

Learning from Food

Food is the research engine of this **studio**; its lofty plan for world domination is to reinvent the **kitchen**. It is a space to learn from the architecture of food and invent a new architecture for the place where taste is fabricated: the **kitchen**. **Learning from food** will be a **laboratory for taste** to reinvent the most singular and solitary space of our domesticity, the symbolically charged and yet underused kitchens of our urban everyday. Food is a political, formal and mechanical problem, a **laboratory for taste** that we will analyze through its **processes**, its **logistics**, its **interfaces** and its **environments**.

We will learn from cooking, the **Process** through which taste is produced and reproduced. From a perspective of Process, food is always a perishable actualization of a particular combination of culture and nurture, is about fluidity, about changing and overlapping sets of adaptable processes; processes that survive in recipes, loosely defined sequences of preparations, and not in fixed formulas; that are collective and individual, that transform with every actualization, with every performance, different on every repetition; processes through which the dynamics and trajectories of the food itself are literally incorporated, made into body.

Food happens, it does not exist permanently. It is precious but impermanent, and its comforting memories are revived in the cycling repetitions of seasons, places, and celebrations. It is likely one of the most portable cultural constructions, sometimes the sole thing dispossessed migrants carry along through borders: memories of food, personal and collective, the last evidence of belonging. Essential for the collective image of any community, food is not about an established identity, it is instead about memories created momentarily at every repetition, ever the same and ever slightly different. Every family adds its decisive difference to the same recipe.

We will learn from the table, the main **Interface** and broadcasting system of food, the node of its circulation. From a political perspective, the circulation of food can range from illegal farming to underground supper clubs, with an even wider range of interferences with legal or communication networks. The most common interface for food, the table, is the symbolical communal surface to literally *be at the table*, understood as a form of citizenship, the architectural set up for inclusion and participation. The first photo, the first automatic image of the world, impressed by light, was, without surprise, an image of the essential interface of its social order and its bodily conservation: the table.

The sharing of food can disrupt the usual boundaries of public and private, when you buy dinner in a supper club or a pop-up restaurant that is actually a domestic space, a home. The complex process of sourcing and assembling food can be read as an untraceable web of subcontractors (much like a building site) that cannot track its failures or monitor its safety, prompting the recent obsession with traceability. And like real estate, gourmet is the last frontier of gentrification. *Eataly* is the High Line of food. The sharing and the circulation of food bring **politics to the table**.

We will learn from the industrialization of food, the **Logistic** that enables its physical incorporation. Siegfried Giedion's chapter on the mechanization of death should convince us that the process through which mechanization took command learned from food. The industrialization of death went hand in hand with the technological possibility of broadcasting freshness, the suspension of putrefaction made possible by the refrigerated

wagon. The same logic justified Haussmann's brutal renewal of Paris, to ensure that freshness arrived daily to Les Halles. Yet the modern kitchen killed the market, when home refrigeration made unnecessary the daily visits to the belly of Paris.

We will learn from fireplaces, ovens, dutch-ovens, food trucks, restaurant kitchens and domestic ones, the **Environments** of taste production.

This far I made the case for some things we can learn from food, but you might be asking: how can we learn from food? That, I propose, should be through the fast food version of aesthetics: taste; both in its sense of the perceptive regime of the mouth and of a critical perspective on a given cultural construction; good taste, bad taste, popular taste... What I propose is a **laboratory for taste**, for its construction and production: a re-invented domestic kitchen, one different from the stage for gourmet's spectacle or the received taste that makes comfort food so comforting. This laboratory for taste will try some typological corrections in an area of great conflict between the domestic kitchen and the outsourcing of its products through phoned-in take-away food: **Chinatown**. Modernity removed events from home, we are no longer born at home, nor die at home, and the kitchen is on its way out. So what better place to re-invent this process than a point of maximum friction between industries of taste and laboratories of taste?

This is an opportunity to investigate the space of the kitchen from the point of view of food. These laboratories of taste can be many things: an industrial kitchen, a restaurant, a school, a garden, a new kitchen for the post-domestic household, a walk-in Bimbi food robot, a guide to foraging that maps the edible part of NYC, a ray-gun to count calories, a communal table, a more architectonic way of butchering beef, an environment that, like ketchup, is engineered to satisfy all taste buds, a highway embankment for food production, a kitchen stadium... Many hypotheses we can **test and taste** collectively...

Weekly field research in the experience of food is highly encouraged.

The studio motto will be: **think with your mouth.**