



NEW RELEASE 2025

Gregor Sailer *Cockaigne*

Texts by David Julian McClements, Lisa Ortner-Kreil,

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A photographic view behind the scenes of global food systems

With *Cockaigne*, Austrian photographer Gregor Sailer turns his lens toward the hidden worlds of modern food production. Inspired by the medieval myth of the »Land of Cockaigne«, a utopia of boundless abundance, Sailer investigates the real systems, technologies, and infrastructures that sustain and shape today's food supply. The publication invites readers to reconsider their assumptions about nourishment, consumption, and responsibility.

His photographs allow us to enter into spaces that are usually concealed from the public: enchanted food forests in the High Atlas and barren food deserts in the icy north; test facilities for the colonisation of Mars and the Moon; high-tech production sites for algae, insects, jellyfish, and lab-grown meat; as well as sealed laboratories for virus and cell cultivation. With the precision of his analogue large-format camera, Sailer reveals the ways human ingenuity, ecological limits, and global power structures intersect. Essays by leading food scientist David Julian McClements and art historian Lisa Ortner-Kreil expand the publication with scientific and art-historical perspectives that deepen our understanding of Sailer's approach.

Cockaigne exposes the ambivalence of a world that strives for efficiency, growth, and sustainability, yet simultaneously generates new forms of dependency and alienation, as well as ethical tensions. Balancing aesthetic fascination with critical observation, Sailer uncovers how far our modern »Land of Cockaigne« has drifted from its utopian ideal and how urgent the question of what the future holds for our food systems has become.

From the foreword *Feeding the Future*

by **David Julian McClements:**

We may believe we live in a land of endless plenty, where food is abundant, delicious, nutritious, and sustainable. But as Cockaigne reveals, this perception is as much an illusion as the mythical paradise of medieval folklore.

From the foreword *Cockaigne for the Eyes*

by **Lisa Ortner-Kreil:**

Gregor Sailer's artistic qualities lie not only in his conceptual planning and captivatingly sharp images, but also in his ability to visually condense our highly complex world and its challenges. Cockaigne can be wistful and hopeful in one moment but also highly unsettling, even deeply disturbing, in the next.

Gregor Sailer (b.1980) is an Austrian photo artist, whose works have been internationally exhibited, awarded and published. His photographs are held in the collections of the Republic of Austria, the Albertina in Vienna, the Belvedere Museum Vienna, the Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt am Main, the Fotomuseum Winterthur, New York Public Library, Fondazione MAST, Bologna, and the Museum der Moderne Salzburg. Following *The Potemkin Village*, *Closed Cities*, *The Polar Silk Road*, and *Unseen Places*, *Cockaigne* is Sailer's fifth publication with Kehrer Verlag.

Exhibition

Cockaigne, Natural History Museum Vienna, Austria

11.02.2026-19.07.2026

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