

## Session at XXI ISA World Congress of Sociology (Gwangju, 4–10 Jul 27)

Gwangju, South Korea, Jul 4–10, 2027

Deadline: Oct 14, 2026

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Making Visible What We Live From: How Visual Arts, Museums, and Cultural Events Represent Contemporary Agri-Food Systems.

Chair: Anna Schober (Prof. Dr. at University of Klagenfurt, Austria)

Co-chair: Kae Sekine (Prof. Dr. at Aichi Gakuin University, Japan)

Joint Session between RC57 Visual Sociology and RC40 Sociology of Agriculture and Food (Oral Presentation).

Language of Presentation: English

### Abstract

This session aims to critically examine how visual arts and public curation initiatives can enhance sociological understanding of contemporary agri-food systems. It seeks to foster an international and interdisciplinary dialogue on the transformative potential of visual culture for the sociology of agriculture and food. By bringing together diverse sociological and visual cultural perspectives, we aim to advance our understanding of how creative practices can democratise knowledge, stimulate public discourse, and inspire progressive change within contemporary agri-food systems.

The sociology of agriculture and food critically foregrounds the structural contradictions inherent in contemporary agri-food systems. Central to this inquiry are asymmetric power relations, threats to ecological sustainability, and the survival strategies of precarious primary producers. Furthermore, contemporary research scrutinises food certification schemes and emerging forms of ethical consumerism, particularly urban consumer cooperatives aimed at establishing unmediated, direct relationships with agrarian communities. Crucially, this perspective conceptualises “agriculture” and “farming” beyond traditional cultivation to encompass all practices of food procurement, including fishing, animal husbandry, hunting and wild gathering.

Visual culture and the fine arts actively interrogate these socio-ecological complexities through diverse artistic and curatorial initiatives and various media productions. Contemporary agri-food systems are critically examined through documentary cinema, photojournalism, feature and animated films, and cartoons. Moreover, this field investigates historical archives—specifically collections of photography that trace the evolution of representations of agrarian life and how farmers and food processors represent themselves and their working environment over time. These historical and archival perspectives are complemented by contemporary interventions from museums,

public galleries, and visual artists, who curate exhibitions to deconstruct, challenge, and reframe the hidden mechanisms of contemporary agri-food systems.

We welcome empirical, theoretical, and methodological contributions that analyse how film, photography, fine arts, museums, and cultural events depict and critique the contemporary agri-food landscapes. The aim is to analyse how these visual and cultural practices actively reframe public perceptions, challenge dominant corporate narratives, and reshape consumer behaviours.

A core objective of this session is to advance methodological innovations by establishing analytical frameworks that integrate visual methodologies with empirical agri-food research. Rather than treating visual data as mere illustration, we seek contributions that theorise how analysis of visual media, sensory sociological and anthropological approaches, and methods for the popularisation of science can be combined with traditional studies in the realm of agriculture and food. By doing so, the session aims to develop mixed-methods approaches capable of capturing both the structural complexities of contemporary agri-food systems and the lived, visual realities of those whose livelihoods depend on them.

#### Suggested Themes for Papers:

- Visual Regimes and Self-Representation: Photography, film, and AI images documenting farming, fishing, animal husbandry, hunting and wild gathering since the Second World War.
- Curating Food in Public Spaces: The role of museums, exhibitions, and cultural festivals in shaping collective memories, heritages, and futures of food.
- Existential and Bodily Disturbances: Artistic interventions into hunger, food loss and waste, systemic inequalities, and eating disorders.
- Migration and Culinary Cultures: Visual representations of food practices used to negotiate difference, conflict, and integration in globalised societies.
- Aesthetic Tactics in the Anthropocene: Artistic engagement with agroecological crises, biodiversity loss, and climate change in agricultural contexts.
- Public Pedagogy and Consumer Activism: How museums, cultural festivals, and visual interventions challenge consumer habits and foster critical consciousness, cross-sector solidarity, and sustainable food citizenship.

All abstracts must be submitted through the Conference System and linked to one selected session. Submit your abstract here: <https://isaconf.confex.com/isaconf/wc2027/cfp.cgi>

Abstracts must not exceed 300 words and must be submitted in English. The submission deadline is October 14 2026. For further questions please write to: [anna.schober@aau.at](mailto:anna.schober@aau.at)

#### Reference:

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