val Sarrentino, June 2018.



Figure 3. A discussion about what is, and what could be shared, in farming communities in South Tyrol. Sockerhof, Malles Venosta, South Tyrol.

This is framed within the Common Agricultural Policy for environmentally and socially sustainable farming, with special reference to 'sustain viable rural communities with diverse economies' and 'keep(ing) the rural economy alive'. [1]

A key strategy for the EU is The Rural Development Programme (RDP), 2014 – 2020 comprising 118 RDPs across Europe. [2]

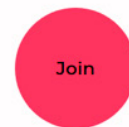
The project links diverse actors and stakeholders in Alto Adige/South Tyrol including small farmers, designers, artists, the LEADER Action Groups within the Bolzano RDP, Südtiroler Bauernbund, catalysts and entrepreneurs, and others interested in the futures of small farms and rural development.



Figure 4. A farmer from Wipptal describes his vision for near future foods in the “Food by describing a typical meal he drew on a paper plate. Aspmayrhof, Val Sarrentino, June 2018.

The primary objective of What Could A Farm Be? is to explore agro-socio-ecological opportunities for small farms[3] in Europe through inter-disciplinary design, art and social practices. The aim is to bring together the stakeholders to explore and experiment with potential new experiences, services or products that go beyond conventional thinking in farming and rural development. Early initiatives include several workshops (see Diversescape, <https://diversescape.wordpress.com/>) and creating a platform and network (muu-baa <http://www.muu-baa.org>) for explorations, exchanging ideas and developing collaborative on-farm projects.

## An agri-cultural network for explorations



### BIANCA GIALLI

MEMBERS - 22nd August 2018

Looking for a publisher for a book on special breeds of cows I have created. I can offer diverse types of milk for making incredible cheeses. [Read More](#)

#alto-adige #designer #farming #milk

### WHAT'S UP

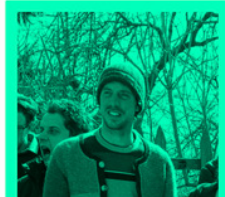
STORIES - 20th August 2018

#agri-culture #design #muu-baa #process

### INSPIRATIONS FOR EVERYBODY

INSPIRATIONS - 20th August 2018

Assessments of the biodiversity status of four global regions (Europe and Central Asia, Americas, Africa and Asia Pacific) published on March 2018 by



### EXPLORATION NUMBER 2

Figure 5. Screen grab of the network and platform, muu-baa, in development.

Expertise from the region and internationally is being brought together in an anthology highlighting inspiring case studies and hybrid practices of designers, artists and farmers. An international event will be held in South Tyrol in the autumn/winter of 2019 to disseminate the outcomes of the project.

## References

[1] European Union. 2017. The European Union Explained. Agriculture. Brussels: European Commission, DG for Communication.

[2] European Union, 2014a. Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Bolzano. Brussels: European Commission. European Union, 2014b. Factsheet on 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme for Italy. Brussels: European Commission.

[3] For this project we embrace anyone who considers themselves a small farmer and accept various physical and/or economic criteria defining a small farm. A small farm is recognized as one being less than the European Union average of 16ha, or less than 2 hectares or less than 5 hectares of UAA, and/or one being of a land area that is in the size category of being less than 20% of the total UAA in a member state, and/or between 1 to 8 European Size Units (ESU) i.e. where the sum of the standard gross margins of each agricultural activity on the farm equates to Euros 1.200 to 9.600, and/or between 0.5 to 2 AWU per farm.