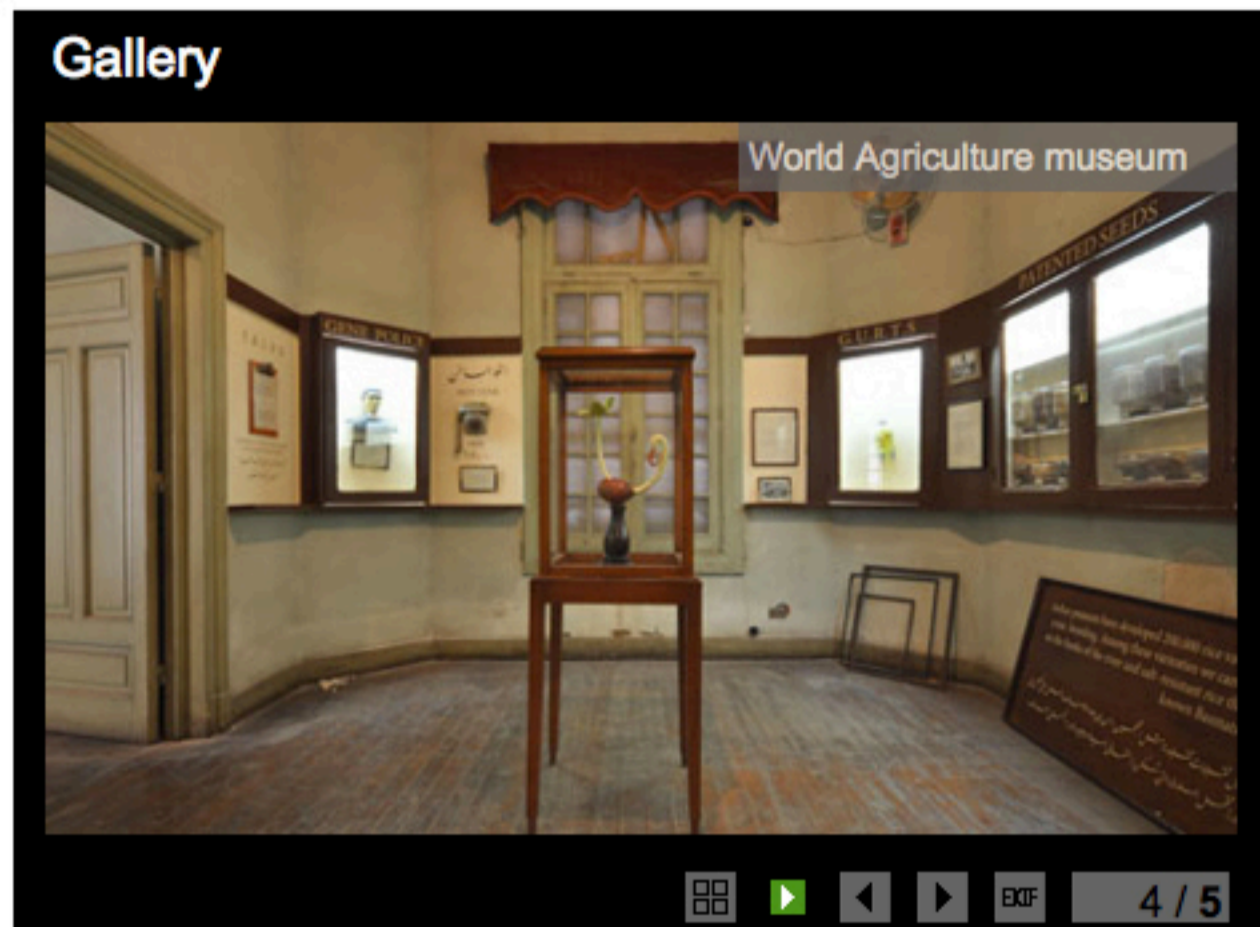


Agriculture re-examined

Spanish artist Asunción Molinos explores and destroys myths in modern farming

Menna Taher, Wednesday 5 Jan 2011



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The World Agriculture museum takes the shape of old museums in several ways. The cracking wooden floors, the smell of antiquity, the dust that has accumulated over time as well as the display cabinets and locked doors.

The project is an initiative by the Spanish artist in residency Asunción Molinos, who worked with a number of artists to construct this replica museum. Having grown up in a small village in the region of Burgos, Molinos has a deep-rooted interest in the cultural practices of the countryside and agriculture.

"I fell in love with the agricultural museum in Egypt," said Molinos "I have never quite seen anything like it. It is artistic and visually rich."

Molinos was not only impressed with the museum but also with the agricultural life in Egypt. "The agriculture in Egypt uses very old traditional methods as well as the new technology. You can look at the agriculture of the world by looking at the agriculture in Egypt."

In an attempt to copy the same structure of the agricultural museum, Molinos' exhibition presents data, facts, opinions as well as some forms of fantasy giving an overview of the situation of contemporary agriculture worldwide. It shows the interference of large corporations with agriculture and its effects on the farmers' lives, as well as the general population.

The concept of the museum is presenting large banners and pictures holding widely known general statements not backed up by any statistics, and having charts right under that prove the exact opposite.

One large chart provides data that refutes the wide-spread notion that world hunger is caused by overpopulation. The chart shows that the food produced on a daily basis can be enough for the population and that it is distribution that is flawed.

Enticing and colourful fruits, vegetables and nuts are displayed in the middle of the room titled 'Haiti produces' ironically contrasting the mud-cookies displayed in the corner to show the food that's actually eaten in Haiti.

"All the food that's produced in Haiti is not affordable to the citizens there," explains Molinos.

Mud-cookies are made of clay from the country's central plateau region with salt sometimes added to them. According to a 2008 [article](#) by the AP, mud cookies cost 5 cents apiece.

A map of Africa highlights the land grabbing and agro fuel issues. "They say that scarcity of land is a cause of hunger in Africa, but the land is not scarce," said Molinos elaborating that foreign countries exploit the land in these areas for their own benefit.

Genetically modified seeds were also one important topic in the exhibition. At the entrance it is simply explained what these modified seeds are through charts that are both absurd and amusing. They explain how the genes of animals and plants can be morphed together and what the outcome is. A cow was morphed with a soya bean, an apple with a butterfly and mouse with a lettuce.

The exhibited work shows how these genetically modified seeds affect the crops and the farmer's lives. While the seed manufacturers claim that they improve the farmer's income, a chart displaying the rate of suicide among farmers in India from 2005 till 2010, because of debts they incurred after using those seeds, proves the opposite.

These seeds also cause deforestation in Brazil.

"I left many blank and empty frames lying on the floor," said Molinos "to show all there is is a lot of missing information."

Closed doors titled 'Trade', 'Health', 'Legislation' and 'Environment' also served as a representation for this missing information. A sign that says 'Labour' was put up without a door.

"Many of the visitors here went to visit the agricultural museum afterwards," said Molinos.

The exhibition will be on-going until 31 January and is displayed on the third floor of 22 Abd El Khaleq Tharwat street.