Women cooking art: Hospitality and contemporary art practices

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Declaration

I, Mariana Meneses Romero confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Signature

Abstract

This thesis examines the notion of hospitality in light of contemporary food-based artistic practices created from 2000 to 2015 by female artists Sonja Alhäuser, Mary Ellen Carroll, Leah Gauthier, Ana Prvacki, Alicia Ríos, Jennifer Rubell, Miriam Simun, and Anna Dumitriu, and the experimental food artists Sam Bompas and Harry Parr. The aim is to make sense of how food practices, art, and feminism intersect, especially in light of the gendered history of the food system, including cooking, when opened onto a philosophically developed notion of hospitality.

I explore the intricacies of hosting the "other", considering the multiple levels in which the relationship between the host and the guest develops. Hospitality is examined as a continuous cycle of relationships where dynamics and discourses of power and of generosity are constantly rehearsed. I focus on four main stages within the food system: 1) the gathering of edibles; 2) the cooking process; 3) the moment when food is shared and ingested with others; and 4) the digestive process.

Throughout this thesis, I consider hospitality as an open structure that sheds light on the understanding of the encounters between human and non-human species—including animal, vegetable, and microbial—in the food chain. My analysis is situated within contemporary debates of gender studies, cultural studies, food studies, and philosophy of hospitality, in particular, Jacques Derrida's ethics of the other, and the imperative that "one must eat well". Eating is discussed as the literal *and* metaphorical assimilation and incorporation of the other, and incorporates feminist theoretical engagements which highlight Western thought as being structured by a series of gendered dichotomies, including those of nature–culture, male–female, mind–body, object–subject. I argue that the philosophical notion of hospitality and feminist theory enable a critical approach to the food system as a continual ethical imperative for and to the other.

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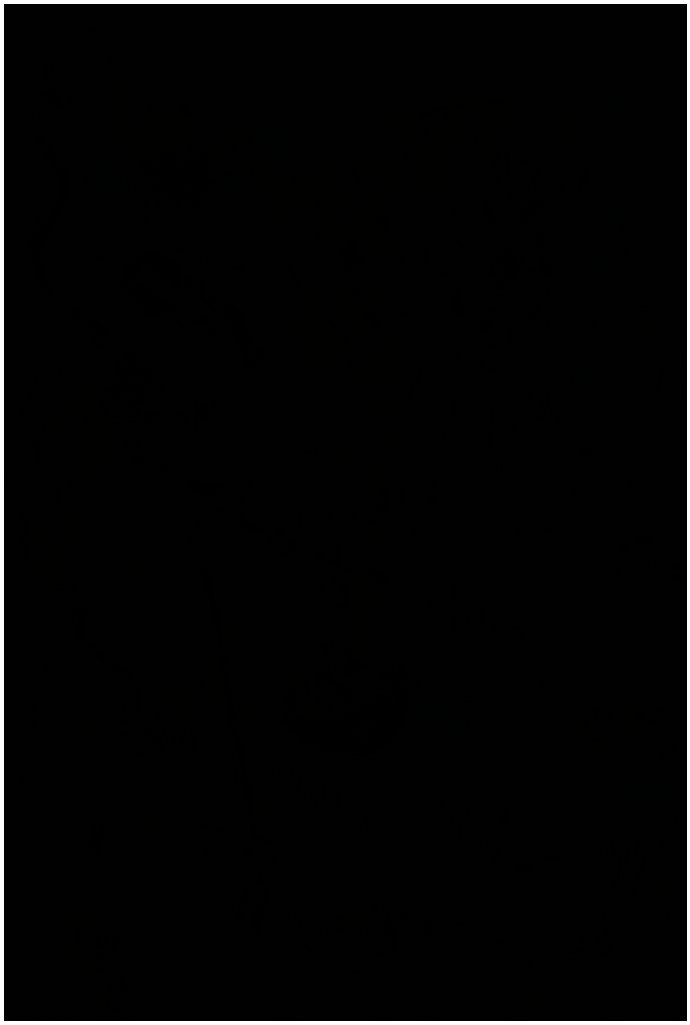
Introduction

Let's say yes to who or what turns up, before any determination, anticipation, identification, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, immigrant, invited guest, unexpected visitor, from another country, human, animal, divine creature, living or dead thing, male or female.

—Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality*

I first encountered the artworks of German artist Sonja Alhäuser in 2007. Since then, I have been fascinated by her food-based installations and comic-styled drawings that take shape as pictorial recipes. In these drawings, the artist portrays the step-by-step procedure of her performances and installations from the early stages, and which ultimately become part of the documentation process of her artworks.[1]



1. Sonja Alhäuser. *Gegen Schwermut*, 2002

[1] Sonja Alhäuser, interview by Mariana Meneses Romero, Video, December 12, 2008.

In *Gegen Schwermut* (2002), for example, Alhäuser presents the process of making a concoction of mushrooms, frog legs and a liquor—probably beer—that is drunk by a man lying on the grass. The overlapping scenes show the gathering of ingredients, the *mise-en-place*,[2] the cooking process, and the digestive process as it develops inside the stomach and the intestines, a progression that ends with the excretion of faecal matter.

The image is envisioned as some sort of *memento mori*, as an allegory of the life cycle or a *neo-baroque vanitas*, serves as a reflection of how the artist conceives her artwork and herself.[3] More importantly, food becomes part of a pictorial language that addresses the slow process of evolution and decay similar to the process suffered by our bodies and of those we eat, which transform into organic matter that is reincorporated into the environment, allowing other species to grow and nourish. *Gegen Schwermut*, in this sense, reminds the viewer of the multiple steps and relationships taking place within the food chain and the food system, from agricultural practices to cooking, to eating and to digesting.

It was the invocation of a cyclical pictorial narrative of food practices that first drew my attention to a more thorough analysis of how the notion of hospitality permeates through every step within the food system. One of my first ideas was to discuss how food-based artistic practices addressed the hospitable act, when hosting and sharing food with others and considering that we have become accustomed to the notion of hospitality as a "generous and friendly treatment of visitors and guests" linked to offering food, drinks, or a place to stay.[4] This idea and the conviviality that arises from eating with others are addressed as contemporary discourses of hospitality, especially in light of the different issues embedded in the sociocultural, political, and economic spheres, as referred to in

[2] This French term is translated as "putting into place" or as the "set up". It is widely used in gastronomic jargon to define the tasks of organising and arranging ingredients used to cook a dish. Senén Pérez, "Mise-en-place", *Diccionario Gastronómico* (México: Trillas, 2003), 80.
[3] Alhäuser further commented: "I use anatomy to show where you are and where you are going after. It has to do with the process. [...] That's why I show bones [...] Eating is an idea of the Baroque as well, these still-lifes, —vanitas—with these skulls and fresh fruits. [...] I think I'm very neobarroca. [...] It's like a reminder: It's more about [...] the value of this time." Alhäuser, interview.
[4] Merriam-Webster, "Hospitality", *Merriam-Webster*, May 18, 2016, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hospitality.

social sciences and the humanities, even if every discipline examines hospitality in a different manner, according to their particular objects of study and theoretical frameworks.[5]

Hospitality is, and will continue to be, a controversial and complicated subject of study due to its direct influence in the hospitality industry and its major impact on the host–guest relationship in micro and macro scales; for example, the social, political and historical processes that have unfolded globally and locally in terms of migration. Even if hospitality is not an alien idea, it is a notion that takes shape as a complex web of interrelations to others, making it difficult to identify who gives hospitality, to whom or what we give hospitality, and the conditions in which it takes place. In this sense, encouraged by my previous background in the hospitality industry and my interest in food studies and visual culture, particularly food-based installations and performances, I decided to transform my initial idea into an academic research enterprise in which I could test my own inclination for philosophical approaches.

In this thesis I suggest that the hospitable act needs to be discussed from global to local scales, from social to individual domains. The close relationship between food and the idea of hospitality requires a thorough discussion of the complexities of the host–guest relationship, paying attention to the actions performed within the body, and considering that the self opens up to welcome others inside oneself. My main objective is to explore the food system through the lens of hospitality and food-based artistic practices, to discuss how eating with others entails more than the simplistic assumption of offering food as a hospitable act. I analyse who, or what, gives hospitality to an(other) and the conditions in which this exchange is produced. I propose that if food is a means of showing or giving hospitality, then it is crucial to think of it as an ethical relationship to the other, emphasising its input within the different stages and

[5] Conrad Lashley, Paul Lynch, and Alison J. Morrison, eds., *Hospitality: A Social Lens*, Advances in Tourism Research (Boston: Elsevier, 2007); Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch, eds., *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011); Kevin D. O'Gorman, *The Origins of Hospitality and Tourism* (Oxford: Goodfellow Pub., 2010); Kevin D. O'Gorman, "Dimensions of Hospitality: Exploring Ancient and Classical Origins," in *Hospitality: A Social Lens*, by Conrad Lashley, Paul Lynch, and Alison J. Morrison, Advances in Tourism Research Series (Elsevier, 2007), 17–32.

processes involved before, during, and after eating, particularly the gathering, cooking, eating, and digestion of food. I stress the need to think that hospitality is rehearsed throughout the entire food system, up to the digestive process and inside the body of the subject who eats. My approach presents a dialogue between critical theory and artistic practices—like that of Alhäuser—that address, perform or represent the growing concerns of contemporary food politics regarding gender and labour inequalities and sustainable and ecological practices within the vast array of activities taking place within the food system, such as the production of food, including the growing and harvesting of vegetables or plant-based foodstuff, as well as the raising and slaughtering of animals; the processing of food, including cooking; the transportation of ingredients from the farm to the consumer; and food consumption.[6]

From a Derridean framework of hospitality, and in conjunction with feminist critical theory, I explore contemporary food-based artistic practices. However, rather than merely focusing on the moment when we share and eat food with others, I examine hospitality as a notion that encompasses and addresses to multiple ethico-political relationships in the food system on a global and local scale. This thesis aims to encourage thinking of hospitality as the responsibility towards others throughout the entire food system and look at the following questions: Does hospitality only refer to giving and sharing food with others, as the food industry emphasises? Or does the notion of hospitality allow us to consider the food chain as numerous relationships with others in which eating—understood as the ingestion of food—is an action that is only possible because of the input of subjects, non-human species, objects, and practices that take place before, during and after we put food into our mouths?

This thesis draws forth Jacques Derrida's ideas in *Of Hospitality* (2000), and follows the need to further explore "what remains to be thought" in terms of the arrival of a foreigner, of a stranger, of the unknown, to question the underlying

[6] Brian Halweil and Thomas Prugh, *Home Grown: The Case for Local Food in a Global Market*, Worldwatch Paper 163 (Washington: Worldwatch Institute, 2002); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "Sustainable Food Consumption and Production", *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rural Infrastructure and Agro-Industries Division*, 2016, http://www.fao.org/ag/ags/sustainable-food-consumption-and-production/en/.

limit between letting another inside, someone or something that is expected, and the mystery of the unnoticed arrival.[7] In *Of Hospitality* Derrida presents a deconstructive approach to the concept of hospitality proposing it as an ethical relationship to the other, and emphasises the need to overturn hierarchies implicit to hosting by "radical[ly] questioning of binary oppositional thought on the other".[8] This thesis follows these ideas and proposes an analysis oriented towards a critical approach to hospitality and food-based artistic practices paying attention to the inequalities and discrepancies of the hospitable act, between those who give hospitality and the "others" to whom hospitality is not granted.

The right of hospitality, Derrida argues, is in direct relationship to the host's sovereignty, where that is the house—the domestic space—or a nation state, hence positing the discussion on a global scale, specifically in terms of migration. The host has the right to choose, select, and filter invitees, visitors or guests, which implies that "hospitality's sovereignty is exercised by [...] excluding and doing violence".[9] At the same time, the arrival of the foreigner or stranger supposes that he or she needs to "contest the authority of the chief, the father, the master of the house, the master of the family" at the time of arrival in order to be considered a guest, although, ultimately, the host, the master of the house, decides whether or not to concede the right of hospitality.[10] Within scenario, in this thesis I examine the encounter of alterities in the food system by challenging inherited ideas of otherness embedded in the host–guest relationship that suppose relationships of power and of violence in cultural, historical, and political contexts, and considering, that hospitality is an everyday practice that lingers between ethics and politics.[11]

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[7] Nicholas Royle, *Deconstructions: A User's Guide* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 11.
[8] Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, eds. Miele Bal and Hent de Vries, trans. Rachel Bowlby (California: Stanford University Press, 2000); Simon Morgan Wortham, *The Derrida Dictionary*, Bloomsbury Philosophy Dictionaries (Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 33.
[9] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 55.
[10] Ibid., 5.
[11] It is worth noting that Derrida's ideas draw forth Emmanuel Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*. In this text, Levinas explains that subjectivity results from the encounter with the other—as the *face-to-face* encounter—as an ethical relationship; as the responsibility for the other; an encounter that implies that I must respond to that who appears unadvertised instead of ignoring it. This is, to open oneself when encountering the other. More than just a departure point for Derrida, Levinas's work is further discussed by contemporary scholars exploring notions of

Furthermore, as Derrida explains, hospitality is an *aporia* or *undecidable*, a notion that supposes a constant paradox as it lingers between possibility and impossibility without conforming to either side of the dichotomy. In other words, as Derrida argues, the conditions of possibility become, at the same time, conditions of impossibility.[12] The latter supposes the existence of two laws of hospitality, both of which constitute the fundamental thesis in *Of Hospitality*.

On the one hand, *absolute* or *unconditional hospitality*—the *Law of hospitality*—is understood as the moment when the host opens the threshold to anyone or anything that comes over the doorstep, offering a place to the foreigner, even to the absolute unknown and anonymous other, without asking any sort of reciprocation nor identification. *Unconditional* hospitality, argues Derrida, should not be understood as establishment, but as something which "may happen as a miracle [...] in an instant, not lasting more than an instant".[13] *Absolute* hospitality implies the master of the house is willing to give up his position as sovereign and to pass it over to the recently arrived foreigner without hesitation. The yielding of sovereignty, however, argues Derrida, would never be possible in phallocentric and patriarchal logic; this requires constant demarcation of limits of property to the let the newly arrived know what is mine, what belongs to others, and also to communicate what I can give to others. In this sense, absolute hospitality remains an unachievable ideal.

On the other hand, *conditional hospitality*, refers to the laws of hospitality related to the sovereignty of the host and master of the threshold. They are set by the

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gifting and giving, hospitality and the maternal, for example, Judith Still, Rosalyn Diprose and Irina Aristarkhova. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, vol. 24, Philosophical Series (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 51, 77; Irina Aristarkhova, "Hospitality and the Maternal", *Hypatia* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 55.

[12] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*; Jacques Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars*, ed. Paul Patton and Terry Smith (Sydney: Power Publications, 2001); Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death*, trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Jacques Derrida, *Given Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Mark W. Westmoreland, "Interruptions: Derrida and Hospitality", *Kritike* 2, no. 1 (June 2008): 1–10; Kevin D. O'Gorman, "Jacques Derrida's Philosophy of Hospitality", *Hospitality Review* 8, no. 4 (2006): 50–57; Myra J. Hird, "The Life of the Gift", *Parallax* 16, no. 1 (February 2010): 1–6; Penelope Deutscher, *How to Read Derrida*, How to Read Series (Granta Books, 2005); Lucy Niall, *A Derrida Dictionary* (United Kingdom: Blackwell, 2004), 147–55.

[13] Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars*, 105.

host and oppose the absolute notion of hospitality. In Derrida's words, conditional hospitality is the "rights and duties that are always conditional, as they are defined by law and Hegel's philosophy of law: the family, the civil society and the State".[14] This supposes that conditional hospitality always requires an exchange of a hospitable gesture, which is not necessarily linked to economic exchange as in the case of the hospitality industry. Conditional hospitality is not spontaneous but planned by the host. To some extent too, it is expected by the guest. Furthermore, both parties understand that some form of retribution is already expected, planned, and acknowledged by the guest. In similarity to other undecidables (the gift or forgiveness), in order for hospitality to occur, it must be absolute a surprise for both giver and receiver; it must not be acknowledged or named as the same action it represents as it will annul their properties.[15] Conditional hospitality corrupts and pollutes the notion of an absolute hospitality, despite the fact that both conditional and unconditional hospitalities form part of an insoluble antinomy in which one needs the other, even if both imply and exclude each other simultaneously.

Relationships of hospitality help to challenge the Cartesian logic, including that which supposes boundaries between species. In the interview "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", Derrida discusses the question of subjectivity by linking the "who" to the question of "sacrifice", thus as he argues, "one never eats entirely on one's own".[16] *Eating well* is emphasised as an ethical responsibility and explained as a term that refers to a "metonymy of introjection" that does not just refer to food intake, nor it is limited to the mouth; it comprises other orifices such as the ear, the eye and all the senses in general.[17] Derrida further explains that, in conjunction, the history between diet and national character, reflect a dominant schema where subjectivity is embedded to an exclusionary and dominant system that justifies and allows carnivorous sacrifice,

[14] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 77–79.
[15] Hird, "The Life of the Gift", 1.
[16] Jacques Derrida and Jean-Luc Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida", in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. E. Cadava, P. Connor, and J-L. Nancy (New York & London: Routledge, 1991), 115.
[17] Lynn Turner, "Hors D'oeuvre: Some Footnotes to the Spurs of Dorothy Cross", *Parallax* 19, no. 66: bon appétit (February 2013): 5.

for which he coins the neologism *carno–phallogocentrism*.[18] This term explains how the subject reflects his "carnivorous virility" as a flesh-eating man that exercises power through the domination of nature, killing and devouring the other, both human and non-human. In other words, the authority and autonomy given to the adult male are reaffirmed by what he eats, in this case by eating flesh, meat.[19]

Eating well, in this sense, is proposed by Derrida as a reflection of the ethical relationship between human and non-human "others", and where the appropriation–assimilation of the other sheds light to determine the "best, most respectful, most grateful, and also most giving way of relating the other to the self".[20] To say that one *eats well* supposes offering infinite hospitality to the other, regardless of gender or species. One must show respect and identify with the other who is going to be assimilated and interiorised.[21] The exclusion of those considered as "others" from relationships of hospitality only reinforces the same domination scheme that carno-phallogocentrism refers. Therefore, the inclusion of non-humans to hospitality's discourse broadens the ethical discussion to an even more inclusive position.

Becoming a participant: Contemporary artistic practices, gender, and hospitality

As I mentioned, I embrace the notion of hospitality to explore contemporary food-based artistic practices, particularly those created by female artists in the last 15 years, specifically those of Sonja Alhäuser, Mary Ellen Carroll, Leah Gauthier, Ana Prvacki, Alicia Ríos, Jennifer Rubell, Miriam Simun, and Anna Dumitriu, as well as the experimental food artists Sam Bompas and Harry Parr. I suggest that their artworks elucidate ways in which the hospitable act takes place, and highlight problems that arise within different stages of the food system, both locally and globally, making special emphasis on the anthropocentric and phallogocentric logics that suppose practices of exclusions

[18] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", 113.
[19] Ibid., 114.
[20] Ibid., 115.
[21] Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 233.

in each stage. In particular, I focus my attention on the host-guest relationship and discuss the sovereignty embedded in the host during the exchange with the guest, including the relationship between the public and the artist.

My thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to hospitality that focuses on the application of theoretical perspectives from art history, gender studies, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and food studies, to the analysis of visual images mainly, but not exclusively, created by women. The choice of artistic practices discussed here reflects my own interests and concerns about the growing enthusiasm of media, visual culture and artists for food-related practices. I want to stress that, unlike some art history and cultural studies research, this study is not a historiographical review of female artistic practices using food.[22] Instead, it aims to discuss artworks of Alhäuser, Carroll, Gauthier, Prvacki, Ríos, Rubell, Simun, and Dumitriu as a critical approach to the food system in light of a theoretical framework of hospitality—alongside the notions of gift and generosity—to understand spatio-temporal boundaries and inequalities taking place in human–human interactions, but also in relationship(s) between human and non-human species.

The rationale behind the selection of artworks, however, supposes the exclusion of others. There are notable omissions where I have felt artists' work has been studied elsewhere.[23] But essentially, my selection focuses on artworks made by female artists that help me analyse and elucidate food, its materiality and symbolism, as a powerful artistic strategy that sheds light on the notion of hospitality within the food system, from the production of food, to the very last stage of the digestive process: the excretion of faecal matter. These artworks

[22] Linda Montano, *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, 1st edition (California: University of California Press, 2000); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Making Sense of Food in Performance: The Table and the Stage", in *The Senses in Performance*, ed. Sally Banes and André Lepecki, World of Performance (New York: Routledge, 2006); Stephanie Smith, ed., *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* (New York: The New Press, 2013); Rosemary Betterton, *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists, and the Body*, Visual Studies – Women's Studies (Routledge, 1996).

[23] Cecilia Novero, *Antidiets of the Avant-Garde: From Futurist Cooking to Eat Art* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Geraldine Girard-Fassier, "Art to Eat… Entretien Avec Dorothée Selz et Antoni Miralda. Barcelone, Mars 2004", in *Daniel Spoerri Presents Eat Art* (Paris: Galerie Fraich' attitude, 2004), 45–53; Leanne Hayman, Marianne Templeton, and Tom Howells, eds., *Experimental Eating* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014); Maurice Fréchuret, Eric Féloneau, and CAPC Musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, *Hors D'oeuvre: Ordre et Désordres de La Nourriture* (France: Fage éditions, 2004).

constitute the backbone of this thesis and their inclusion mirrors my intention to as act hospitably in order to contribute to the research of women's artistic practice.

Moreover, the artworks of the afore-mentioned artists propose experiences that challenge the passivity of the public, forcing them to put aside their status as contemplative subjects and to engage in a multisensory way. It is worth reminding that artistic practices since the late 1960s followed a similar approach. Artists proposed an embodied approach between the artwork and the viewer through the stimulation of different senses, rather than mere contemplation.[24] The introduction of food as an artistic medium helped this purpose; endorsed the participation of the public[25]; while at the same time, the semiotics of food served in many cases to, according to Linda Montano, as

> *political statement* (Martha Rosler, The Waitresses, Nancy Buchanan, Suzanne Lacy), as *conceptual device* (Eleanor Antin, Bonnie Sherk, Vito Acconci), as *life principle* (Tom Marioni, Les Levine), as *sculptural material* (Paul McCarthy, Joseph Beuys, Kipper Kids, Terry Fox, Carolee Schneemann, Motion, Bob & Bob), *for nurturance and ritual* (Barbara Smith), *for props and irony* (Allan Kaprow), *as a scare tactic* (Hermann Nitsch), *in autobiography* (Rachel Rosenthal), *as feminist statement* (Suzanne Lacy, Judy Chicago, Womanhouse), *in humor* (Susan Mogul), *for survival* (Leslie Labowitz).[26]

In the late 1990s, artists saw the potentiality of food—conceptualised as gifts, meals, parties, gatherings, games, discussions and other types of social events—to trigger sensory experiences; but most importantly, to critically approach social and cultural practices while involving the public's participation.[27] In these cases,

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[24] Anna María Guasch, *El Arte Último Del Siglo XX: Del Posminimalismo a Lo Multicultural*, Alianza Forma (Alianza Editorial, 2000); María Elena Jubrias, *Arte Postmoderno* (Universidad de La Habana, Facultad de Artes y Letras, 1993); Novero, *Antidiets of the Avant-Garde*; Larry E. Shiner, *La Invención Del Arte: Una Historia Cultural*, Paidós Estética (Editorial Planeta, 2004).
[25] Paul Ardenne, *Un Art Contextuel: Création Artistique En Milieu Urbain, En Situation, D´intervention, de Participation* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002); Claire Bishop, *Participation*, Documents of Contemporary Art Series (Whitechapel, 2006); John Dewey, *El Arte Como Experiencia* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1949); Michael Kirby and J. Dine, *Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology*, A Dutton Paperback (Dutton, 1965); Frank Popper, *Arte, Acción Y Participación: El Artista Y La Creatividad Hoy*, Arte Y Estética (Madrid: Akal, 1989).
[26] Montano, *Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties*, 145.
[27] Novero, *Antidiets of the Avant-Garde*; Michel Delville, *Food, Poetry, and the Aesthetics of Consumption: Eating the Avant-Garde*, Routledge Studies in Twentieth-Century Literature (Taylor & Francis, 2012); Geraldine Girard-Fassier, "Le Eat Art: La Gastrosophie de Daniel Spoerri", in

food-based artistic practices have been referred by the existing research within the categories of *participatory Art* and *relational Art* to designate artworks that have a "relational form, [that intended to address] social gap[s], updat[ing] and reconcil[ing] situationism with the art world".[28] Particularly, French curator Nicolas Bourriaud referred to *relational aesthetics* as open-ended artistic practices that addressed to "human relations and their social context beyond private and autonomous spaces".[29] Within this scenario, creation is understood as collaboration in which artists renounce their leading roles, and allow the collective to emerge. By performing food practices as artistic strategies—although not only cooking or eating—artists embrace the opportunity to endorse collective processes that seek social cohesion and promote a sense of community, reason why I consider that food-based artworks discussed in this thesis feature as *relational devices*.

Discussing food-based artistic practices made by women, furthermore, emphasises my interest in feminist art and how artists address gender inequalities in their artworks. This draws from feminist art history discussing feminist art from the late 1960s and during the 1970s. According to Lucy Lippard, the work of feminist artists from this period suggest a "trialectic" which "simultaneously address[ed] the feminist world, the art world, and the 'real world'" where themes of gender and sexuality, and economic and political concerns such as equal wages, feminisation of space, reproductive rights, the body and embodiment, were constantly challenged.[30] Domestic food practices were a source of inspiration for women artists and used as a strategy to escape from these practices. While the imagery of domesticity was always present and one from which women artists separated, it was one that, as Lippard argues, male artists "pillaged with impunity."[31] This would suggest that the domestic

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Daniel Spoerri Presents Eat Art (Paris: Galerie Fraich' attitude, 2004); Alexandra Alisauskas, "Introduction", *Invisible Culture* Aesthetes and Eaters – Food and the Arts, no. 14 (Winter 2010): 1–7; Darío Corbeira, ed., *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX* (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002).

[28] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Collection Documents Sur L'art (France: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 107.

[29] Ibid., 142.

[30] Lucy R. Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art*, Art Criticism. Women's Studies (New York: New Press, 1995), 27.

[31] Ibid., 62.

sphere, is "an imagery [women] can't escape", even if the work of artists like Martha Rosler and Judy Chicago emphatically rejected.[32]

In similarity to artists from the late 1960s and 1970s, the artists included in this thesis still address to the trialectic referred by Lippard. They focus on the kitchen and dining spaces; however, these are portrayed as open and fruitful spaces that can give place to hospitable relationships with others. Artists grow, cook, and share food with the public, but these activities do not locate female artists to specific tasks such as gathering food, cooking, nor feeding others. Even if the female artists included in this thesis give food to others, they do not respond to phallocentric and patriarchal logic that assumes women are nurturers. In this case, and in Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's words, performances and installations staged as "dinner parties" allow artists to "creat[e] new forms of commensality and of resignifying what it means to eat together", but most importantly to examine with whom, how, and where we eat.[33]

What's cooking? An interdisciplinary feast for art and hospitality

The structure of this thesis is inspired by Alhäuser's watercolour *Gegen Schwermut* presented at the beginning of this introduction. The sequence of mini scenes that compose this image give sense to the idea of eating as part of a cyclical relationship with others and the environment.[34] Following this premise, I emphasise that hospitality as an ethical relationship between the self and the other needs to be constantly acknowledged throughout the entire food chain and food system. The notion of hospitality becomes a strategy to critically analyse food-based artworks and to emphasise that food includes gendered practices in terms of material, sociocultural, and corporeal domains, issues to which I constantly attend throughout this thesis. Food endorses relationships

[32] Ibid.
[33] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses: Food as a Performance Medium", *Performance Research: A Journal of Performance Arts* 4, no. Essential (n.d.): 24.
[34] I also draw forth Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's argument that explains that apart from the sensory experiences triggered by food, artists have used edibles as a medium to explore other possibilities that are entangled in the food system. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses", 12.

between participants and the artists that question sociocultural norms and gender roles. Most importantly, the artworks in this thesis allow me to question gendered assumptions within the food system. More than sharing food with those attending the exhibitions, I propose, these artistic practices attend to the ethical relationships with the other within the food system, an issue that is partially explored in recent art history studies.[35]

The selected food-based artworks and their relationship to hospitality are explored following the following stages: gathering, cooking, sharing, eating and digesting food. Each one is discussed in one of the five chapters that constitute this thesis, and which emulate the different courses of a menu that aims to satisfy the reader's palate and appetite, calling for more *food for thought*. The artworks and concepts *à table* are the key ingredients to produce a feast of gender-related issues embedded in food practices, the food system and hospitality. Furthermore, this particular approach and structure also responds to my own appetite to understand the complexities of hospitality in relationship to food-based artistic practices, but also to my previous professional background in the hospitality industry, gastronomy, and art history.

Chapter 1 focuses on the *production* and *gathering* of food. Considering that without food production there would be no produce on the table, I argue that the ethical responsibility—the hospitable gesture—should begin at this stage of the food system. I focus on the analysis of Leah Gauthier's urban agricultural artistic practices, Alicia Ríos's edible garden, Sonja Alhäuser's foraging edible experience, and Jennifer Rubell's metaphorical hunting. These artistic practices emphasise food gathering as actively engaged practices with the society and the environment, while endorsing collective engagement of the public. In these cases, hospitality is examined in light of the relationship between the host and the guest, focusing on traditional gender roles when gathering food, and the location where they take place. The chapter proposes that in order to fully

[35] Smith, *Feast*; Irina Aristarkhova, "Hosting the Animal: The Art of Kathy High", *Journal of Aesthetics & Culture* 2, no. 0 (December 31, 2010), http://www.aestheticsandculture.net/index.php/jac/article/view/5888; Ana Prvacki and Irina Aristarkhova, *Ana Prvacki & Irina Aristarkhova: The Greeting Committee Reports*, 100 Notes – 100 Thoughts/100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken (Distributed Art Pub Incorporated, 2011).

acknowledge the hospitable gesture while eating with others, it is necessary to consider food-gathering practices as hospitable relationships by carefully examining patriarchal and phallogocentric discourses that diminish women's labour or bound them to specific activities and places. I also argue that neither the land or the garden must be posited as a women's sphere, but viewed within an ecological framework in which both human and non-human species cohabit, i.e. to consider that within these spaces vegetable and animal species take part in temporal relationships with each other. The chapter includes a discussion of hunting and the gathering and eating of meat in light of Derrida's neologism of *carno–phallogocentrism*, signalling hospitality as an ethical relationship to the non-human animal other. I contend that as long as the differences and the complementarity between species are acknowledged, foreseeing an ethical approach to each other in the food system, but specifically in relation to the gathering of edibles, this can be understood as an initial gesture of hospitality.

The gathering of ingredients is followed by the *preparation* or *cooking process* of a dish. Chapter 2 explores the relationship between hospitality, cooking, and the kitchen. There is special emphasis on artworks that appropriate the kitchen as a creative space to rehearse and convey a host–guest relationship with the public. My analysis focuses on three different issues. First, in relationship to labour and gender politics inside the kitchen; the implications of naming the domestic kitchen as a "feminine space," in comparison to professional kitchens dominated by male cooks and chefs, and where women's cooking skills become diminished or undervalued. I contend that despite the fact that a discourse of hospitality and of welcoming prevails in professional kitchens—in the hospitality industry—the actions performed in these kitchens greatly differ, as they convey a hostile attitude to and treatment of women working in these cooking spaces. Second, it focuses on culinary narratives and discourses taking place inside the kitchen. I am particularly interested in comparing two different modes of depicting a recipe, rather than being orally transmitted or written in a cookbook. For this, I explore Sonja Alhäuser's pictorial recipes, and the culinary ideograms by Michelin-star chef Ferran Adrià; both of them depicting recipes as visual texts that include specific cooking methods and techniques. Third, I focus on culinary language as a cultural marker that relates to hospitality's discourse in terms of

migration. I discuss Jennifer Rubell's installation *Made in Texas* (2011) which addresses the processes of adaptation and adoption of recipes taking place between the host and foreigner. I argue that recipes and culinary traditions, similarly to language, migrate with the subject and highlight the experience of *culinary nostalgia*.

Chapter 3 focuses on the most obvious understanding of hospitality: the reception of friends, visitors or strangers, and the offering and eating of food and drinks. Elspeth Probyn explains that this rhetoric of care is communicated through images of eating and of *commensality* that multinational discourses and marketing strategies use as clichéd ideas of food.[36] Eating together as a family portrays an ideal image that exploits happy memories of intimacy, sharing and care. I follow Probyn's critique to discuss how the notion of hospitality is often assumed as gestures of generosity and of openness; however, as Derrida signals, gestures of (conditional) hospitality rely on relationships of economic exchange.[37] Considering that hospitality is constantly bound to its opposite, to hostility, domination, violence, and exclusion, in this case and as Probyn argues, the meal becomes a micro dynamic of power regardless of its ability to create nostalgic ideas of a simple life.[38] To discuss the latter idea, I first examine the welcoming of guests as presented by Ana Prvacki's *The Greeting Committee* (2012), an artwork that sheds light on complexities arising in welcoming rituals between the host and its guests. The second artwork under analysis is Mary Ellen Carroll's installation *Open Outcry* (2012), which I discuss in relationship to the power and sovereignty of the host, taking shape as table rituals, table manners, and seating arrangements that suppose exclusionary practices which limits the notion of hospitality as an openness to others. Lastly, I refer to Sonja Alhäuser's *Flying Buffet* (2012), an artwork which refers to the togetherness

[36] Commensality is understood as the moment when we eat with others. Even if "conviviality through eating constitutes the basis of commensality", according to Tan Chee-Beng, this social act also entangles "rules of hierarchy and solidarity, boundary making as well as symbolic expression". Tan Chee-Beng, "Commensality and the Organization of Social Relations", in *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast*, eds. Susanne Kerner, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 13–14.
[37] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*.
[38] Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites: FoodSexIdentities*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2004), 33.

experienced at the moment when food is shared and eaten with others, in this case, however, inside a museum.

Chapter 4 and 5 pay attention to those who we constantly ingest—both literal and metaphorically speaking—and in this case eating is explored, as Derrida refers, as a "metonymy of introjection" that does not just refer to food intake.[39] In specific, chapter 4 explores eating the other as a continual giving of hospitality, inside and outside the body. I examine Miriam Simun's *The Lady Cheese Shop* (2011) and Jennifer Rubell's *Incubation* (2011) to discuss maternal (human and non-human) bodies as a medium of nourishment. Both artworks, I argue, suggest the ingestion of an(other) as an act of hospitality taking place by and through maternal corporeal fluids.[40] The chapter follows the ideas of Rosemary Betterton in *An Intimate Distance* (1996), where she discusses artistic practices that use food's symbolic elaboration as an approach to the female body, sexual and cultural taboos, and abjection. Betterton pays attention to artists that use visceral or corporeal imagery to explore the internal and external limits of the body, and use food as a means to disrupt corporeal borderlines. She focuses on the notions of disgust, pollution, or prohibition to discuss artistic practices using foodstuff that mimics the female sex, like Helen Chadwick's *Eat Me* (1991); or those that address the figure of the mother, its corporeality, and the refusal to *ingest* the feminine as a means to separate from the mother.[41] My analysis, however, re-addresses the figure of the mother and its corporeality using a different approach and emphasises eating as a biological and physical act that embraces hospitable relationships with, and to, others through one's own body.

Finally, chapter 5 focuses on the *digestive process*, bearing in mind that ingestion is followed by a long process of incorporation. First, I analyse the performance *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* (2014) created by experimental food artists

[39] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", 115; Lynn Turner, "Hors D'oeuvre: Some Footnotes to the Spurs of Dorothy Cross", *Parallax* 19, no. 66: bon appétit (February 2013): 5.
[40] Frances Gray, "Original Habitation: Pregnant Flesh as Absolute Hospitality", in *Coming to Life Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering*, eds. Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline R. Lundquist (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 82; Irina Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix: Philosophy, Biomedicine, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
[41] Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*, 130–60.

Bompas and Parr. The main purpose was to show to the public live images of the gut and the passage of food. However, I argue that this action more than showing the interior of the gut, it reinforced the objectification of a woman's body. The images presented an anatomical view of the body but the public feasted upon the (female) subject that was on display. Gazing and observing are discussed as metonymical acts of eating and ingesting the other and which, in this case, emphasised the phallocentric view of female bodies as objects to be consumed. Second, and following the passage of food through the digestive tract, in this chapter I discuss the host–guest relationships taking place inside the gut. Particularly, I discuss Anna Dumitriu's *Don't try this at home* (2015), an artistic practice that showcases the importance of gastrointestinal microbes during the digestive process, regardless of the fact that most of the times we are not aware of their presence. Digestion—or the pathway followed by edibles from the mouth to the end of the guts—is proposed as a hospitable act embedded in the food system and explored in light of the symbiotic relationship between humans and the microbial other. In other words, this last section emphasises the ethical imperative of *eating well* coming into play during the microbial and human encounter, when the body exercises an active performativity that does not imply the need to defend itself but to "negotiate, build alliances, and seek peace" with those we cannot see, talk, nor touch.[42] The body welcomes the other as part of biological and symbiotic relationships. In this case, hospitality is linked to an *ecological notion of the body*, which, as Aristarkhova and Hird suggest, sheds light to the continual interplay between hostility/hospitality, between cooperation/competition taking place inside the body.[43]

[42] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 72, 86.
[43] Ibid., 50, 70–72; Myra J. Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life: Evolution after Science Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Chapter 1

The shopping list: The beginning of a hospitable gesture

There is no culture or social bond without a principle of hospitality.

—Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Hospitality"

Is dinner a gesture of hospitality just because I welcome friends into my house and serve them food? Or does the gesture of hospitality actually begins before I have even gathered ingredients, all the way back to the production and farming? If I offer my guests a welcoming reception, should this imply that the gesture of hospitality begins before I start to serve them food, even before selecting ingredients but from their cultivation and harvest?

In this chapter I address these questions bearing in mind contemporary participatory artworks that present and/or represent the gathering of food, specifically those related to practices of urban gardening and cultivation, harvesting, foraging, and the killing of animals in terms of hunting. The artists and practices to which I refer allow me to discuss the hospitable gesture that is offered to others through food, where hospitality is viewed beyond the traditional logic of offering edibles to the guest, and bearing in mind the constant conflict that arises between the openness that is offered to determined subjects while others are excluded. I propose that in order to fully acknowledge the hospitable gesture while eating with others, it is necessary to consider food-gathering practices as hospitable relationships that require a careful examination of patriarchal and phallogocentric discourses that exclude others.

Food gathering is a vital step in the food system that does not just include the growing and harvesting of crops and animals that we consume on a daily basis. The various practices entail obstacles regarding food politics and food sovereignty of communities on a global and local scale, some of which signal problems in relationship to discrimination in food practices. Furthermore, food-gathering

practices are continuously evolving, but even now, industrially lead practices of mass production that respond to the global economy continue to underestimate women within the food system. The gender gap persists in relationship to agricultural labour, and leads me to think of this as an issue that goes back to the hunter–gatherer opposition and to the persistent gendered division of labour. Nowadays, women are still limited to specific tasks, sometimes placing them in vulnerable positions, including underpayment and non-contractual work. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, women's labour in agriculture represents an unequal relationship as "women usually allocate time to food preparation, child care and other household responsibilities in addition to agriculture".[1] In other words, women—especially from developing countries—are still bound to agricultural and domestic activities which benefit the food system, but whose labour is not fully recognised. Women are therefore underestimated in two different contexts within the food system: within the host–guest relationship where they are considered servants of the guest and the host, and in light of agricultural and domestic activities.

The notion of hospitality, as proposed by Derrida, serves to highlight and explore the complexities embedded in the food system. In this case, it helps to re-evaluate the gathering of food as part of an ethical and hospitable gesture to others. The latter requires bearing in mind the notion of *eating well* that Jacques Derrida insistently refers to in his interview with Jean Luc-Nancy, where Derrida delves into the anthropocentric, patriarchal, and phallogocentric schemata that permeate the question of subjectivity, arguing upon the need to think of that who are we eating and the implications of doing so.[2] Derrida contends that the ethical approach to others requires a more inclusive pursuit and reconfiguring of our relationship to

[1] The FAO (UN) reports that "women work in agriculture as farmers on their own account, as unpaid workers on family farms and as paid or unpaid labourers on other farms and agricultural enterprises. They are involved in both crop and livestock production at subsistence and commercial levels. They produce food and cash crops and manage mixed agricultural operations often involving crops, livestock and farming. All of these women are considered part of the agricultural labour force." Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food and Agriculture. Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2011), 7, 13, http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2050e/i2050e.pdf.

others, including non-humans such as animals as well as vegetal life. As Michael Marder would suggest, it is by "opening [...] up to the other, [that] ethical subjects prompt the plant in them to flourish".[3] Therefore, and following Derrida's notion of *eating well*, in this chapter I explore interspecies host–guest relationships that take place while gathering food, acknowledging them as the first respectful, caring and generous approach towards the other that is later incorporated and assimilated.

In this chapter I examine relationships of power, practices of exclusion and hierarchisation based on sexual difference between producers and consumers. I argue that the gathering of food, the subjects involved in this task, and also the location where they take place require distancing from traditional assumptions. Particularly, I focus my analysis on discourses that diminish women's labour or bound them to specific activities and places. I formulate that neither the land nor the garden must be posited as a women's sphere, but should be thought as within an ecological framework in which both human and non-human species cohabit. I contend that as long as the differences are acknowledged, foreseeing an ethical approach to each other, the food system, and specifically the gathering of edibles can be thought of as a gesture of hospitality.

In the first part of this chapter I examine the division of labour in food gathering based on sexual difference, focusing on the role assigned to women as servers and gatekeepers of food. I emphasise the patriarchal and phallocentric logic as responsible for the diminishing of certain food-gathering activities, usually assumed as "women's activities" in comparison to those "assigned" to men. I examine the dichotomy of the hunter-gatherer and which I examine in light of Derrida's and Judith Still's writings of hospitality to discuss how women have been allocated as subjects responsible for performing determined activities in spaces that require little distancing from the threshold such as gardening, cultivation, or foraging, thus allowing them to take care of the children and the house. For this reason, these

[2] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject".
[3] Michael Marder, *Plant-Thinking: A Philosophy of Vegetal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 69.

activities and spaces are termed “feminine” and/or “domestic”. The opposite happens to activities that require leaving the house, and especially those which are related to the killing of non-human species for meat eating, such as hunting.

The second section focus on the analysis of the artworks *Cold Weather Crops* (2009) by Leah Gauthier, *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)* by Alicia Ríos, *Halali* (2005) by Sonja Alhäuser, and *Landscapes* (2011) by Jennifer Rubell, and whose installations and performances shed light on food-gathering practices and on the gendered division of roles. I discuss their artworks paying attention to the particularities of the host–guest relationships that arise in each artwork, including that between the artist(s) and the public. In the first place I examine the work of Leah Gauthier, an active participant in the urban agricultural movement, dislocates a space which intends to display art into one which embraces the growing of edibles as a strategy to highlight the effort, labour, and collaboration that this process implies. Her artwork points to the necessity of reconsidering the production of agricultural crops on a small scale, as it can favour the community that grows them rather than inserting this practice in a logic of economic exchange where not all parties involved equally benefit. Secondly, I discuss the practices of Alicia Ríos and Sonja Alhäuser, both of which endorse the public to participate in gathering edibles. Both address agricultural practices, harvesting and gardening in particular, as the opportunity to share vegetable-shaped edibles that are picked and eaten by the public. I argue that the artworks of Gauthier, Alhäuser, and Ríos show the effort, time, and care invested in the gardening, harvesting and foraging of edibles.

Finally, in the third section of this chapter I examine the works of Alhäuser and Rubell in relationship to the gathering of meat when hunting, sexual difference and objectification of humans and non-humans. It is worth noting, however, that I do not focus on industrialised processes of meat farming or its consumption, even

though artists are increasingly showing more interest in portraying and addressing issues arising from these practices.[4]

My analysis is especially aware of relational aesthetics and the participatory dynamic of these artists' work. The relationship between the artist and the public is often addressed by their creators using the term guests, to refer to the public, thus the artists indirectly assume themselves—and the museum, gallery or any other institution that financially helps in the realisation of their performances and installations—to be hosts. Nevertheless, these roles are transposed by the time the public is enabled to participate, foreseeing a constant struggle to define who is actually performing as a host; it also raises the question of whether their artworks blur the category of a subject holding entire sovereignty over a place. In addition, bearing in mind that these artworks focus on different food-gathering practices, the roles between the gatherer/producer and consumer are also challenged, thus it no longer supposes one single gendered subject as being responsible for the production of food. The artists endorse the gathering of food as a communal event which takes place prior to the commensal act of eating together.

Moreover, the space where the gathering of edibles takes place has the same relevance as the action itself. The public is welcomed into spaces that are not ascribed to restrictive nominations, such as those of "feminine space", nor merely considered as "artistic spaces". Instead, these spaces are suggested as spheres of temporary public interaction that shed light on the relations of hospitality taking place on micro and macro levels. These artistic practices suggest agricultural spaces, as depicted and presented by the artists, which at the same time highlight a wider range of relationships and complexities within the global and local food system.

[4] Helena Pedersen, "Terror from the Stare: Visual Landscapes of Meat Production," *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* 14, no. Autumn 2010 (2010): 34–38; Jacob Metcalf, "Meet Shmeat: Food System Ethics, Biotechnology and Re-Worlding Technoscience," *Parallax* 19, no. 1 (February 2013): 74–87; Allison Carruth, "Culturing Food: Bioart and In Vitro Meat," *Parallax* 19, no. 1 (February 2013): 88–100; Lindsay Kelley, "The Bioart Kitchen: Art, Food, and Ethics" (Ph.D. History of Consciousness, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2009); Lindsay Kelley and Eva Hayward, "Carnal Light," *Parallax* 19, no. Special Issue: bon appétit (February 2013): 114–27.

1.1 Gathering food: Sexual difference in the food system.

Sexual difference in food-gathering narratives follows the patriarchal and phallogocentric logic in hospitality's discourse that assumes the head of a household is also the host, and always a male subject.[5] It supposes the man is the subject who grants hospitality, while the woman is often in charge of transforming the welcoming gesture into tangible objects such as food and other commodities for the benefit and pleasure of the guest. As Judith Still explains, within this logic, women perform as mediators between the host and the guest, serving as the "material ground of hospitality (cooking and serving meals, cleaning houses and so on), [but also those that intend to] provide entertainment [for the guests]".[6] Women are situated as servants or intermediaries between the host and the guest, but never considered as hosts or guests. They are merely a medium through which the host is able to welcome others. In other words, women are considered another property of the host. Nevertheless, as Still emphasises, women are the real providers of a "materialised hospitality," even if these actions are submitted to the law of the sovereign of the threshold. This is explained within the argument that women are contained inside the host's property and granted protection, and thus they must follow the host's orders.

If we consider that one of the ways in which the gesture of hospitality is presented includes preparing and serving food, then it is necessary to bear in mind that this activity is as time-consuming as collecting edibles. The labour from those performing these tasks—often women—is not always assumed as part of an ethical approach to others; rather, it is a duty or a responsibility. Gathering food remains a gendered practice, which refer back to the widely explored dichotomies between hunter–gatherer, man–woman, and nature–culture.

Sociologists and anthropologists have repeatedly discussed sexual difference in regards to the social roles arising from the *hunter–gatherer* dichotomy. Susan Allport

[5] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 149.
[6] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 122.

explains, for example, that the gathering of food divides two main tasks (hunting and gathering) which help to determine the social organisation of patriarchal societies: the hunter, who is assumed as a male subject, strong and capable to prey and bring food to the household, ensures the provision of food for those he is responsible for: his partner and offspring, primarily. The hunter role, explains Allport, involves the killing of animals, an activity that supposes a certain degree of danger that restricts and endorses, at the same time, the containment of females to tasks that appear to be less demanding such as foraging, harvesting, and most importantly, the nursing of children.[7] In this sense, women have been considered as gatherers or *gatekeepers* of food, while men have been assumed as providers of food, particularly meat.[8] Anthropologists repeatedly argue that the hunter–gatherer relationship is an equal interaction between both parties, enabling the exchange of meat for vegetables, endorsing reciprocity between both groups and benefits them with a more balanced diet.[9] Nevertheless, it is the role of gatekeepers of food which continues to uphold the categorisation of labour through sexual difference.

In their book *Food and Gender: identity and power*, Counihan and Kaplan argue that gender division and inequalities arise from the responsibility assigned to women to cook food. They explain that even if the patriarchal scheme considers food management essential and necessary for the survival of the family or the community, the tasks assigned to women are deemed non–intellectual activities.[10] Leaving the threshold to search for food is ranked higher thus it locates men in the public sphere; meanwhile, women are situated in the private and domestic sphere, taking over activities of gathering, harvesting and cooking food. The categorisation of food gathering and the labour implied highlights sexual difference, and serves to control women, restraining them to specific tasks and places to further justify

[7] Susan Allport, *The Primal Feast: Food, Sex, Foraging, and Love*, 1st. edition (United Kingdom: Harmony, 2000), 158.
[8] Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey, "Women as Gatekeepers of Food Consumption: A Sociological Critique", in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, eds. Carole Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 135.
[9] Richard B. Lee and Richard Daly, "Foragers and Others", n.d., www.udel.edu/anthro/.../hunter.pdf.
[10] Carole Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan, eds., *Food and Gender: Identity and Power* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998).

patriarchy's superiority.[11] However, as sociologists Alex McIntosh and Mary Zey suggest, the role of women as gatekeepers of food is not entirely derogatory, as it empowers women to distribute food and to be able to decide what to cook, even if the patriarch holds the sovereignty of the threshold:

> Food gets to the table through [...] "channels" such as the grocery store, the garden, and the refrigerator. The selection of channels and the foods that travel through them is under control of the gatekeeper [...] Women control "all of the channels, except gardening, and even there the husband(s) seldom control this channel alone".[12]

The fact that women control the gathering of food, however, does not position them equally to men; the sovereignty of a place is therefore a constant issue, as the quote above suggests. Women in agricultural labour are undermined because their labour is generally assumed to be as something "natural" and directly related to their gender, especially because they bear the responsibility for nourishing others.[13] Thus in this sense, the agricultural activities performed by women are seen as feminine and within domestic spheres.[14] Moreover, as Deborah Barndt suggests, the "feminisation of labour" supposes the exploitation and undermining of women food workers in the food system, reinforcing the inequality between consumers and producers, between the "North and South as well as between men and women (with class and race completing the picture); at the same time, it perpetuates human domination of the environment".[15] To eat well, as Derrida insists, requires us to reconsider and re-evaluate the activities and labour involved in the gathering of food. It requires reconsideration of the patriarchal scheme in the oppositional hunter–gatherer relationship which bounded women to "supposedly" less

[11] Ernest S. Burch and Linda J. Ellana, eds., *Key Issues in Hunter-Gatherer Research* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994).
[12] McIntosh and Zey, "Women as Gatekeepers of Food Consumption: A Sociological Critique", 135.
[13] Patricia Allen and Carolyn Sachs, "Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food", *International Journal of Sociology of Food and Agriculture* 15, no. 1 (April 2007): 1.
[14] Stacy Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground. Recasting Nature as Feminist Space* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000); Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature to Culture?," in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974), 68–87; Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

demanding and non-intellectual activities: subjects working in the current food system (migrants from developing countries, but mainly women) are still vulnerable to violence from the early stages of food production through to its consumption.

Although food gathering, especially agricultural activities, might appear distanced from urban and highly populated places, the voracity of the "increasingly globalised food system" has been built on "historical and cultural practices of racism, classism", and sexual difference that relegate—and feed upon—those less favoured: women, the poor, the indigenous peoples, i.e., those *others* that become invisible while we eat them.[16] Hospitality, in this sense, suggests considering these practices as an ethical approach to others, in which the labour of each of those involved is equally appreciated and valued, similar to the products that are grown, rather than endorsing relations of exchange based on domination and power.

[15] Deborah Barndt, *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food & Globalization*, Women's Issues Publishing Program (Second Story Press, 1999), 15.
[16] Barndt, *Women Working the NAFTA Food Chain: Women, Food & Globalization*; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, "The State of Food and Agriculture. Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development", 22.

1.2 Cultivation, gardening and foraging.

The sharecropper

Leah Gauthier (b. 1963, Chicago, IL) creates relational artworks that aim to contribute to the uprising conscience of environmental issues. In particular, her performances and installations focus on problematics within the American food system, specifically the increase of food production and consumption on an industrial scale. She engages the public in *do-and-learn* processes to increase the environmental awareness of the participants through the sowing, growing and harvesting of food.[17] For example, her artworks highlight that Americans "don't cook, [...] don't grow [their] own food, [...] don't make our own clothes, [...] don't build our own houses", but rather depend on industrial food practices for their survival.[18] Particularly, Gauthier's practice focuses, mostly, on growing, eating and cooking food as a means to explore the history of food and agriculture, including the "revival and protection of endangered food plants".[19]

In 2009 Gauthier presented the installation *Cold Weather Crops* in Allegany College, Meadville, Pennsylvania as part of the exhibition "Engineering Eden". Like other Gauthier artworks, *Cold Weather Crops* explores food-growing and eating as a means to witness the "transient nature of life".[20] My analysis, however, intends to re-contextualise her practice by discussing gathering, cultivation, and gardening in relation to hospitality. I argue that the notion of hospitality and of eating well not only serve for a better understanding of the work of the artist, but also address from a different perspective environmental concerns regarding food production on a global and local scale.

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[17] Eyebeam Art and Technology Center, Interview with artist Leah Gauthier, Feedback Exhibition, Video, June 3, 2008, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3hlgipljX1o&feature=related.
[18] Megan Meyer, "Bringing the Garden into the Gallery", *Arts and Music – Indiana Public Media*, October 13, 2010, http://indianapublicmedia.org/arts/tending-a-difficult-hope/; Indiana University, "SoFA Gallery's 'Tending a Difficult Hope' Includes Free Hands-on Workshops on Sustainable Food", University Press, *News Release*, (October 5, 2010).
[19] Allegheny College, "Art Galleries to Present Year of Social Change Exhibit", *Allegheny College News and Events*, October 30, 2009, http://sites.allegheny.edu/news/2009/10/30/art-galleries-to-present-year-of-social-change-exhibit/.

It is worth noting that Gauthier's projects have a similar approach to artworks in the 1960s–70s that proposed "back-to-the-earth" movements which emphasised food cultivation, highlights sustainable agricultural practices in urban and rural spaces as strategies to promote social change.[21] For example, Leslie Labowitz's *Sproutime* series (1980, 1981), where she proposed growing sprouts as an "indoor hydroponic project [as a form of] performance art", and in response to women's ambivalent relation to food.[22] Labowitz considered that working alongside sprouts highlighted these species as live forms that

> coexist within both the art network and the "real world" in a way that links aesthetics (the beauty of the sprouts and the greenhouse) and politics (the larger system of food production and distribution).[23]

Labowitz's sprouting installation required "a lot of quiet attention, color awareness, playing with seeds, and mixing seeds, [in order to create] functional sculptural spaces".[24] *Cold Weather Crops*, like *Sproutime*, makes sense of the garden, or greenhouse, as spaces in which caring and invigilating the growing of others—seeds and plants—is the main goal. In the same manner, Gauthier refers to her practice as a

> personal journey exploring agricultural plant matter, and wild edibles as sculptural material, community building through growing and cooking food, and ways of re–incorporating agrarian sensibilities and simplicity into modern life.[25]

However, in Gauthier's *Cold Weather Crops*, the artist draws the public's attention to the sprouting rather than engaging in conversations with visitors, as Labowitz did.

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[20] Leah Gauthier, "Leah Gauthier", *Leah Gauthier*, 2016, http://www.leahgauthier.com/about/.
[21] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses", 15; Leah Gauthier, "Leah Gauthier", *Leah Gauthier*, 2016, http://www.leahgauthier.com/about/.
[22] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses", 15.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ame Gilbert and Yael Raviv, "Space to Grow: Women, Art, and the Urban Agriculture Movement", *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 21, no. 3 (2011): 395.

Art historians and food studies scholars exploring the relationship with art and nature have referred to both artworks, emphasising the positive input of practices related to the urban agriculture movement. Ame Gilbert and Yael Raviv argue, for example, that artists like Gauthier have persistently addressed to the *urban agriculture* and the *do-it-yourself* movements. They explain that these movements, led mostly by women, include bee-keepers, community gardeners and artists that create decentralised environments as a means to address the growing of food, sowing of seeds, and gardening as practices that engage the local community in self-reflective practices that reinforce their sense of community and raise their awareness of environmental affairs. They further suggest that artistic practices with an agricultural approach shed light on multiple issues about food consumption including: "food justice, social activism, the development of sustainable technologies and ecologies, and opportunities for alternative economies".[26] Artists participate, invent, and critique cultivation and agricultural practices as a strategy to modify urban spaces, but at the same time serve to counteract the gender inequality that is rehearsed in agricultural spaces.

Furthermore, artworks like *Cold Weather Crops* or *Sproutime* show, according to art Historian Marga Bijvoet, "a different attitude toward the excessive consumerism that is so self-evident in Western society" as they force the public to reconsider how our eating habits have "a profound effect on the means of production and even on what is produced", and thus they endorse thinking about the growing of food and vegetables in an "ecologically sustainable manner".[27] With this in mind, Gauthier assumes a role as an "artist/activist" whose artworks grow and share food without expecting any kind of economic payment.[28] Furthermore her practice reflects on the cultivation and preservation of endangered and native plants, by sharing her research, knowledge, and the harvested products as a form of conservancy gardening. Gauthier aims to communicate the relevance of sustainable

[26] Ibid., 385–86.
[27] Marga Bijvoet, *The Greening of Art: Shifting Positions Between Art and Nature Since 1965* (Germany: Books on Demand, 2016), 234.
[28] Gilbert and Raviv, "Space to Grow", 385.

practices in growing and gathering food, and the need to research and safeguard native and endangered vegetable species by reintroducing them to the food system.[29]

Gauthier's *Cold Weather Crops* grew edibles inside a gallery, a space that is not assumed as a "feminine space", positioning the notion of the garden and urban agricultural practices far from the assumption of being domestic or industrially led practices. *Cold Weather Crops* consisted of a series of "net-pots" suspended in rows from the ceiling. Each of them contained soil and red cabbage seeds that germinated during the exhibition.[30] As these "pots" were placed indoors, Gauthier provided artificial light by hanging light bulbs above the pots to ensure the process of photosynthesis took place, thus allowing the seeds to sprout and grow.



2. Leah Gauthier, *Cold Weather Crops*, 2009
Live heirloom plants and mixed media variable

[29] Gauthier's ongoing project, *Marshall Strawberry* (2009), addresses the latter. Due to the incompatibility and frailty of this strawberry, mass production is not possible, so farmers were growing it less and less, to the point that the last remaining plants existed as a single clone at a Germ Repository in Oregon, U.S. Gauthier requested specimens to grow them and then return them to the native east coast. Along this project she has created a community of growers, farmer and backyard gardeners who have raised Marshall strawberries thus ensuring this engendered specie to become available for everyone, once again. Leah Gauthier, "Marshall Strawberry", *Marshall Strawberry*, 2016, http://marshallstrawberry.com/.

[30] Red cabbage seeds belongs to the mustard family (Brassicaceae) which also includes cauliflower, broccoli and Brussels sprouts, and one of their characteristics is that almost all the parts of these plants are edible, including the roots, leaves, flowers, buds and seeds. Liz, "Top 5: Brassicas," *Suburban Tomato*, June 18, 2012, http://suburbantomato.com/2012/06/top-5-brassicas/.

While this artwork was performed, the public was able to see the progressive living process of sprouting seeds which grew in a different and unfamiliar place, compared to traditional agricultural landscapes. At the same time, it resembled so-called “vertical farming”, an environmentally friendly practice that intends to grow food crops in reduced spaces or warehouses. The process involves stacking racks of pots vertically and feeding them using water-conserving and soil-free methods, such as hydroponic systems. These practices, similar to Gauthier, use artificial light (LEDs) that mimics the sunlight. According to ecologist Dickson Despommier, the aim of vertical farming is to grow food in local urban spaces and reduce transportation-based carbon emissions.[31]



3. Leah Gauthier, *Cold Weather Crops.* 2009. (Detail)

The floating garden constructed inside the Allegany College allowed the public to witness the germination process in which seeds turned into red cabbage sprouts. Rather than endorsing passive interaction with her artwork, Gauthier invited visitors to get involved by harvesting the sprouts, which were then mixed with tomatoes and bean and alfalfa sprouts to prepare a salad that was shared and eaten among

[31] Paul Marks, “Vertical Farms Sprouting All over the World,” *New Scientist*, January 15, 2014, https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg22129524-100-vertical-farms-sprouting-all-over-the-world/.

members of the public, thus transforming them from witnesses into active participants, both in agricultural practices and in the act of eating. Gauthier grew plants during *Cold Weather Crops* with the intention to offer them to the public. More than just sharing edibles, she involved the participants in the experience of harvesting, sharing her knowledge and expertise in sowing seeds and gardening. These activities might have been unfamiliar to some members of the public. Furthermore, Gauthier's intention was to create awareness about the gathering of edibles, especially because the industrialisation and mass production have made us think of the supermarket and grocery store as the place where our food comes from, thus obliterating farming and gathering edibles as part of the food chain. The easy access to produce limits consumers to paying more attention to the price and availability of products rather than the quality, origin, and ethics behind food production.

It is no coincidence that artists show more interest in addressing ethical and political views related to environmental issues within the food system, in this case, in relationship to planting, gardening and harvesting. Gauthier repeatedly refers to the *urban agricultural* movement and to *do-it-yourself* agricultural practices, which she also performs in her installations; these practices are also discussed by ecofeminist scholars and environmental activists who refer to them as a counter-statement to patriarchal and phallogocentric discourses.[32] The growing of plants, vegetables, and fruits in domestic and urban spaces becomes more than a "green" or environmentally friendly discourse for a healthier way of eating. They propose a strategy to reconsider our ethical approach to others, acknowledging the labour of those who grow our food, the life cycle and needs of the species that are grown (and later eaten), and the methods involved in all of these activities.

Gauthier's *Cold Weather Crops* is an artistic practice that focuses on hospitality as ethics, as it emphasises the need to "eat well"—following Derrida—and pays attention to welcoming those who are not considered guests in traditional terms.

[32] Gilbert and Raviv, "Space to Grow".

Gauthier transformed part of the gallery into a temporary garden where growing edibles is considered a practice that does not subject the land to exclusive exploitation and domestication of species, nor is it expected to produce food for human consumption.

The legacy of the hunter-gatherer relationship where women were restricted to just gathering food, enclosing them in domestic spaces using their physicality as an excuse, requires consideration of the oppositional binary between nature–culture as the underlying issue that emphasises both sexual difference and exploitation of the environment. In response to this, ecofeminists have noted that phallogocentric discourses justify this position by arguing women are closer to nature, hence justifying nature as the reason that biologically predetermines sexual difference.[33]

Val Plumwood and Stacy Alaimo discuss the multiple exclusions arising from the dualisms of women–nature and men–culture, one of which has served as the basis for women's devaluation and oppression. In *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, Plumwood follows feminist theorists like Luce Irigaray and Iris Marion Young's critique of liberal feminist discourses that insist on women's equality with men, but Plumwood emphasises that their arguments fail to provide an adequate critique of masculinity in the dominant Western culture, thus they barely challenge the "dominant model of the *human* and of human culture as oppositional to nature".[34] Plumwood argues that assuming the category of the human over and not related to nature not only produces arguments assuming gender supremacy, but also of class, race and species supremacy, thus endorsing a model that is doubly phallocentric. Plumwood suggests that within phallocentric discourses, nature is considered and linked to the "feminine", posited as a space of recreation. This results in discourses that relate women to nature, and assume a feminised image of planet Earth, of the

[33] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*; Greta Gaard, "New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism", *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 17, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 643–65; Heidi E. Grasswick, "From Feminist Thinking to Ecological Thinking: Determining the Bounds of Community", *Hypatia* 23, no. 1 (February 2008): 150–60; Chaone Mallory, "Acts of Objectification and the Repudiation of Dominance: Leopold, Ecofeminism, and the Ecological Narrative", *Ethics and the Environment* 6, no. 2 (2001): 59–89.

land—even the homeland—as mothers who are "passive [...] and [...] unreflective [in their] experiencing of life".[35] When nature is referred to as a motherly figure, as "mother nature" or "mother earth", this implies that the woman, and specifically the mother, is responsible for providing food.

Furthermore, the image of earth as a female bounded to the maternal, according to Stacy Alaimo, "underwrites a biology-as-destiny script for women".[36] Gardens and the activities related to this space, such as weeding, are not the exception. These spaces have been historically related to the feminine arena in various cultures, and considered less important in relationship to activities linked to masculinity, as I previously explained.

Anthropologist Donald K. Pollock examines gender roles in gardening and hunting among the indigenous Culina group in the Amazon. He notes that even if Culina men and women own a garden jointly, once the space is planted, it becomes domain of the woman as she assumes the responsibility for weeding and collecting the garden produce.[37] Women exercise some kind of sovereignty over the garden since they decide what, where, and how to plant within this space, according to Pollock, but at the same time, because women decide how the collected produce is cooked. The latter element reinforces the statements of other anthropologists, such as Counihan and Kaplan, who suggest that the gathering of edibles is a task that empowers women. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the notion of sovereignty that Pollock suggests is limited to the garden and not inclusive of the threshold. Women might have the power to control the flow of edibles, but the mastery of the house—in the case of the Culina—still resides with the man who is the head of the family. Although Pollock suggests gardens are spaces in which women act with unfettered freedom and with more independence as they assume these spaces as their own, this logic still reinforces the enclosure of women to determined places,

[34] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 28.
[35] Ibid., 20.
[36] Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, 93.
[37] Donald K. Pollock, "Food and Sexual Identity among the Culina", in *Food and Gender: Identity and Power*, vol. 1, Food in History and Culture (Taylor and Francis e-Library, 2005), 12–29.

categorised as domestic and feminine, positioning them as inferior according to patriarchal and phallocentric logic. Plumwood in particular proposes ecological feminism as an integrative project that rejects binaries that have shaped Western culture and discourses that justify the domestication and exploitation of natural resources, and at the same time underestimates the female as an object that can be used and discarded when it is no longer useful, such as women working in agriculture.

Overcoming the human–nature opposition requires rejecting the assumption of nature as inferior in relationship to culture; this categorisation therefore also serves for the exclusion of women and of non-human species. It requires consideration of "non–instrumentalizing relationships with nature, where both connection and otherness are the basis of interaction".[38] In other words, agricultural spaces need to be considered part of a hospitable gesture to—and from—others, as a site for cohabitation and collaboration between species. Plumwood and Alaimo argue that urban and *do-it-yourself* agricultural practices challenge phallogocentric logic, in which nature—or the land—is posited as inferior domesticated space, but are instead reluctant to mastery. Moreover, these small-scale practices aim to grow food for domestic and local trade and consumption, thus refusing to enter economic exchange and exclusion of those who intervene in the processes. It is worth mentioning that in the case of over-supply, these items are sold in the local area.

Cold Weather Crops avoids positioning the garden as women's space, and instead sees it as space for others and in which hospitality presents a lived experience. Gauthier's installation presents as an ephemeral action that allows the necessary time for the seeds to sprout and then be eaten. Thus to some extent, this action presented the produce as a some sort of "gift given by the 'host' to the 'guest', and then shared between them".[39] Gauthier invested time and effort in the sowing,

[38] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 174.
[39] Kevin D. O'Gorman, "Jacques Derrida's Philosophy of Hospitality", *Hospitality Review* 8, no. 4 (2006): 56.

watering, and weeding of the crops, especially since this floating garden was placed inside a gallery. By doing so, Gauthier challenged the underestimated role of women in these agricultural activities.

As ecofeminist Candice Bradley explains, a hierarchy exists in the agriculture domain that supposes certain activities are more relevant than others. The highly recognised ones are, of course, performed by men. Take for example weeding, the action of removing plants that are "out of place", considered opportunistic and harmful to some crops.[40] Without the labour and constant vigilance of the subjects in charge of this task, the crops could be at risk. As previously mentioned, women are often in charge of weeding; nevertheless, their labour is underestimated. Bradley argues that "the undervaluation of weeding is like the undervaluation of housework".[41] When Gauthier attends to the weeding, she highlights the necessity of all these activities in agriculture, regardless of who performs them. The intention is to care for that growing other, giving attention to the action rather than to who is performing it. This is evident when she sets aside her role and status of artist, thus allowing others to participate and pointing out the need for a community.

Instead of playing the role of a woman as gatherer, Gauthier constructs a fiction where she "plays nature", a term which, according to Alaimo, suggests a "parodic, subversive and postmodern way to destabilize, confront or transfigure the associations between 'woman' and 'nature'".[42] Thus, in this sense, Gauthier does take a dominant role, nor claim sovereignty over the floating garden; she does not act as the "master of the house" who, as Derrida notes, is responsible for deciding who can be offered shelter or allowed over the threshold.[43] On the contrary, Gauthier challenges the traditional conception of a woman who is supposed to gather and care for the crops. The floating garden is consequently posited as an

[40] Candice Bradley, "Keeping the Soil in Good Heart. Women Weeders, the Environment, and Ecofeminism", in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen Warren (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 292–93.
[41] Ibid., 297.
[42] Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, 133.
[43] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 5; Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 67.

open space in which neither sexual difference nor gender determines the performance of determined tasks. What Gauthier does is open up the landscape and panorama of agriculture, emphasising the "invisible" tasks taking place during the process of cultivation, and highlighting the labour and time involved. The blooming of seeds takes place in a determined period of time if the conditions are right.



4. Leah Gauthier, *Cold Weather Crops*. 2009. (Detail)

Event though Gauthier presents relational artworks that often take place in public open spaces, *Cold Weather Crops* located the agricultural domain inside a closed space designed for educational purposes: the Allegany College. The collective exhibition "Engineering Eden" where Gauthier's installation aimed to inspire the campus and college's community to reflect upon a more equitable and just habitat. To achieve this, the artist transformed a rather deserted space into a hospitable place with the intention to "fruitfully" convey a more ethical approach to the others, reflecting upon urban agricultural practices. Most importantly, she created a space that welcomed the public to an interactive, social and environmentally aware agricultural installation. In other words, the college was more than a safe and closed space where Gauthier provided care to allow the plants to bloom.

The greenhouse was a space of hospitality for others, a space to witness the gradual transformation of seeds into plants. Thus, in this sense, Gauthier's notion of hospitality was to share her knowledge of urban agriculture to show the public a reflection of the food system, and the labour and care involved in locally growing and harvesting plants. This installation embraces hospitality as "a particular form of the gift that involve[d] temporary sharing of space, [but] also time, bodies, food and other consumables".[44] Gauthier created an ephemeral hospitable space and a temporal relation with the visitors and living plants by welcoming everyone into this floating garden. The garden is not a discursive or an artistic practice that endorses the oppression of those who care for others—in this case women in agricultural tasks—nor it is posited as a feminine domain in which women are degraded. Instead, it becomes a cultural critique of phallogocentric logic that supposes the feminine delimits boundaries and tasks. This garden is a communitarian and hospitable place that provides shelter and welcomes the crops and the public, the human and non-human as cohabitants, developing a collaborative relationship based on the responsibility for others. In addition, when the artist shared the sprouts, she did not do it as a means to provide or to mimic food gathering as it takes place in supermarkets, for example, where the collected produce is already prepared, selected, and packaged.

Gauthier's *Cold Weather Crops* reflects the aim of ecofeminist artists of the new millennium who, instead of remembering the past and advocating for a close relation to "mother earth", execute direct hands-on interventions and practices that target their primary concern: to promote an ecological conscience to regenerate the earth, or "to heal a planet whose wholeness and integrity have been destroyed in the patriarchal present".[45] But most importantly, Gauthier reinforces the need to acknowledge how the food that one eats arrives on the table and into our mouths, including its origin, the recognition of the species, the process of their growth—

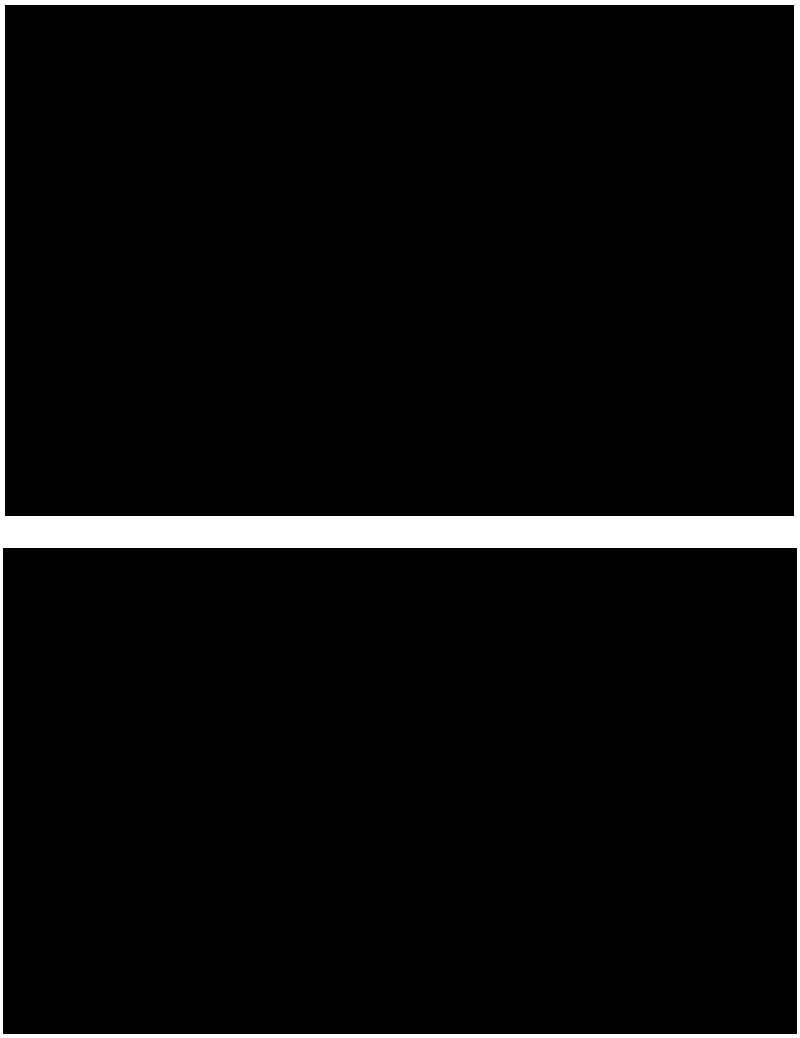
[44] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 14.
[45] Gloria Feman Orenstein, "The Greening of Gaia: Ecofeminist Artists Revisit the Garden", *Ethics & the Environment* 8, no. 1 (2003): 104.

sprouting, seasonality, etc.—and risks they face in terms of industrialised practices within a global food system.

Gauthier's installation needs to be read not only as a relational artistic practice that shares food with the public, but also as an ethical approach, a gesture of hospitality, through which the artist shows the sprouting of red cabbage sprouts as the result of the time and effort of those who are tasked with caring and setting the right conditions for vegetable "others" to grow. Even though Gauthier did not perform as an agricultural worker, she highlighted their role by displaying the effort and resources invested during the month when the exhibition was open to the public. Gauthier not only cultivated seeds to be harvested and eaten, but she also endorsed a recollection of knowledge and of critical reflection upon the slow and transient cultivation that she unveiled to the public.

Cold Weather Crops is an intermedia practice that suggests thinking of hospitality not only as the mere offering and eating of edibles with others. Gauthier welcomes the audience to an enclosed space, as her floating garden shows, in order to open up the discussion towards a more ethical approach to eating, to think of the need to *eat well*, as Derrida endorses,[46] or to put into practice ethics that look for a more sustainable way for growing and consuming food, one in which subjects and non-human species are taken into account. This includes the protection of plant and animal species, but also of safeguarding safe and equal conditions of work for those subjects involved in the growing, harvesting, and processing of food.

[46] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject".



5, 6. Leah Gauthier, *Cold Weather Crops*. 2009. (Detail)

Harvesting an edible garden

Artist Alicia Ríos proposes a different artistic and aesthetic approach to harvesting and gardening. In this section I focus on *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)*, a performance that focused on gardening and consisted entering a fictional greenhouse. This performance was presented for the first time in Cardiff, UK, during the conference "Performance, food and cookery"[47], where Ríos, who dressed up in a gardening attire that included an apron, gloves, and tools welcomed the public and invited them to harvest their own lunch.

Originally from Madrid, Spain (b. 1943), Ríos creates food-based performances—otherwise referred to as *provocative food events*—in which she invites the public to actively participate in the artwork by eating it.[48] Her background as a philosopher and lecturer in the history of psychology has led her to further explore and research the pleasure of the senses through food, as well as following the work of artists of the *Eat Art* movement such as Daniel Spoerri.[49]

In 1993, Ríos attended the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery where she performed *Organoleptic Deconstruction in Three Movements*, an artwork that explored the tactile, audible and visual characteristics of ingredients such as strawberries, marshmallows, meringue and cream that were "chewed" with the hands. In the words of art historian Barbara Kirshenblatt–Gimblett, Ríos

[47] This installation has been presented on various occasions, but in each case the ingredients used have varied in accordance with the public and the geographical location. The concept has, however, remained the same through the years. Alicia Ríos, "A Temperate Menu (An Edible Garden), 1994, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2007", accessed September 15, 2012, http://www.alicia-rios.com/en/food/edible-representations/temperatemenu.html.

[48] Fernando Estévez González, "El Arte de Comer Comiendo Arte", *La Provincia, Diario de Las Palmas*, December 23, 2005; Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior: An Interview", *TDR* 41, no. 2 (1997): 90–110; Darío Corbeira, "Comer o no comer: comer, crear, pensar, disfrutar", in *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX.*, ed. Darío Corbeira (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002), 15–22.

[49] Ríos started to be recognized by her edible performances and was framed under the category of *eat artist*. Ángeles Cosano, "Alicia Ríos: De Menú, Liliput Urbanita," *Sibaritas*, March 2008.

> turned her fingers and the rest of her body into a mouth, so that against the well-mannered behaviour of chewing food with the mouth closed, she publicly showed the intimate act of chewing.[50]

It is worth emphasising that in this case, Ríos sought to challenge the notion of taste as a sense merely associated with the mouth; according to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, her performance recalled the "preludial tactile pleasure" that Futurists previously explored in their artworks.[51]

Ríos's actions make use of multisensory experiences triggered by food's *organoleptic*[52] properties—reason why she considers herself as a "a tailor of the body."[53] These relational artistic performances and installations, pay attention to food as a multi-semiotic medium that highlights social and political issues, apart from being a basic need.[54] Furthermore, Ríos's performances are collaborative practices that involve teamwork and the public to ensure "everyone is a protagonist".[55] This means her status as artist changes to that of lead performer in the action.[56]

Ríos's performances give special interest to the use of ingredients that are typical of each country or city where she performs, allowing the public to feel familiar and close to the artwork, and facilitating their interest and participation. *Urbanophagy Ceremonies*, presented in Madrid, Melbourne and London, were presented as public performances or "interactive community theatre" that highlighted the "identities,

[50] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior", 3.
[51] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses", 4, 7.
[52] The term refers to being, affecting, or relating to qualities (such as taste, color, odor, and feel) of a substance (such as a food or drug) that stimulate the senses. David A. Bender, "Organoleptic", *A Dictionary of Food and Nutrition* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2005), http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1O39-organoleptic.html.
[53] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior", 91.
[54] Cosano, "Alicia Ríos", 22.
[55] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior", 91.
[56] The artist uses the name Ali&Cia to emphasise the creations that include the active participation of her artistic working group, in collaboration with architect Barbara Ortiz. Alicia Ríos, "Ali&Cia Food Artists," *Alicia Ríos*, accessed June 20, 2016, http://www.alicia-rios.com/en/food/food.html.

histories and experiences [of those cities]".[57] These sorts of actions encourage the public to reflect on edibles in relation to their personal and cultural identities through sensory narratives, one of which relates to environmental concerns, particularly in relationship to gardening.

Contrary to Gauthier's *Cold Weather Crops*, where the artist planted red cabbage seeds to create a living floating garden, Ríos's does not engage in a literal practice of cultivation, nor growing of living vegetable species in *A Temperate Menu*. Instead, her practice consists of a fictional garden, *trompe–l'œils*, that resembles plants, some of which are not edible in real life but is made possible in the performance. These "plants" are made using processed, cooked, and raw edibles that the artist reconfigures and reassembles so they bear close resemblance to actual food.[58]



7. Alicia Ríos, *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)*, 2007

The garden, explains Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, are "prime examples of multi-sensory environments and an art form in their own right, whether formally designed

[57] Alicia Ríos and Simon Cohen, "Cooking and Eating London: An Ali&Cia Urbanophagy Ceremony Commisioned by L.I.F.T.", *Petit Propos Culinaires*, *Prospect Books*, no. 84 (December 2007): 16; Cosano, "Alicia Ríos," 22.
[58] Alicia Ríos, "Performance, Food & Cookery: Alicia Rios 'A Temperate Menu'", *Performance Research* 4, no. 1 (1999): 107.

by professional landscape architects or vernacular expressions of local knowledge".[59] In *A Temperate Menu*, the garden embraces this idea along with the objective to create sensory experiences through food in order to create another aesthetic experience. Placed inside a specifically constructed greenhouse, benches and worktables are aligned into six different sections. On top of each of each table, the artist placed pots, planters, and flower beds, as well as other containers similar to those found in greenhouses, where she planted the food-based vegetable *trompe-l'œils*. The greenhouse was set up to welcome the public, who shortly after entering the space received miniature gardening tools that to some extent replaced the cutlery. The public suddenly realised that this performance was not only about eating and experiencing food, but that they become responsible for harvesting their own food, selecting the ingredients and "plants" they wanted to eat.

As the public walked around the tables, gazing upon each section, they discovered that the foods were classified in two different ways: the first one related to the botanical taxonomic system that specified the species, families and subfamilies for each plant; the second, in contrast, took a more familiar approach to a menu, signalling to the public the courses of the meal and directing them to follow a determined eating etiquette.

Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, who attended the first performance in 1994, explains that the six sections consisted of:

1. Facilities: napkins, plates, glasses, oil cruets, cutlery basket.
2. Aperitivos: *cactaceae* (gherkins, pickled onions, olives, sausages skewered on toothpicks) and *vegetables*.
3. Entrances: tuberaceae (potatoes, carrots) buried in earth (barley and rice) and fungii (mushrooms) in compost (coffee dregs)
4. Main dishes: graminae, aquatics (celery in water), bonsais (broccoli), and aromatic herbs.
5. Sweets: seed beds, fragarias, rocaille (a rock garden made of black lava rock, pebble candy, cereal, marzipan fruits and vegetables, and jelly insects)

[59] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Playing to the Senses", 13.

6. Ornamentals: dried flowers (snack food, Japanese rice crackers wired to stalks.)[60]

However, as the artist stated, the performance and the elements presented were not proposed as a thematic dinner, nor did they address vegetarianism; instead, the performance was thought of as a "game in which the product looks like the real thing without actually being it."[61] *Cactaceae*, for example, were created using triangular tortilla chips that imitated the fleshy leaves of succulents such as agave; cooked mushrooms were clustered using toothpicks resembling succulents characterised by their fleshy lobes; and pineapples were inserted with toothpicks that appeared as thorns from which pickled onions and olives "bloomed" as cactus flowers. The idea was to dislocate these depictions from "the least natural and the furthest removed from their natural origins".[62]



8. Alicia Ríos, *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)*, 2007

Ríos uses the taxonomical classification of species such as *cactaceae*, *tuberaceae*, *graminae* and *fragarias*, along with the French term *rocaille* (rubble or pebbles), to simulate the greenhouse as a space that follows botanical and scientific aims for preserving and caring for vegetable species, a space which bears, at the same time, the aura of a botanical laboratory for the interbreeding of species. This is not

[60] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior," 91.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.

surprising considering that Ríos started her artistic endeavour following her interest in the psychology of food, the sensory experiences, and the science involved during cooking processes. Ríos's practice, according to Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, blurs boundaries between art, science and the kitchen.[63]

Ríos's performance alludes to the greenhouse and the garden as familiar spaces. They appear as "hybrid spaces" in the sense that "although [they are] seen as liberatory, [they are still] bounded to the domestic, to the patriarchal dominion", as I referred to in previous sections.[64] Even if the garden is considered by some scholars as an empowering space for women, it is still subjected to the sovereignty of the subject who has control of the threshold. Ríos challenges this logic by dislocating the edible garden from nature and embedding it with artificiality in two different ways.

First, Ríos choses to garden and harvest food inside a greenhouse, a space where the temperature, humidity and atmosphere are regulated to enable species to grow. The "natural" growth of vegetables and plants is, therefore, subsumed to an anthropocentric logic that endorses the creation of artificial environments dominated by those who choose which species to grow. The greenhouse defies seasonality, patterns of growth and availability. The soil is artificially adapted: the texture is changed, macronutrients like nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus can be added, and organic matter is used to enable a suitable environment and source of nourishment for the plants. However, even though the greenhouse intends to preserve species, encouraging their growth inside a safe and enclosed space, the contents inside the greenhouse cannot be considered natural; as Plumwood suggests, "there can be no human influence at all on the genuinely natural".[65] The greenhouse confines nature to an enclosed space where the spreading, rooting, blooming and reproduction of plant species is controlled and manipulated, sometimes by using genetic engineering technologies. This reflects the food

[63] Ibid., 92.
[64] Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, 48.
[65] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 215.

industry practices that control the growth and harvesting of edibles in order to sustain a constant supply.

Secondly, instead of gardening and harvesting real plants, Ríos created them by using processed foods, and giving place to a metaphoric reading of the garden and greenhouse, spaces where none of the produce is provided by *mother nature* or *mother earth*. This is significant bearing in mind that the first performance was in 1994, the same period when ecofeminist artists called upon the "symbol of The Great Mother, The Goddess, or Gaia in order to emphasize the interconnectedness of three levels of creation, all imaged as female outside of patriarchal civilization".[66] The ludic gardening game created by Ríos supposes the contrary: it is not *mother nature* who gives the participants the produce but the artist who creates a space (the greenhouse) to welcome the public, giving them the opportunity to harvest edible creations that mimic the natural landscape.[67] Thus, in this sense, *A Temperate Menu* is an edible satire of the garden that challenges the traditional patriarchal discourse of nature as a feminine and nurturing space, transforming it into one that reflects a collaborative approach to gathering edibles.



9. Alicia Ríos, *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)*, 1994

[66] Orenstein, "The Greening of Gaia", 103.
[67] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior", 90.

In *A Temperate Menu*, edibles are not the only pretension. Unlike in Gauthier's installation, in Ríos's performance, the public is asked to perform as gatherers of their own food, becoming gardeners and harvesters even if they do not have previous experience or knowledge about this practice. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett summarises her experience as a participant of the performance:

> We were milling about a greenhouse, hungry for our lunch and mystified by its presentation. We took little flower pots and lifted their contents to our lips with our little trowels, watered our meal ourselves, and tried to carry on a sensible conversation. The pleasures were several, not least of which were conviviality warmed by sensory engagement and the presence of a master whose mission was our intelligent pleasure.[68]

But how "provocative" and hospitable are Ríos's food events? Within *A Temperate Menu*, the greenhouse was open to subjects who were not necessarily familiar with gardening or agricultural practices, but this was not an excuse to deny them entrance to this space. The garden opens up to the foreigner and stranger, to the unexpected. Visitors were not selected by their status, gender, hierarchy, or knowledge of gardening. Instead, the artist sought everyone's participation, rejecting a protagonist's role or the exercise of some form of power over the space or the actions performed.[69] Rather than upholding sovereignty over the garden, Ríos challenged traditional discourses that suggest this space is feminine, private, or diminished following the binary of nature/woman, but also in relationship to the dynamic of power played between the host and the guest in hospitality discourse.

An ephemeral collective emerges, blurring the roles played between the artist and the public. By the time Ríos—dressed in a gardening attire—announces that the public are invited to harvest their own dinner, the artist opens the garden and endorses it as a space that is not defined as private or feminine space. The greenhouse becomes a site for collaboration between guests. Consequently, the public suffers a double transformation: first, one which changes them from a passive state as mere observers into active participants; second, from new arrivals

[68] Ibid., 93.

who become guests. This shows that *A Temperate Menu* is a performance that addresses hospitality as a structure that "crosses boundaries" and regulates between the individual and the collective.[70]

Ríos's edible garden offers a communal feast emerging from the task of harvesting, one which is no longer attributed solely to women. The entire audience performs the harvesting, transforming the concept of a feminine task into one where the communal and collective becomes important. Ríos allows her newly arrived guests to decide whether they participate in the harvest of *trompe-l'oeil* plants or if they remain as passive observers. This decision is based on the public's desire to actively select what they want to eat, to be involved in acknowledging what food they are putting into their mouths, and discovering what sort of ingredients are used, as listed in the mini-boards planted in the pots. The role as gardeners/harvesters is given to the guests, allowing Ríos to distance herself from a leading position during the performance. The host, Ríos, does not have a dominant role since she openly welcomes others. Furthermore, she does not present herself as the master of the house (or the garden, in this case); she does not dictate nor differentiate between those who are welcome and those who are unwelcome.

The generous offering made to the audience becomes a shared gardening experience played inside the fictional space of the greenhouse, where the enjoyment of sensory experiences while touching, manipulating, and eating these "plants" bring together the stranger and the host. This serves to highlight that the garden—and the greenhouse—is a space in which community formation is achieved even before commensality.[71] *A Temperate Menu* proposes food-gathering practices within a framework of hospitality, suggesting the harvesting and offering of edibles without expecting any kind of exchange. In addition, this installation challenges the phallogocentric logic regarding the domination schemata in the complex discourse of hospitality, as participants/guests gather their own dinner, similar to Gauthier's

[69] Ibid., 97.
[70] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 11.
[71] Tan Chee-Beng, "Commensality and the Organization of Social Relations", 13–30.

installation; however, Gauthier showed the slow and progressive growth of the edibles that were eaten, while in the case of Ríos's artistic practice, the food was ready and available, and familiar to those who were going to eat.

For Ríos's work, food gathering is presented from a different perspective: although she prepares the food, she does not perform as a woman serving commodities to guests. Ríos also emphasised the difficulties faced in the making of this installation, mainly due to the geographical location, but also in relationship to the amount of financial resources, seasonality, and number of *expected* guests that determined, to some extent, the ingredients she used, thus signalling the relevance of crops harvested within the food system. "The market is nature", argues Ríos, thus even if her greenhouse intended to provide crafted plants using specific ingredients, their availability might not possible, as seen in greenhouses and urban farming, practices where seasonality is crucial.[72]



10. Alicia Ríos, *A Temperate Menu (An edible garden)*, 2007

[72] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Alicia Ríos, Tailor of the Body's Interior", 97.

Searching for mushrooms

Picture yourself entering a gallery where, suddenly, an earthy woody aroma strikes your nose. After, while walking further inside the gallery, surrounded by green walls, vegetable life unravels its presence. Right in the centre of the room, you encounter a small land, like a hill formed by moss and soil that pretends to be a small portion of the woodlands. But inside this gallery there is more than just earthy smells and green and brownish colours. The progressive encounter with new elements does not end there. Looking carefully, you can find two hares. The first hare, located far from the moss hill, appears to be captured in the precise moment when it jumps, as if it intended to flee, as if the scene nearby caused it certain discomfort, sudden fear. The body of the second hare, in contrast to the taxidermy hare, remains immobile near one side of the hill. It appears as if it was recently killed and ready to be picked up by the subject who caused its death. Furthermore, a variety of mushrooms seem to have taken over this small chunk of land. They gather in *clusters* and *troops*, highlighting the different species, colours, sizes and shapes, yet they still appear as a strange appearance inside this gallery.[73]

Once again, as in the woodlands, you need to pay close attention to details. What kind of mushrooms are these? Are they real or just an artifice made from a material rather different from the fleshy body of a fungus? Are they edible? The scene I asked you to imagine relates to *Halali* (2005), Sonja Alhäuser's installation presented at the Kunsthalle Göppingen, Germany. This artwork takes its name from the term used to refer to the festive calling that marks the end of the hunting game by capturing or killing the animal; however, in this case, the installation embraces more than hunting.[74]

[73] Clusters are a community of mushrooms that grow with their stems fused together or packed against each other at the base. Troops are a community of mushrooms that grow in a close group but not close enough nor united at the base. Mushroom. The Journal of Wild Mushrooming, "Growth Habit," *Mushroom. The Journal of Wild Mushrooming*, 2015, http://www.mushroomthejournal.com/greatlakesdata/Terms/clust608.html#clust608.
[74] Werner Meyer, "A Lot of Game: Hunted, Shot, Cooked", in *Sonja Alhäuser: Immerzu* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2007), 96.

Sonja Alhäuser presents *Halali* as a scene that addresses the gathering of food grown in the "wild" and the hunting game. Foraging is presented as a relational artistic practice but is understood as a *modus vivendi* where "subsistence is based on hunting of wild animals, gathering of wild plant foods, and fishing, with no domestication of plants, and no domesticated animals except the [gun] dog".[75] Instead, foraging is an activity that relies on opportunity and the right conditions, "such as rain, game movements, and plant availability".[76] In this particular section, I focus on the foraging of marzipan mushrooms and argue that *Halali* is an artwork that refers to the gendered division of labour when gathering food and to the dichotomies nature–culture and wild–domestication, emphasising that the notion of hospitality helps to reconsider the ethical relationship with other species within the food system. In the next section I return to the analysis of this artwork, focusing on the hunting of hares and the killing of the wild boar as depicted in one of her watercolour drawings, where I will also address Derrida's notion of *hostipitality* and *carno-phallogocentrism*.



11. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali*. 2005

[75] Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, 48.
[76] Michael Wessels, "Foraging, Talking, and Tricksters", *Journal of Folklore Research* 45, no. 3 (December 2008): 304.

Alhäuser (Kirchen, Westerwald, Germany, b. 1969), currently living in Berlin, began to experiment with food as sculptural artistic material in 1992 while she was studying at the Düsseldorf Art Academy (1989–1994). Food is the focal medium of her edible sculptures and installations, which art critiques and art historians have referred to as food-based artworks that take shape as "opulent banquets [… with different] levels of meaning oscillating between uninhibited addiction and an emotional corrective".[77] She is recognised by the German artistic community as the "artist who cooks, or the painter of recipes".[78] Her artworks have been presented across Europe and the United States in exhibitions dealing with the relationship between food and art, the semiotics of food and sociocultural practices in terms of eating and food practices; and lately addressing hospitality and the host–guest relationship.[79]

Alhäuser uses a range of edibles in her artworks, particularly sweets like marzipan and chocolate. In particular, chocolate is a material which Alhäuser exploits and repeatedly uses due to its organoleptic characteristics (texture, aroma, colour), as well as its ductility, which allows her to use it as a material that solidifies enough to construct sculptures. Bearing in mind the history of chocolate, its production and consumption, artists like Alhäuser have used this ingredient as a material that addresses cultural, social and political issues, including chocolate's connotation to erotic and sexual stimulation.[80] Alhäuser uses chocolate by recognising and emphasising that if eating is an act that can provide satisfaction and pleasure, it also triggers remembrance of past experiences. She uses the association of sweetness to evoke and create (new) memories in those who attend her installations and

[77] Sylvette Babin, Magdalena Holzhey, and Renate Buschmann, "Sonja Alhäuser", in *Eating the Universe: Vom Essen in Der Kunst*, ed. Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Galerie im Taxispalais (Innsbruck, Austria), and Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Köln: DuMont, 2009), 273.
[78] Roland Nachtigäller, "Introduction", in *Sonja Alhäuser: Immerzu* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhanlung Walter König, 2007), 90.
[79] Babin, Holzhey, and Buschmann, "Sonja Alhäuser", 312; Tanja Maka, "Eat Art: Joseph Beuys, Dieter Roth, Sonja Alhäuser", *Busch-Reisinger Museum*, October 1, 2001; Nachtigäller, "Introduction", 90–91; Darío Corbeira, ed., *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX* (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002).
[80] Mercedes Replinger González, "Recetarios indigestos en arte contemporáneo", in *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX*., ed. Darío Corbeira (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002), 247.

performances. Furthermore, food helps Alhäuser to trigger sensory stimuli in the public, allowing them to engage with her artworks.[81]

Alhäuser's food-based artworks are strongly influenced by the work of Joseph Beuys, Dieter Roth and Daniel Spoerri, as the artist mentioned in an interview in 2009.[82] Her interest relies on the use of edibles as a strategy that addresses different themes and purposes, but mainly because food enables sensory experiences and highlights the transformation of an artwork; for example, the process of decay of fungi and bacterial fermentation ultimately results in the disappearance of the artwork.[83] Unlike Roth, however, Alhäuser is not interested in showing the deterioration of the artwork; instead, she is interested in showing the temporality, ephemerality, evolution and destruction of an artwork, triggered by the public's active participation by eating it.[84] This refers back to the relationship between art and life, following Joseph Beuys's artistic approach. Alhäuser endorses experiences that foresee the enjoyable aspects of food, by appealing to the link between art and everyday life through the act of eating. Furthermore, and in close similarity to Beuys, Alhäuser's food-based installations and performances highlight the interest of contemporary artists who endorse relational aesthetic practices in which sharing food with others becomes an aesthetic and ethical experience. Food proves to be a medium that helps artists to generate temporal relationships—social bonds—among the audience, between strangers.

Within her installations, Alhäuser often displays drawings, watercolours and lithographs that serve as graphical representations of the creative process and construction of her food-based actions. These drawings are visual complements to her actions and also remain as the only non-ephemeral elements that withstand the process of destruction. Alhäuser's watercolours and pictorial recipes are in this sense key in understanding the meaning of food in the installation, and at the same

[81] Sonja Alhäuser, interview.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Catherine Dupree, "Sonja Alhäuser's Sweet Installations", *Gastronomica: Journal of Food and Culture* Winter 2003 (2003): 13.

time, they unveil a deeper and more complex relationship to the food chain. I will not address these representations in depth here; however, I will come back to this in the chapter 2.

Halali (2005) aims to create multisensory experiences for the public from the moment Alhäuser welcomes them into a space that mimics a small portion of the woodlands and part of the wildlife inhabiting this fictional scene. Those attending the installation are transformed into wandering foragers who are encouraged to collect and eat handmade marzipan mushrooms, which Alhäuser previously "planted". At the same time, the surrounding watercolours help the public imagine the story behind the multiple scenes depicted in the large pictorial recipe hanging on the wall: *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach* (2005).



12. Sonja Alhäuser, *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*. 2005

This painting serves as an instructive recipe that provides meaning and purpose to *Halali*; it is pictorial step-by-step instructions for cooking wild boar goulash, a traditional stew in Germany prepared with wild boar meat, vegetables and red wine. Alhäuser portrays the complete process of the dish's preparation including the foraging of mushrooms, the hunt for wild boar and its butchering, and the cooking of the dish. By carefully observing this drawing, as if the eye forages within the

elements of its composition, the public understands that *Halali* is, in fact, an installation that addresses a particular mode of gathering food.

Halali represents a portion of the woodlands, a territory that is referred to as *wilderness*, which according to Plumwood relates to the notions of "*terra nullius*, the alien, fearful and disordered domain of animals, women, savages and the underside of the human psyche".[85] There is a similarity of the term to the experience of the public, caused by the sudden encounter with a moss hill covered in mushrooms and placed in the middle of a gallery. Visitors experience the encounter with species alien to this artistic space, namely mushrooms that appear to be real, but also both hares, one of which was purposely laid near the moss hill. The woodlands are a space of multi-species encounters, similar to *Halali*, where mushrooms, hares, wild boars and other vegetable and animal species cohabit—including human groups, in some cases. However, it is the human who is alien to this space, emphasising the division between nature and culture. The subject enters this space within the logic and desire to *discover* or to *explore* these sites, although it is a domain where other species are autonomous. These areas of land and life, emphasises Plumwood, embrace a respectful and mutual relationship where there is place for the other that escapes phallogocentric and anthropocentric logic:

> "Wilderness" is not a place where there is no interaction between self and other, but one where self does not impose itself. It is a place to be visited on its own terms and not ours… Here is the visitor who is the taught and not the teacher, the transformed and not the transformer, visitors who must see themselves through the other's eyes, must bend themselves, as is appropriate for visitors, to the other's ways.[86]

Entering the "wild" does not supposes denying, neglecting or abusing the species living in these spaces. *Halali* addresses, precisely, the interaction with the other. *Halali* foresees the transformation of visitors by inviting them to act as foragers, to

[85] Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 163.
[86] Ibid., 164.

pick up mushrooms and eat them, even if this action takes place in an enclosed and limited fiction of the outside landscape.[87]

Contrary to Ríos's edible garden and to Gauthier's hanging garden, Alhäuser foresees an encounter with an environment that is not domesticated and is full of surprises. There is no certainty about what one will find in the woodlands. In this sense, the depiction of the hare in the watercolour drawing, *Running Hare*, points towards the idea of uncertainty and the brief encounter that could take place. The movement of the brushstrokes resemble the futuristic style of Giacomo Balla's painting *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (1912), and suggest the hare intends to avoid a threatening subject (in this case the chase of a hunter) by rapidly moving. Nevertheless, Alhäuser depicts red-orange concentric circles to mimic a shooting target, pinpointing the shot that ultimately harms the hare, as the body near the hill suggests. The uncertainty of this brief encounter resulted in an unfruitful effort to escape. The elements placed in the moss hill further emphasise the undomesticated character inside the woodlands: the hare is a species that is not raised or grown for mass consumption, similar to the wild boar depicted in *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, or the mushrooms handcrafted by Alhäuser.



13. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali, (Running hare)*, 2005

[87] It is worth remembering that although foraging might be assumed as a human practice, other species also do it. Even if a subject identifies and recognises a location where plants, mushrooms or other edibles grow and can be foraged, that does not mean that other species have not already

Even if *Halali* is a fiction of wilderness, it is interesting that the artist proposes this space as a site of encounter that transforms the individual entering the wild into a collective action from the instant members of the public wander around the gallery, near the moss hill, and eat marzipan mushrooms together. Just as with Gauthier's and Ríos's food-based artworks, the artist does not perform as gatherer or forager; instead, she leaves the task to the public, to everyone who enters the space and embraces active participation inside this tiny forest. Moreover, even if members of the public choose not to participate actively, they still perform some sort of foraging: their mere presence and intention to discover the range of elements on display inside Alhäuser's woodland confirm this. For Alhäuser, foraging is an opportunity to surpass the audience's expectations. Despite the vegetable odour, sooner or later, they realise that the mushrooms are not real *fungi* but are made of marzipan. These are not fleshy, moist and do not have an earthy flavour; it is only through oral perception—by tasting—that the public notices the *trompe-l'oeil*. Similar to Ríos's work, the public eats food-crafted elements that might mimic vegetation, but they taste different, in this case, sweet and nutty.

Foraging assumes an "ethos [that] requires equality and sharing, on the one hand, and self-reliance and individual autonomy, on the other".[88] Alhäuser's installation changes an individual activity into a collective one. She does so by transforming every participant into a forager. Furthermore, this gesture of collectivity reframes the assumption of women as foragers, questioning the gender roles posited in the hunter–gatherer economy, as ethnographic and anthropological accounts have highlighted. In this case, it is not a woman nor even the artist who forages by going to the wild in search for food.[89] *Halali* questions the phallogocentric logic that

found and eaten them. To think of us (humans) as the only species that forages reinforces, to some extent, phallogocentric and anthropocentric logic.

[88] Wessels, "Foraging, Talking, and Tricksters," 305.

[89] Alison Wylie notes that "the 'gathering' activities associated with women are often the primary, and most reliable, source of dietary intake for foraging groups." Nonetheless, some of these accounts, she suggests, dismiss considering that in some groups, women also take part in hunting parties. Alison Wylie, "Doing Social Science as a Feminist: The Engendering of Archaeology", in *Feminism in Twentieth-Century Science, Technology, and Medicine*, eds. Angela Creager, Elizabeth Lunbeck, and Londa Schiebinger, Women in Culture and Society (University of Chicago Press, 2001), 27.

assumes a certain degree of inactivity or quietness for women as gatherers. A logic, which, according to Carol Adams, emphasises a derogatory state as "vegetative":

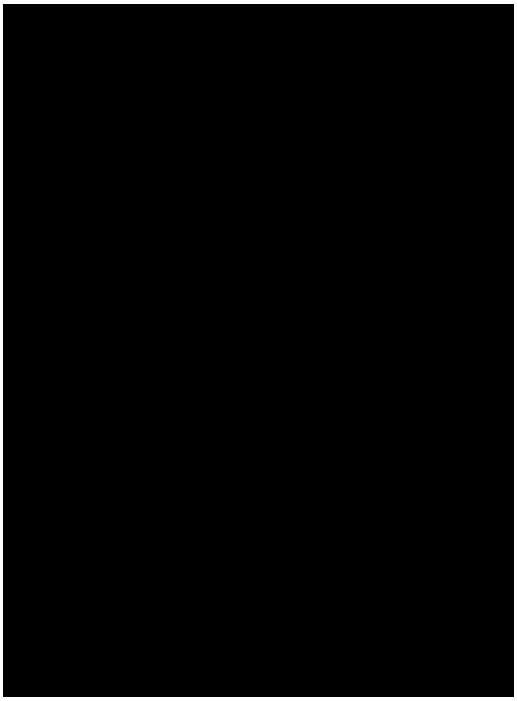
> once vegetables are viewed as women's food, then by association they become viewed as "feminine" passive [...] The word vegetable acts as a synonym for women's passivity because women are supposed to like plants.[90]

This supposes the use of models of domination and of exclusion of other living beings, including, in this case, mushrooms.[91] The gathering of edibles, especially vegetable species, is therefore considered less important than the acquisition of meat while hunting, for example. As I have previously mentioned, these sorts of arguments discriminate women's tasks in food-related practices, and at the same time justify the exploitation of nature and of animal and vegetal species.

Alhäuser's installation proposes foraging as a temporary hospitality event that, contrary to phallogocentric discourses, does not submit any species to domestication nor exploitation. In other words, although foraging is a practice that implies a sudden "discovery" or encounter, this does not happen every time. Mushrooms, berries, or any other foraged food only becomes available in specific seasons and in determined locations; consequently, the encounter with these "others" living in the woodlands is certainly unexpected. Furthermore, it supposes an encounter that demands an ethical approach to the species living there, thus it is us (humans) entering this space. As Alaimo suggests, it involves entering land which is not "sexualized [nor] domesticated" and where nature is posited "outside the law, depict[ed...] as a force that exceeds and resists mastery".[92] Alhäuser's ephemeral action embraces a hospitable relationship with her "guests" by offering them sweet handmade marzipan mushrooms as gifts to be foraged. *Halali* therefore becomes a

[90] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 36–37.
[91] Anna Tsing argues that mushrooms can be considered as companion species, following Donna Haraway, an argument that aims to refute the domination discourse of women and nature by means of domestication. Anna Tsing, "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species", Blogspot, *Party Writing for Donna Haraway!*, accessed January 11, 2012, http://tsingmushrooms.blogspot.co.uk/.
[92] Alaimo, *Undomesticated Ground*, 84.

hospitable forage-gifting artwork where the encounter with other species—at least as a fictional staging—is completely unexpected.



14. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali (Pilze)*, 2005

1.3 The hunting game: Killing and eating the animal other

Similar to gardening, harvesting and foraging practices, contemporary artists have also shown an interest in creating aesthetic practices that insist on a critical reflection on the ethical implications of animal and human relationships, especially those regarding the killing of animal species, considering that they are interrelated to our food system from the moment when we think of them as food and we proceed to eat them.

In this section, I focus on the depiction and representation of hunting in *Halali* by Sonja Alhäuser and *Landscapes* by Jennifer Rubell. Both artworks represent, depict, and address hunting as a strategy to confront the public, forcing them to think of hunting as an "armed confrontation between the human world and the untamed wilderness between culture and nature".[93] The main purpose of this section is to explore the oppositions between nature and culture and hunter and gatherer, emphasising hunting as a highly valued skill for men in patriarchal and phallocentric societies that, according to Karen Davies, explicitly recognise "the hunter–gatherer life-style" giving special emphasis to the role and activities performed by the hunter, and almost "none to the gatherer".[94] Hunting is examined within the literature of social sciences as a vital activity that permits gathering "meat and other animal parts [as] a necessary strategy for survival and subsistence"; however, this logic endorses a structure of domination and of violence of others, including women and animals.[95]

In light of Alhäuser's and Rubell's installations, I examine the way both artists portray the subject who acts as a hunter. Most importantly, I focus on the depiction

[93] Matt Cartmill, "Hunting and Humanity in Western Thought", in *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*, eds. Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald (United Kingdom: Berg, 2007), 238.
[94] Karen Davis, "Thinking like a Chicken: Farm Animals and the Feminine Connection", in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 195.
[95] Pollock, "Food and Sexual Identity among the Culina", 16; Garry Marvin, "Wild Killing: Contesting the Animal in Hunting", in *Killing Animals* (United States of America: University of Illinois, 2006), 11; Steven Mithen, "The Hunter-Gatherer Prehistory of Human Animal Interactions", in *The Animals Reader: The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings*, ed. Linda Kalof and Amy J. Fitzgerald (United

and representation of the non-human other, both as prey that becomes a source of food and a trophy that sustains the logic of domination over other species. Consequently, I argue that similarly to cultivation, gardening and foraging, the food system requires careful critical reflection of ethics as hospitality that, as Derrida and Still remind us, is not exclusive to the human. I would argue that hospitality's discourse needs to be extended further to include non-human others, bearing in mind that these gestures of hospitality mirror—to some extent—the ethics of "hospitality amongst humans".[96]

In addition, I suggest Sonja Alhäuser's *Halali* and Jennifer Rubell's *Landscapes* as artworks that emphasise what Irina Aristarkhova refers to as "radical hospitality", this is

> a relation that provides a framework to account for the treatment of others with limitless attention [...] because it entails an active gesture of welcoming, greeting, sheltering, and in many cases nourishing.[97]

The notion of hospitality presents an open structure that welcomes the human and the non-human, or unnamed guests; however, when discussing the hunting and eating of animal species under the lens of hospitality, close attention is paid to the intricacies of meat eating and its relationship to Derrida's notion of *eating well*, especially to the hierarchisation and dynamics of power that are constantly rehearsed during these activities. The framework of hospitality encourages to think of the killing of non-humans and their ingestion as an ethical approach that supposes offering infinite hospitality.

The complexity of hunting and eating non-human species gives rise to imagining the idea of hosting the animal, dislocating non-human species from the assumption as property, but bearing in mind the contingencies that arise from the thin borderline between hospitality and hostility. Derrida uses the term *hostipitality* to refer to

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Kingdom: Berg, 2007); Frances Dahlberg, *Woman the Gatherer* (United States of America: Yale University Press, 1983); Cartmill, "Hunting and Humanity in Western Thought".

[96] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 220.

emphasise that hospitality is inadvertently bound to violence and exclusion. He explains that the etymology *"hostis"* gives place to both hospitality and hostility, but one refers to an openness (offered to a guest) while the other entails a rejection of the other (of the enemy).[98] In Derrida's own words, hospitality has

> a troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, "hostility", the undesirable guest [hôte] which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body.[99]

In other words, hospitality is always in relation to the opposite, to hostility. *Hostipitality* therefore highlights the forceful need to be constantly vigilant of the relationships of power taking place between the stranger, the guest, and the enemy; thus, the roles and dynamics inadvertently change. To some extent, it all depends on how the host receives the "arriving stranger, an alien, foreigner".[100] The "welcomed guest [can be] a stranger treated as a friend or ally, as opposed to the stranger treated as an enemy (friend/enemy, hospitality/hostility)".[101] Hospitality further implies that the host is suddenly removed from the place over which he holds sovereignty. The guest can take over the role of the host, assuming the sovereignty of the place in which s/he was once welcomed. I suggest that Alhäuser's and Rubell's installations address this point, and it is the human who enters a space inhabited by the non-humans who are suddenly taken as hostages, victims of a violent action that ends in their killing.

Furthermore, and considering killing animals for meat is always related to power, in this section I discuss who performs the killing and how it is done. However, I will only refer to the hunting game and not to slaughterhouses.[102] Following the idea of

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[97] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 38.
[98] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 45.
[99] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 5, no. 3 (2000): 3.
[100] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 45; Andrzej Marzec, "The Aesthetics of Hospitality - Deconstructions of the at-Home", *Art Inquiry. Recherches Sur Les Arts* XIII (2011): 7; Paul Lynch et al., "Theorizing Hospitality", *Hospitality & Society Journal* 1, no. 1 (January 28, 2011): 15.
[101] Derrida, "Hostipitality," 4.
[102] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*; Ron Broglio, "Heide Hatry on Skin and Meat", *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* 14, no. Autum (2010): 55–64; Carol Gigliotti, "Heartburn:

"ethics as hospitality, and hospitality as ethics",[103] I examine hunting because it is an activity which remains part of the food system, even if this practice has been replaced by industrial farming and raising domestic animals. The living non-human other should be included as part of hospitable relations, but it should also include those who are already dead. Moreover, bearing in mind that hunting game requires a lot of attention and effort, hunting sheds light on dichotomies like the hunter–gatherer, culture–nature, women–men, wild–domestic, and also affordable–luxurious food.

Indigestion, Contention and Animals in Contemporary Art", *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* 14, no. Autum (2010): 25–33; Pedersen, "Terror from the Stare: Visual Landscapes of Meat Production"; Anat Pick, "Turning to Animals between Love and Law", *New Formations* 76 (2012): 68–85; Helen Simpson, "Meat for Thought", *Modern Painters* 10, no. 1 (1997): 94; Cary Wolfe, "From 'Dead Meat' to Glow in the Dark Bunnies Seeing 'the Animal Question' in Contemporary Art", *Parallax* 12, no. 1 (January 2006): 95–109.

[103] Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (California: Stanford University Press, 1999), 19.

Chasing the hare, killing the wild boar

As stated previously, Alhäuser's installation *Halali* (2015) depicts foraging as an activity that includes the gathering of vegetables as well as hunting. I would like to refocus my attention on this artwork, specifically the watercolour *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, as this gives sense to the hunting game that Alhäuser addresses throughout the entire installation. This painting shows the chasing and killing of a wild boar in a series of mini-scenes that follow a determined sequence, starting from the hunter's entrance to the forest and then showing the step-by-step procedure for a game-based goulash recipe.



15. Sonja Alhäuser. *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, 2005

In the bottom centre of the frame, Alhäuser shows how the hunting game evolves following the path of a wild boar while it is chased: a sudden shooting splits a sounder,[104] forcing one of the boars to run away. However, the following scene reveals that the escape attempt was fruitless, because the animal is fatally shot by a male hunter using what appears to be a German wild boar hunting hat and matching

[104] Sounder: a small social group of wild boars. Martin Goulding, "All You Need to Know about Wild Boar," *British Wild Boar*, December 4, 2012, http://www.britishwildboar.org.uk/index.htm?contact.html.

costume. The shotgun was directly aimed at the heart, instantly killing the boar. The type of gun that Alhäuser depicts coincides with the advice about hunting game within the literature: the bigger and more dangerous the animal, the bigger the calibre. The wild boar is described as a large "thin-skinned dangerous game" and therefore the hunter requires a gun that will kill the animal in a fast and "humane" way while allowing the hunter to protect himself.[105]

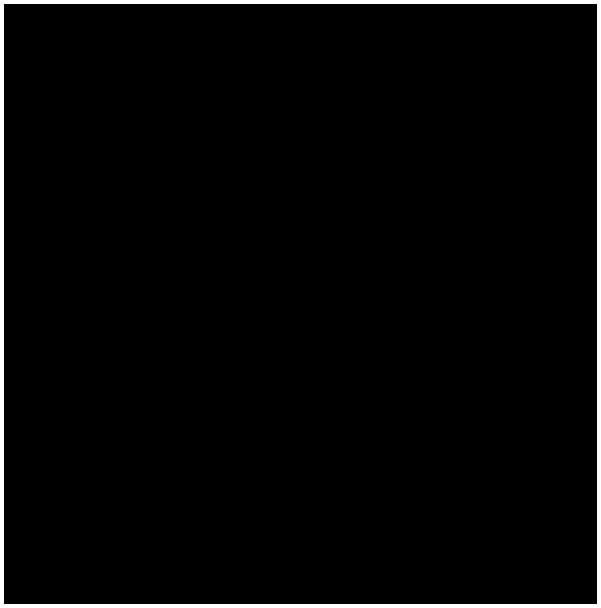


16. Sonja Alhäuser. *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, 2005
(Detail of hunting game)

After the killing scene of the wild boar, Alhäuser directs the public's attention of the top left corner, where she presents a scene showing the body of the wild boar moving slowly, almost floating, until it is shown hanging from the lower extremities. Almost immediately, a knife begins to remove the hair and the skin from the body of the animal. This scene intertwines with the following one, where a hand appears, pointing at the flanks of the carcass, signalling the butcher cuts, dividing the body into separate parts: the head, shoulders, legs and trotters, ribs and flanks. This butchering scene does not present a realistic depiction of the interior of the body, unlike other artworks like the *Skin Room* (2006) performance by the German artist Heide Hatry, where the artist deskins a pig on stage to construct a room using only

[105] Chuck Hawks mentions that "The wild Russian boar and their cantankerous relatives found in North America and Europe can also be both dangerous and hard to stop. A furious 200 pound tusker is nothing to trifle with and these beasts can put on weight like a, well, pig." Chuck Hawks, "Matching the Gun to the Game," *Guns and Shooting Online*, 1999, http://www.chuckhawks.com/gun_game.htm.

the skin of the animal.[106] Alhäuser avoids showing the innards as a red bloody mass of organs, and instead infers this in a cleaner and less sanguinary manner. The guts are depicted as a serpentine-shaped greenish matter; the lungs are shown in a slight grey-blueish colour. The heart is no longer located inside the thoracic cavity of the animal but appears as a floating organ surrounded by concentric circles that signal a diffused heartbeat.



17. Sonja Alhäuser. *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, 2005
(Detail of carcass)

Alhäuser's watercolour moves from a butchering scene to a cooking one. The body is no longer seen as flesh but as meat, a gesture that effaces the fact that a killing took place not long ago. The pictorial narrative suggests that only the meat of the ribs is used in the recipe: the bones are separated, and the meat is cut into cubes. Then, it is mixed with herbs and spices that are depicted in another mini-scene being ground in a mortar. Alhäuser signals that before making the meatballs, it is necessary to cover and chill the mix, a suggestion that is inferred by a series of snowflakes surrounding the bowl. The final mini-scenes depict the cooking per se: the meatballs are pan-fried with chopped onions, and then half a bottle of red wine is added to make a sauce. Similar to the snowflakes, Alhäuser is meticulous in

[106] Heide Hatry, "Heide Hatry Skin Room", *Heide Hatry*, 2006, http://www.heidehatry.com/.

signalling the time needed to cook her pictorial recipe. In this case, the casserole pot follows a path towards the oven where the ingredients will cook for 45 minutes (understood by the round circle mimicking a clock depicted next to the oven). The pot is taken out only to incorporate the foraged mushrooms cut in quarters and a dash of cream or milk—as with the clock, a barely noticed udder is depicted between the pot and the mushrooms squirting white liquid inside the pot—serving as some sort of thickening for the wine sauce. The goulash is left in the oven for another 15 minutes, before it is taken out and ready to eat.



18. Sonja Alhäuser. *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, 2005
(Detail of goulash cooking recipe)

The multiple mini-scenes composing *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach* only partially reveal the identity of the hunter or the cook. It is only possible to see the face and half of the body during the hunting scene. Afterwards, only a pair of hands suggest the presence of a subject, but only signalling the steps and tasks that need to be carried out, such as the grinding of herbs in the mortar. The viewer might assume that the subject who cooks and forages for the mushrooms is the same one who hunts, deskins, and butchers the animal. However, this subject—the hunter and cook—has no clear identity, appearing as an unnamed entity within the representation, just as the wild boar.

Eating is both a necessity and a desire but the main problem, as Derrida would argue, derives from acknowledging the most appropriate and ethical way to "eat

well".[107] To *eat well* is not a matter of diet, table manners, or questioning if it is good to eat the other; it also does not relate to the mere physical act of ingesting food. What Derrida suggests with eating well is to surpass the opposition between living and non-living, human and animal, and symbolic and real sacrifice, bearing in mind that these dichotomies constrain our thinking to a multitude of exclusionary practices in terms of appropriation and assimilation of the other. Eating, in this sense, requires taking into account the symbolic sacrifice, the incorporation and the appropriation of the "other", including the internalisation of symbols, language, and social codes.[108] Furthermore, thinking of the conception–appropriation–assimilation of the other enables the acknowledgement and concealing of the "best, most respectful, most grateful and also most giving way of relating the other to the self".[109] In Derrida's words,

> the infinitely metonymical question on the subject of "one must eat well" must be nourishing not only for me, for a "self," which given its limits, would thus eat badly, it must be shared, as you might put it, and not only in language. "One must eat well" does not mean above all taking and grasping in itself, but learning and giving to eat, learning-to-give-the-other-to eat. One never eats entirely on one's own: this constitutes the rule underlying the statement, "One must eat well." It is a rule offering infinite hospitality.[110]

In *Halali* the depiction of the hunting game and the sequential images of butchering and cooking, I suggest, address to eating well and the *carno-phallogocentric* schema that Derrida refers to in his interview with Jean-Luc Nancy. In this text, Derrida argues that the notion of subjectivity is framed by anthropocentric and phallogocentric logic which fails to include the ethical question in relation to non-human animals specifically. Derrida reframes Nancy's question of subjectivity, arguing about the processes of introjection and of incorporation of others—of eating others—and emphasising that instead of discussing if non-humans should be considered in the category of the "subject" or if they should not be killed, the main

[107] Kelly Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics: Derrida's Homeopathic Purity", *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* XV (2007): 43.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", 114.
[110] Ibid., 115.

problem requires rethinking the phallogocentric structure, bearing in mind it is an exclusionary and dominant system in which "others" (women and non-human animals) are subjected to the "carnivorous virility" of the authority.[111] Derrida explains that the authority, the head of state for example, cannot claim himself a vegetarian, thus the phallogocentric logic implies that "the *chef* must be an eater of flesh".[112] Derrida uses the neologism *carno-phallogocentrism* to link the question of the subject, the who, to the question of the killing, of sacrifice; consequently, subjectivity is then understood as "a self-speaking being, virile eater of flesh".[113] In other words, the carno-phallogocentric schema entails flesh/meat eating as a reflection of the power exercised by a subject in order to possess nature by accepting and performing the killing and eating of others, including non-human animals.

What is more, the idea of *eating well* resonates with Alhäuser's position about eating meat. As she explained during an interview, her position considers the non-human animal as a subject that should be respected, recognising it as a subject that lived and who "gave" its life so that we can eat. For Alhäuser, consuming the flesh of a non-human other is a gift,[114] and accepting it requires a thorough reflection of the implications of its killing and ingestion. The artist indirectly links hunting and eating meat to Derrida's insistence of an ethics of hospitality. It is worth reiterating here that what Derrida refers to as hospitality is more than a social gesture that surpasses the traditional logic of social exchange and cooperation; it is not just about food and nourishment. As Kelly Oliver notes, it presumes readdressing the ethical obligation of the subject to be "infinitely vigilant in one's hospitality to the other, even the very other whom one eats".[115] Alhäuser, for instance, articulates this (infinite) gesture of hospitality when she refers to meat eating.

[111] Ibid., 113.
[112] Ibid., 114.
[113] Matthew Calarco, "Deconstruction Is Not Vegetarianism: Humanism, Subjectivity, and Animal Ethics", *Continental Philosophy Review*, no. 37 (2004): 190.
[114] Alhäuser, interview.
[115] Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics," 45.

Hunting for trophe or a trophy?

Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach (2005) leads to questions of how the wild boar is depicted. Is it a visual narrative that forces the public to compare the hunting of a "wild" animal to the mass-killings of farm and domestic animals? Furthermore, Alhäuser's installation shows the killing of real animals via the hunting game and also includes the dead bodies of two hares, thus forcing the public to think of the production, circulation and consumption of meat from an ethical perspective. The paradox of this issue, however, relies on the limits between hospitality and hostility. To be clear, the hunting game portrayed in *Halali* is a visual and aesthetic imagery of death versus the living, which emphasises the violence of the act as part of the dynamic and cyclical life process of a food chain while this is rehearsed inside the gallery.

Furthermore, the butchering and the manner in which the wild boar is tied from the extremities and hanged head down denotes the brutality exercised in the slaughtering. This image shows the flesh-eating man exercising power over the dead body of an animal, signalling the need to question how as a carnivorous society we can exercise a more respectful, responsible and ethical position in relationship to non-human killing. It is worth noting that this relationship of power and domination is also criticised by feminist and ecofeminist scholars. Stacy Alaimo and Val Plumwood consider, for example, that hunting is a dominant scheme of the human over the animal, but is also a metonymy that mirrors men's domination over women.

In particular, Carol J. Adams addresses the issue of power, signalling how male dominance is reflected in eating meat. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams discusses the link between the oppression of animals compared to that of women. She argues that gender and species inequality is, in most cultures, related to gathering meat and eating. Hunting presents a pattern of domination against women and animals, considering that men are seen as those responsible for obtaining and distributing meat, and the control of meat is therefore understood as

an economic resource. Adams, however, views plant-based societies as an example of equality, arguing that in these cases, women achieve an essential economic and social role that does not assume an abuse of their status in comparison to men as hunters and meat distributors.[116] More importantly, Adams emphasises that the role of a male hunter and distributor of meat is equally transposed to the male as eater of meat, thus giving sense to the logic of subjectivity as explained by Derrida. The portioning and butchering of the wild boar depicted in *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach* breaks down the non-human other into smaller pieces, suitable for consumption. This task, argues Adams, is a unique characteristic inherent to humans, the same as using implements such as knives, hooks and saws that simulate "teeth that rip and claws that tear".[117]

The carno-phallogocentric logic is not only addressed by the butchering scene, but also bearing in mind that hunting is an activity that intends to manage the wildlife and subsume it to humans. Kelly Oliver notes that the double meaning of *trophe/trophy* relates to the problematic of hunting as a relationship of power. *Trophe*, argues Oliver, is "related to feeding and nutrition," while *trophy* addresses "to the goods obtained in the hunt and that have been made into monuments".[118] There is an implicit risk of transforming the trophe into a trophy, for which is pertinent questioning if the killing of the other is performed as a means of obtaining a source of food, or if in fact this violent action presents as some form of sport in which the killing of the nonhuman other becomes a triumph, or more precisely, a trophy. Oliver further argues hunting as an activity fixed in the phallogocentric discourse that justifies patriarchy as an allegoric strategy that reinforces political power, for which it is necessary to remain vigilant and to continually reflect on what sort of relationships of power and domination are involved in the act of eating.[119]

[116] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 35.
[117] Ibid., 50.
[118] Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics," 43.
[119] Kelly Oliver, *Animal Lessons: How They Teach Us to Be Human* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 97–130.

The difference between trophe and trophy requires an understanding of the activities performed by the hunter: who is this subject and how does s/he enter the woodland? In *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, the hunter is depicted as a subject whose identity is not known. He enters the habitat of the animal with the purpose of chasing and killing it. But is this approach similar in every hunting game? Is there an approach to hunting that justifies this activity? In "License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunter's Discourse" Martin Kheel emphasises that hunting is an activity that aims to develop a masculine self-identity, and at the same time, it reinforces a discourse of violence towards women and the natural world. He identifies three types of hunters, each of them justifying the killing of non-humans based on different perspectives.

The first category, the *happy* hunter, is referred to as a male subject that hunts for pleasure; killing animals is seen as a sport or fun activity, hence naming this activity as the (hunting) *game*. The happy hunter, emphasises Kheel, intends to enhance the virility of the subject, justifying this practice as one which reinforces a strong and independent character. In other words, the happy hunter describes what Derrida would consider the logic of the carno-phallogocentric subject. The second type of hunter, the *holistic* hunter, justifies the killing of non-human animals based on environmental concerns that intend to reduce the overpopulation of a species to ensure a balanced environmental dynamic. This approach still entails a relationship of power and domination since it involves human intervention in the environment and in other species' communities, despite the intention to restore balance. This position is still framed by anthropocentric and phallogocentric logic, since the alleged balance is assumed only from a human point of view. The third hunter is that of the *holy* hunter. This is a subject who does not consider the death of the non-human animal as an individual achievement, but as a "'gift' [given only] to those who are [deemed] worthy [or] demonstrate the proper attitude". The holy hunter justifies eating the hunted animal as an act of love and generosity, a position that is

shared among social groups who consider hunting as a religious and spiritual experience.[120]

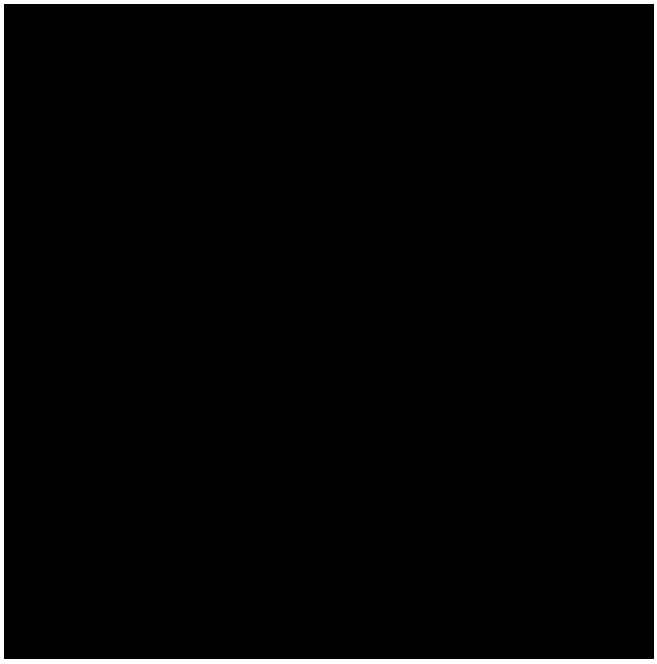
Moreover, the category of the holy hunter relates to the ambivalent role of the totem animal, as portrayed by Sigmund Freud in *Totem and Taboo.*[121] On the one hand, the totem animal is worshipped as it represents the spiritual core of a tribe; at the same time, it helps to sustain the collective memory and *status quo* of a community. On the other hand, the totem animal is subjected to ritual ceremonies of sacrifice which, in most cases, include its ingestion. The hunting, sacrifice and eating of the totem animal is only allowed during these rites, so if this accidentally takes place outside these timeframes, the subject who kills or harms the totem animal is considered unlucky or a bad omen for himself or for the entire group too. The sacrificial killing and respectful eating of the totem animal is only allowed, as Freud mentions, "if it is done according to a prescribed ritual of apologies and ceremonies of expiation".[122] The idea of the holy hunter and the totem animal involves a ritual slaughter where eating the animal assumes that every member of the tribe incorporates a piece of this being as a means to acquire its characteristics, a sort of animistic gesture that is only permitted to those considered worthy of ingesting the totem animal.

Given these points, I suggest that the figures of the *happy* hunter and the *holy* hunter are both present in Alhäuser's installation. In *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, hunting is not presented as a recreational game; however, the depiction of the hunter wearing a German hunting hat implies the opposite. Hunting is not thought of as a *game* that sees killing the non-human animal as a trophy, but rather an action during which the animal becomes a trophe, a source of food.[123] The

[120] Martin Kheel, "License to Kill: An Ecofeminist Critique of Hunter's Discourse", in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (United States of America: Duke University Press, 1995), 102.
[121] Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, ed. James Strachey, Reprint, Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (Norton, 1950), 130.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics," 52.

gesture as a holy hunter is only understood bearing in mind Alhäuser's statement that hunting, killing, and eating the non-human animal is a generous gift.

Furthermore, the carcass and the remaining parts of the animal are not discarded. As stated previously, *Halali* requires careful examination of the space through which the public wanders, and it is only with special attention that they can find four smaller canvases displayed on one of the walls of this fictitious woodland. One of them showing three head mounts, one of a wild boar, one of a stag and another of a deer. These taxidermy objects are displayed as hunting trophies, as a sort of recognition of the hunter's labour. It is precisely at this point that Oliver's notion of a trophe transforming into a trophy makes sense, further emphasising the *carno-phallogocentric* schema that Derrida explains.



19. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali*. 2005
(Detail of mounted heads trophies)

In most cases, the heads, stags, fur, fangs or even whole animal specimens are preserved after being hunted to form part of taxidermy collections and exhibitions at natural history museums. This practice is generally justified as a means to raise environmental conservation awareness, as well as educational purposes. Holding, collecting, and displaying hunted animals as trophies is, according to Linda Kalof and

Amy Fitzgerald, historically linked to "the ideology of domination, patriarchy and colonialism".[124] That said, the display of stuffed animals has become a common practice in some contemporary artworks, such as in the case of *Halali*. The small drawing of three mounted heads displayed as trophies, as well as the stuffed hare, emphasises contemporary artists' interest in including animal bodies—and on rare occasions also living animals—as a strategy to present the *real* rather than a representation.[125] Including animals aims to provoke and construct a discourse that engages the public in a critical reflection of the display. According to art historian and animal studies scholar Steve Baker, these contemporary art practices use the non-human "dead body as a highly charged object".[126] In other words, the corpse becomes a carrier of multiple meanings that are unveiled differently by each viewer according to their particular ethical position.

In *Halali*, for instance, non-human animals are presented in two different ways: firstly, the drawings of mounted heads displayed as game trophies and the stuffed hare serve as a *trompe-l'œil* that mimics a live animal jumping far from the scene, trying to escape the hunters who enter the gallery space foraging for mushrooms; secondly, Alhäuser presents the fleshy body of a hare, one which is not preserved but will decompose over time, or before the hunter arrives to collect it. Under these circumstances, the public entering the gallery might think of the origin of both hares and if they were specifically hunted to be part of Alhäuser's artwork. Although this may be true, what this installation addresses is the fact that whether as a happy, holistic, or holy hunter, it is almost impossible to escape the *carno-phallogocentric* logic that Derrida mentions, one that entails the individual seeking to control nature, literally or metaphorically eating the other constantly.

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[124] Linda Kalof and Amy Fitzgerald, eds., *The Animals Reader The Essential Classic and Contemporary Writings* (United Kingdom: Berg, 2007), 113.

[125] It is worth remembering the scandal in 2008 sparked by Guillermo "Habacuc" Vargas's artwork *Eres lo que lees (You are what you read).* The artwork included a malnourished dog, found on the streets of Nicaragua tied to a rope and left to starve inside a gallery. The show raised a number of criticisms from environmental and animal protection societies. David Yanez, "You Are What You Read", *art21 Magazine*, March 4, 2010, http://blog.art21.org/2010/03/04/you-are-what-you-read/#.V3ucC46scik.

[126] Steve Baker, "You Kill Things to Look at Them: Animal Death in Contemporary Art", in *Killing Animals*, by The Animals Studies Group (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 78.



20. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali*. 2005

Hosting (or being hosted by) the animal

Derrida, Still, and Aristarkhova endorse considering "hosting the animal". In *Hosting the Animal*, Aristarkhova discusses Kathy High's artwork that involves hosting and caring for laboratory rats in her house in order to question how hospitality discourse is performed towards the non-human. Aristarkhova notes that Derrida's notion of hospitality contravenes Kant's idea of a right to offer hospitality, bearing in mind that this "right" is always viewed from an anthropocentric perspective. In Derrida's words, hospitality is understood as

> a human right, this right to hospitality and for us it already broaches an important question, that of the anthropological dimension of hospitality: what can be said of, indeed can one speak of, hospitality toward the non-human, the divine, for example, or the animal or vegetable; does one owe hospitality, and is that the right word when it is a question of welcoming – or being made welcome by – the other or the stranger [l'étranger] as god, animal or plant, to use those conventional categories?[127]

[127] Derrida, "Hostipitality", 4; Aristarkhova, "Hosting the Animal", 3.

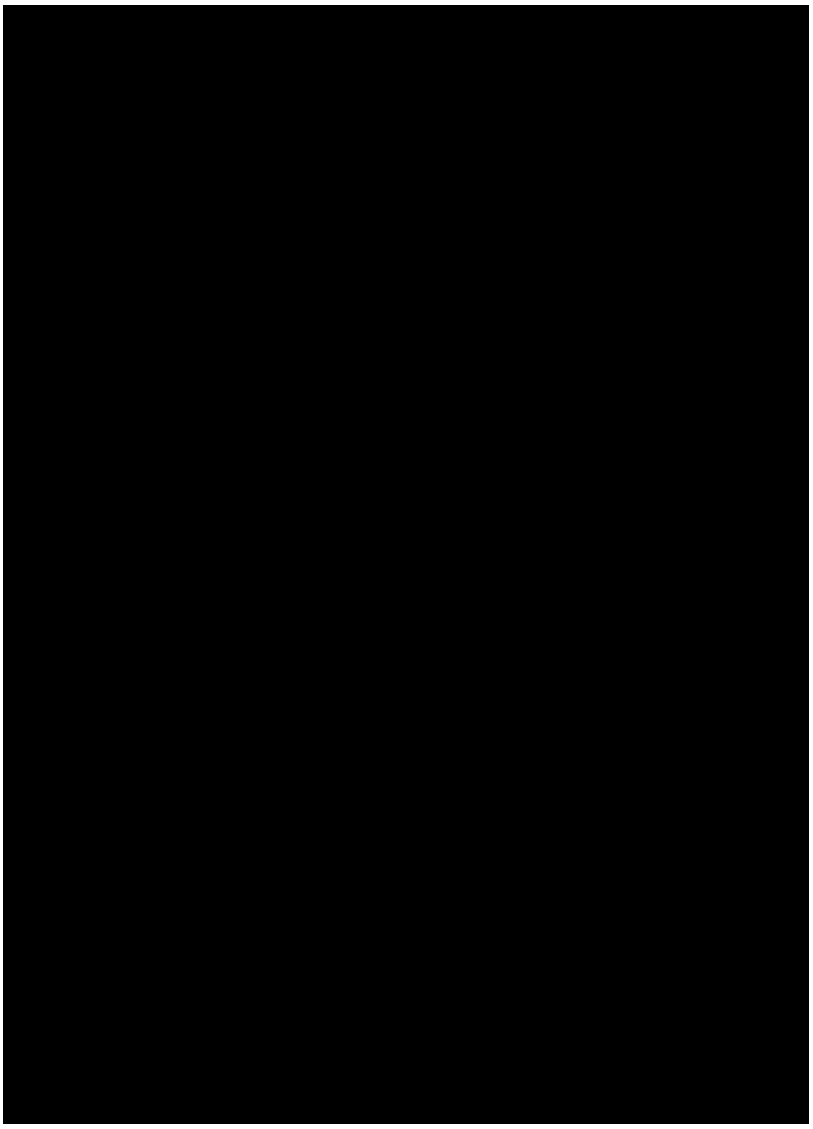
As noted above, both Derrida and Aristarkhova argue for the need to re-evaluate the idea of hosting the animal, thinking of it as a "less anthropomorphic and anthropologic concept of hospitality".[128] This is, to consider if the non-human animal can act a host, and if at some point this subject becomes victim of its own welcoming gesture bearing in mind Derrida's term *hostipitality*, which as referred above, emphasises that hosting is always in close relationship to the opposite, to a hostile gesture.

In *Halali*, the public is invited to enter the hunting space and immerse themselves in a hunting game scene similar to that portrayed in Alhäuser's drawing. In doing so, however, it is possible to distinguish different host-guest relationships giving sense to the whole installation. The first thing to remember is that the public is welcomed by gallery staff, but at the same time, the inanimate presence of both hares attracts the public to further explore the space, revealing the theme of the exhibition. Unlike the wild boar in *Wildgulasch vom Schwein–einfach*, these hares are not pictorial representations though this does not oppose the idea of considering them as hosts. In fact, their presence helps to transform the public into foragers. It is the human who enters the other's space—the habitat of the animal—without an invitation, with the intention to pick mushrooms, but also to hunt the animal. The human trespasses and violates the animal's space, revealing the intention to dominate nature, foreseeing the fact that man considers himself superior to other species and entitled to exercise his will over others. Furthermore, the deceased hares signal the path to follow, welcoming strangers into this artistic space. Their presence gives sense to the work, guiding the welcomed guest throughout Alhäuser's woodlands, bringing together the watercolour drawings, the moss hill, and the marzipan mushrooms as a discourse of human and non-human relationships.

[128] Aristarkhova, "Hosting the Animal", 3.

In this case the stuffed hares and the figure of the wild boar as depicted in *Wildgulasch vom Schwein – einfach*, I suggest, help rethinking the notion of hosting and considering animals also act as hosts. For example, they are present in spaces such as the woodlands before we (humans) enter it. As noted earlier, foraging and hunting assumes humans discover and encounter others in a place where we do not regularly go. The moment the other animal is located in a space, the notion of belonging to a place is challenged; consequently, the same happens with the idea of a human subject embedded with the right to offer hospitality. Contradicting patriarchal and phallogocentric schema, in Alhäuser's work, the male subject is not the one holding sovereignty of a space, but in fact sovereignty lies with the non-human animal and the vegetal species that already cohabit within these spaces. However, in the case of the wild boar, the painting suggests that the hunter enters the sounder's habitat without an invitation. The hostile intentions of this new arrival/stranger soon become evident. The ephemeral hospitable act of the non-human other, sharing the same space and food (mushrooms) with the human, suddenly turns into hostipitality; thus, the host, the non-human animal, becomes victim of the intrusion and reception of a stranger who, indeed, turned out to be an enemy.

Overall, the inclusion of animals in this artwork helps to reframe hospitality as a notion that endorses being open to human and non-human others, living or dead. By the same token, this openness challenges the phallogocentric discourse since it is not the human (man nor woman) who welcomes us, but the non-human animal. At the same time, Alhäuser's gesture to include the stuffed hares shows a gesture of hospitality towards the non-human animal other. The careful placing of these animals insists on the animal's death as a precious and generous gift. In either case, the installation seems to portray an effort to bring the hares back to their "home", to the woodlands, giving them their final resting place.



21. Sonja Alhäuser, *Halali*. 2005
(Detail of a moss hill with marzipan mushrooms and dead hare on the side)

Deer skewers

Compared to *Halali*, Jennifer Rubell's artwork *Landscapes* addresses the hunting game in a different manner. Created in 2011 for the Beyeler Foundation in Switzerland, the installation—inspired by the surroundings—was thought of as a series of interactive works that explored how humans engage with the natural world: contemplation, domination, a source of fantasy, imitation and depiction.[129] Each of these was addressed in one of the five mini installations staged inside the Beyeler Foundation. In this case, I focus on the *Deer Sculptures*, as they address the hunting game and to the imitation and domination of non-human animals.



22. Jennifer Rubell, *Landscapes (Deer Sculptures).* 2011

Deer Sculptures consisted of five deer-shaped sculptures constructed with three-dimensional deer targets similar to those used for archery practice. These targets are made with synthetic materials like foam that aim to imitate a deer's body in shape, size, positions, and appearance. These models have the particularity of including features like removable heads and ears, or being able to reposition them according to the preference of the hunter (lying down, standing up, or with the head up or down) to provide hunters with a training experience as close as possible

to the one they can encounter in the wild, though with the exception of movement. These targets remain immobile the entire time so archers can practise their shooting. It is worth noting that the immobility reinforces the assumption of passiveness of non-human species and of the natural world, giving a (false) idea of control over non-human species.



23. Jennifer Rubell, *Landscapes (Deer Sculptures).* 2011

Rubell chose to use training devices with enhanced anatomical position of vital organs, such as the lungs and heart. Blocks of durable foam are inserted in these areas so that archers can shoot repeatedly until they master a clean kill—i.e. a shot that aims directly at the heart of the animal, causing an "almost" instantaneous death—a killing that is often considered by hunters as a more humane killing.[130] It is precisely within this enhanced vital spot where Rubell inserted a large number of skewers made with cured raw deer meat that mimicked the arrows shot at the targets during training. These edible arrows were consumed by the public during the installation. Thus, in this sense, instead of inserting or inflicting another wound

[129] Jennifer Rubell, "Landscapes", *Jennifer Rubell*, 2011, http://jenniferrubell.com/projects/20-landscapes-projects.

[130] Thomas Tabor argues that "the safe area to shoot for is the heart and lungs area, [however, this does not mean that] a clean shot does not always mean that the animal will collapse instantly." Thomas Tabor, "Clean, Humane and Successful Hunting", *Sport Shooters' Association of Australia*, accessed July 2, 2016, http://ssaa.org.au/stories/hunting-clean-humane-successful-hunting.html#.V3flao6scik.

in these *realistically* made deer targets, the public removed them to consume the flesh/meat, although they skipped the labour of skinning, ageing, and butchering the carcass. After all, the public was offered the experience of a ready-meal that, according to Rubell, intended to ask visitors to consume the hunter's "fruits of labour", and to "undo" the pattern of domination that hunting represents.[131] Nevertheless, this same gesture reinforced the violence embedded in the hunting game, only emphasising the meat as part of a once-living wild animal that someone else killed.



24. Jennifer Rubell, *Landscapes (Deer Sculptures).* 2011

Landscapes exposes the relationship between humans and nature as one in which the carno-phallogocentric logic insists on mastering an effective pattern of domination over others, whether that is the nature as a space or other human and non-human species. Furthermore, *Deer Sculptures* involves the public as part of a symbolic killing, feasting on the flesh of the "other".

What is more, it is not enough to consider that the public appears in the installation to eat cured raw deer meat as part of a relational artwork; instead, it is necessary to look at how both Alhäuser's and Rubell's artworks highlight the need to think if

[131] Jennifer Rubell, "Jennifer Rubell: Landscapes."

humankind, specifically those in urban and industrialised spaces, assume their food as inanimate objects, such as the three-dimensional deer targets presented in *Landscapes*.

Although Rubell does not place the public in the role as hunters, *Deer Sculptures* still requires them to perform an embodied and violent encounter, forcing them to "prey" as hunters even if they do not have to shoot a gun or fire an arrow. Hunting is not rehearsed by the public in a straightforward manner: they do not *kill* the animal. Instead, they participate in an allegoric butchering and feast. The public approaches the "dead animal" but rather than collecting the carcass, they proceed to remove the skewers to eat the meat. The carno-phallogocentric gesture of ingesting flesh is symbolised through the artificial representation of an animal's body.



25. Jennifer Rubell, *Landscapes (Deer Sculptures).* 2011
(Detail – Visitors eating the raw cured venison meat skewers.)

Even though the hunter is not depicted, nor the hunting per se, both the subject and the task are still implied by training devices. The media used in this installation emphasises the idea of domination over the other, whether that is non-human or human; for example, the three-dimensional deer shooting targets remove the corporeality of the non-human body. The strategy of imitation that Rubell displays

objectifies the other; flesh and bones are not only replaced by polystyrene blocks, but they also facilitate the public's approach to the artwork. In other words, even if the flanks of the deer sculptures appear to be inserted with multiple arrows, the "wounds" are not inflicted on a "real" animal.

Imitation, as Steve Baker would argue, is "central to art's exploration of the animal";[132] however, in this case and contrary to Alhäuser's installation, the animal body is mimicked through other materials to prevent a negative reaction or aversion from the public. In turn, this creates a dynamic involving the active participation of the public; the targets made it easier for them to take the skewers and eat the flesh/meat. However, if Rubell decided to present a more realistic depiction or representation of a deer, eating the skewers might have been more difficult. Imitation serves as a strategy that allows the artist to create a relational bridge between the artwork and the public, bearing in mind that in the postmodern era, the animal other takes more importance and is far more useful in artistic discourses when it is "actively [...] performed, rather than passively represented".[133] Baker further emphasises that this sort of approach also requires consciousness of what an animal is, but also of the practices and violence these entities are subjected to. For *Deer Sculptures*, Rubell does not intend to present a realistic copy or representation of the animal, but instead looks at ways in which the wild animals are subjected to objectification that allows and justifies killing and ingesting of the non-human other.

The sacrificial and carnivorous incorporation of the non-human other is facilitated by distancing the public from the killing of the animal. The *trompe-l'oeils* are not stuffed animals, unlike the hares used by Alhäuser in *Halali*. By detaching the public from direct contact and even from the moral dilemma of killing or butchering the deer, they were given a more comfortable position to accept the killing of the animal and the consumption of the raw flesh. The deer targets are devices that

[132] Steve Baker, "Sloughing the Human," in *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. Cary Wolfe (University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 158.
[133] Ibid., 159.

prevent the public from experiencing any emotional bond to the prey, to the hunted animal, which according to Garry Marvin is a frequent ordeal between hunter and prey due to the emergence of a personal and emotional relationship where feelings of "joy, grief, satisfaction, pleasure, pride and relief [happen during and after the] killing".[134] Marvin explains that the act of killing the non-human animal "deconstructs, redefines or reshapes the social order between humans and animals".[135] That said, the emotional bond to which Marvin refers is initially driven by a desire to kill and possess the animal, and not because the hunter acknowledges the death of the animal as a gift to be consumed—at least not within the logic of a *happy hunter*, as Kheel would suggest.[136] Moreover, a similar emotional bond takes place when the animal is butchered and the body, the meat, is eaten. In *Landscapes*, the public saw what appear as a wounded "animal", standing inert and with arrows in its body. Rubell wanted them to release the arrows as a means to "undo" the hunter's labour, but also to profit—understood as the ingestion of the meat—from his/her work.[137]

Generally speaking, the three-dimensional targets therefore distanced eaters from the hunter's experience, while at the same time allowed them to take a piece of the flesh from the metaphoric prey. The audience feeds upon the flesh of an animal that is no longer present, one that is disguised in the skewers inserted in the polystyrene shooting targets. It is worth noting that the gesture of using raw cured meat was another strategy that forced the public to eat the non-human other in a more natural, wild or animalistic way, instead of presenting them with cooked food. This is best understood bearing in mind Lévi-Strauss's notion of the culinary triangle and the opposition of the raw as natural versus the cooked as a cultural marker.[138]

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[134] Marvin, "Wild Killing," 10, 18, 21.
[135] Ibid., 10.
[136] As a reminder, the category of the "happy hunter" refers to a subject who considers the killing of animals to be a sport or a fun activity intending to develop a sense of maleness. This reinforces how sexual difference is still present in discourses about the hunter–gatherer relationship, in which hunting is often categorised as a male task. Kheel, "License to Kill."
[137] Jennifer Rubell, "Jennifer Rubell: Landscapes."
[138] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle", in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 28–35.

Objectification as a strategy to justify who we are (really) eating

In *Landscapes*, the deer targets highlight a double relationship of domination. The imitation of deers and the objectification of the non-human other requires consideration of how Rubell's *Deer Sculptures* also echoes the metaphoric cannibalistic act of eating the human other, especially if bearing in mind the *carno-phallogocentric* schema as one that justifies the male subject constantly devouring others. In this sense, the deer targets can be read as a metaphoric depiction of the female subject, bearing in mind that women, like animals, are subjected to a pattern of objectification. The "animalisation" of women is another strategy that justifies an androcentric and anthropocentric scheme of domination, which is once again linked to the binomial opposition between nature-women and culture-men as alleged by patriarchal and phallocentric logic. However, it is the responsibility of those eating to reflect on the implications of their actions, to think about the ethical act embedded in meat eating as a means to question if this is a way to offer infinite hospitality to the non-human other, to think of *eating well;* in other words, to "attempt the best possible hospitality in the absence of an ideal."[139]

In *Animals and Women*, Carol Adams and Josephine Donovan explain that the phallocentric schema often justifies the hierarchy by naming women after animals, or by using characteristics of non-humans to describe them.[140] Objectifying, naming, and comparing women to animals serves to denigrate in terms of sexual difference but also in terms of species. To this extent, Joan Dunayer also explains that "language is a powerful agent in assigning the imagery of animal versus human"; she mentions, for example, that women are often compared to hens—think of hen parties or brooding hens—as a strategy that subjects both human and non-human females to the exploitation of their bodies due to the capacity to

[139] Penelope Deutscher, *How to Read Derrida*, 81.
[140] Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan, eds., *Animals & Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995).

reproduce.[141] Similarly, Karen Davies argues that "non-human animals are oppressed by basic strategies and attitudes that are similar to those operating in the oppression of women", such as reproduction.[142] By the same token, Adams discusses in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* how meat-eating relates to women and animals. She argues that "cultural representations of the butchering of animals [are justified considering that] meat eating is the most frequent way in which we interact with animals".[143] Making the animal absent responds to the need to avoid the depiction of a suffering animal dying or being butchered. To be more precise, to be consumed as meat and not seen as flesh, humans reinforce the effacement of the animal's bodies.

Adams further explains that meat-eating is subordinated to a cycle of objectification, fragmentation, and consumption that links butchering to sexual violence against women; furthermore, she directly relates this to the "production" of meat on an industrial scale, with special attention to the differentiation between edible and inedible body parts.[144] This cycle entails, first of all, consideration of the body of the (non-human) other as an object that is fragmented—or brutally dismembered, butchered—in order to be consumed, which Adams refers to as the "fulfilment of oppression".[145] Yet, the fragmented body parts are renamed in order to hide the fact that they were once part of a living non-human other. This renaming constitutes a disguising strategy that takes place during butchering and also during cooking. Subjecting the non-human other's flesh to contact with fire, following Lévi-Strauss, transforms the wild, raw, and the natural to a process of culturisation.[146] Likewise, seasoning or covering the meat with sauce, or even curing meat, also helps to dissimulate and rename the body parts of animals that are about to be consumed. In Alhäuser's *Halali*, for example, the artist depicts the wild boar's

[141] Joan Dunayer, "Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots", in *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, eds. Carol J. Adams and Josephine Donovan (Durham and London: Duke University Press Books, 1995), 11.
[142] Davis, "Thinking like a Chicken," 195.
[143] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 40.
[144] Ibid., 47.
[145] Ibid.

carcass being transformed into meatballs that are cooked and mixed with other ingredients. By contrast, in the case of *Landscapes*, Rubell does not present cooked meat. The animal's flesh is transformed by adding salt to preserve it, changing the consistency, texture and flavour, while delaying the natural process of decay. It is worth noting that this was probably chosen as the appropriate state of meat for use, handling, and consumption of "raw" meat during the entire the exhibition.

With this in mind, I consider that Rubell's *Deer Sculptures* not only address meat as a bodily part that has been gastronomically manipulated. Instead, it highlights domination and violence towards the non-human other, while at the same time addresses the one exercised towards women. The raw deer meat represents an edible metaphor of human and non-human females' subjectivity. At the same time, the skewers/edible arrows become devices of domination, submission, and violation of women's bodies. Hence, when the members of the public take the skewers and eat the meat, they are indirectly consuming women's bodies, assuming them as objects subjected to be owned. This notion places women and animals in a vulnerable position, one that is inferior to the subject who feeds upon them in a moment that entails a violent appropriation and incorporation of the other. This consumption of literal and metaphoric flesh requires recollection of Derrida's insistence on *eating well*: the public not only feasted upon deer meat, but also incorporated a multitude of others.

Landscapes presents the objectification of the non-human animal by means of *Deer Sculptures*. The deer targets are not dismembered, although, the meat of "real" deers is presented as individual (fragmented) meat skewers inserted in the shooting props. They simulate arrows that are taken out from a body, and with them a piece of the flesh of the non-human animal that is ready to be eaten. Not only are the skewers inserted in the vital spot, but by the time they are removed, the public partakes in the eating of the deer's heart, the vital organ that is shared communally, giving the impression that with this gesture, they ingest part of a totem animal.

[146] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*, vol. 1, Mythologiques (Chicago:



26. Jennifer Rubell, *Landscapes (Deer Sculptures).* 2011

This installation shows the violence and domination of the hunting game; at the same time, the consumption of meat reinforces a *carno-phallogocentric* logic of power that subordinates both non-human animals and women. This is to say, that by the time Rubell presents deer targets, she doubly obliterates the non-human other as well as the female human other. According to Adams, this double substitution "mirrors and represents [...] patriarchal values" that refer to both subjects as objects used in terms of reproduction, nourishment and entertainment.[147] The "other" is incorporated and appropriated both literally and metaphorically.

Moreover, while the hunting is performed, there is an eventual relationship of domination between the host and its guest. As mentioned in relation to Alhäuser's *Halali*, by the time the hunter enters the spaces of wild animals to kill them, this conceals an event of *hostipitality*. In Rubell's case, however, the public is not placed within a landscape of hunting; instead, they are presented with a scenery that includes both the events before the hunting but also after the killing of the animal. The viewers enter as guests at the installation hosted by an artistic institution; they

University of Chicago Press, 1983).
[147] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 187.

are not entering the “zone of animal habitation”.[148] Nevertheless, they do consume them as trophe and trophies, as the deer targets present both at the same time.

[148] Marvin, “Wild Killing”, 22.

Chapter 2

The *mise-en-place*: "Plating up" gender

What is cooking? Who does the cooking? What is the purpose of doing so? The first thing to remember is that these questions, as Michael Pollan explains, insist on humankind's domestication of fire as an event running in parallel to the origins of cooking.[1] Without doubt, fire influenced our hominid evolutionary path, providing comfort and safety, as anthropologists have suggested.[2] Fire is identified within the literature as the milestone that gave rise to cooking, and deemed essential to our eating process as it enables the transformation of raw edibles by subjecting them to chemical and physical reactions; whether that is through direct or indirect contact with fire or some source of heat.[3] Put it more simply, cooking is a process where raw ingredients are transformed using the primal elements of water, fire, air and earth, as Michael Pollan argues.[4] However, cooking not only changes the appearance of edibles and affects their flavour, but it is also a process that modifies the molecular structure of food that allows our organisms to assimilate complex carbohydrates, fats and proteins from grains, meat and vegetables. In other words, without fire and the cooking process, most of the food we consume would not be part of our diets, and cuisines from all over the world would not resemble what we know nowadays.

Most importantly, contemporary artistic practices are not exempt from paying attention to cooking. This task is dislocated as an activity that is only performed

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[1] Michael Pollan, *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation* (Penguin Publishing Group, 2013).
[2] Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *The Meaning of Cooking*, English Edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 51; Richard W. Wrangham, *Catching Fire: How Cooking Made Us Human* (Profile, 2009).
[3] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*; Luce Giard, "Doing-Cooking", in *The Practice of Everyday Life: Living and Cooking.*, by Michel de Certeau and Pierre Mayol, ed. Luce Giard, vol. 2, The Practice of Everyday Life (United States of America: University of Minnesota Press, 1998); Harold McGee, *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen* (Great Britain: Hodder and Stoughton, 2004); Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food* (Wiley, 2009); César Vega, Job Ubbink, and Erik van der Linden, *The Kitchen as Laboratory: Reflections on the Science of Food and Cooking*, Arts and Traditions of the Table: Perspectives on Culinary History Series (Columbia University Press, 2013).
[4] Pollan, *Cooked*.

inside the home or in the hospitality industry, but also one which has permeated cultural institutions eager to present the work of artists that evoke, simulate, or use the kitchen as an aesthetic and critical space to discuss various contemporary problems, including cultural, social and economic issues within the food system on a macro and micro scale.[5]

In this sense, and after gathering and harvesting edibles from the last chapter, I now focus on the idea of cooking as a gesture of hospitality, which I explore in light of hospitality's aporia. This chapter explores art practices that address cooking paying special attention to issues regarding gender and migration, both of which relate to the notion of hospitality. I centre my analysis on the division of labour in cooking practices in regards to gender; the relationship between gender and cooking spaces; and the intercultural encounter in the culinary arena. In particular, I discuss the inequalities taking place inside the space where cooking traditionally takes place (the kitchen), and the relationships that develop between those who do the cooking.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first one explores the origins of cooking and the binomial oppositions of cooked–culture versus raw–nature that give place to the genderisation of the kitchen. I focus on the transformation of food, highlighting how sexual difference is present in cooking, which at the same time emphasise the prevalence of patriarchal and phallocentric logic that assume women are responsible for cooking and nurturing others.

The second section explores gender roles and hierarchisation rehearsed in domestic and professional kitchens. I concentrate on discourses and artistic practices that differentiate the kitchen as a domestic and feminine space when cooking is performed exclusively by women, compared to those of the hospitality industry, in which the cook assumes a different status in direct relationship to gender. Men, for example, are identified as subjects who cook as part of their profession rather as an

[5] Lindsay Kelley, *Bioart Kitchen. Art, Feminism & Technoscience* (United Kingdom: I. B. Tauris, 2016).

obligation. In particular, I address how cooking is also embedded in hospitality discourse bearing in mind the relationships between the guest, the host, and the servant.

In the third section I turn my attention to artistic practices that give special attention to culinary language, particularly those that focus on recipes—texts deemed crucial for safeguarding and transmitting culinary identity—but that at the same time escape the traditional written and oral tradition. I compare the artistic approach of Sonja Alhäuser's pictorial recipes and Ferran Adrià's culinary ideograms, which aim to simplify the transmission of culinary techniques used for cooking his signature dishes while endorsing a professionalisation of culinary knowledge.

Lastly, in the fourth and final section of this chapter, and following Jacques Derrida's writings on hospitality, I explore culinary language in relationship to the notion of nostalgia. I focus on migration, the mobility of the recipe and the importance of the kitchen in terms of hospitality for and to the other. I focus on Jennifer Rubell's installation *Made in Texas* (2011), particularly because it addresses migrants' food practices and how these go through the process of adaptation and adoption of different cultural influences and ingredients of recipes.

2.1 The genderisation of cooking and the kitchen.

In similarity to the gathering of edibles, scholars refer to the opposition of nature and culture as that which leads to other categories that endorse exclusionary practices, for example the opposition between men and women which divides cooking practices, spaces, and roles in terms of gender. In *A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen: The Evolution of Women Chefs*, executive chef Ann Cooper identifies women as being responsible for the domestication of fire, arguing that they had a closer relationship with this element as home-keepers.[6] According to Cooper, "since the beginning of time, [women were] the tamers of fire, the inventors of most daily cooking tools, and the creators of most elementary cooking techniques".[7] Similarly, sociologist Jean-Claude Kaufmann links fire to the genealogy of cooking, emphasising the sociocultural relationships arising from cooking and eating, and pointing out that gender greatly influences activities in the kitchen and during cooking.[8]

Claude Lévi-Strauss, one of the most cited anthropologists in cultural and food studies, gives special emphasis to the relationship nature–culture, arguing that cooking has a transformative cultural capacity. In *The Raw and The Cooked*, he analyses South American indigenous myths that speak of eating and cooking to explain the evolutionary development of a community's cultural process.[9] Lévi-Strauss proposes cooking as a language that is structured based on binary oppositions. He considers fire and cooking as markers of culture because they emphasise the transition from a natural state to culture.[10] To explain this, he

[6] Ann Cooper, *"A Woman's Place is in the Kitchen": The Evolution of Women Chefs* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1998), 3.
[7] Ibid., 2. Cooper highlights the close relationship of women with fire as a way to place them higher than men on the value scale inside the professional kitchen.
[8] Kaufmann, *The Meaning of Cooking*.
[9] Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*, 1:35. This work provides the foundation of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist model of analysis. Lévi-Strauss's methodology includes taking a representative myth from a specific group, to which he refers as "key myth". This then served as a standard to which he compared and analysed other mythological narratives.
[10] Ibid., 1:169, 188–211. Lévi-Strauss argues that fire also exists within a framework of binary oppositions between nature and culture. He explains that myths often refer to two kinds of fire: one is closer to nature, which he explains as a celestial and destructive force that originates from natural phenomena; the other is described as a "terrestrial and creative" fire, a force that is in direct

proposes the model of the *culinary triangle*, in which he argues how the raw—the natural—transforms to rotten as part of a natural transformation, or, alternatively, it can be subjected to a cultural transformation through cooking, by means of fire.[11] In the same fashion, Lévi-Strauss considers that eating behaviours are influenced by the opposition between nature and culture. He contends that animals lack the ability to select the food they eat, and eat instinctively any foodstuff they perceive as edible. In contrast, he explains, humans are socially required to distinguish between non-edible and edible matter, the latter often identified as cooked products.[12] Furthermore, Lévi-Strauss's culinary triangle model explains cooking methods and food transformations such as roasting, boiling, and smoking in light of the opposition of nature versus culture.[13]

More importantly, Lévi-Strauss's arguments signal other binomial oppositions, such as inside–outside, low–high, or elaborated–unelaborated, that have served to identify cooking spaces and practices in a logic of exclusion based on space, class, and gender. Lévi-Strauss differentiates the space where cooking takes place in relationship to the cooking methods that are used, signalling them as determinants of who cooks in relation to their gender. *Endocuisine*, he explains, is cooking performed inside the home, aimed primarily at feeding small groups such as members of a family. He explains boiling as a cooking method that is performed inside the house and that makes use of receptacles like pots—which Pollan

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relationship to the fire used in the kitchen and for cooking, produced by mankind. For this reason, referring to both fire and cooking is a crucial element in the genealogy of cooking and cultural and human development in comparison to animal behaviour.

[11] It is worth noting that Lévi-Strauss explains the "culinary triangle" model but does not assume cooking is entirely bound to culture. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle", 35; Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*, 1:1, 164.

[12] In the words of Lévi-Strauss, "the jaguar and the man are polar opposites, and the contrast between them is doubly formulated in ordinary language: one eats raw meat, the other cooked meat; in particular, the jaguar eats man, but man does not eat the jaguar." Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*, 1:83, 87.

[13] Lévi-Strauss explains that roasting implies direct contact between raw food with fire; for this reason, it is identified as a method of cooking that is close to nature. Boiling and smoking, however, are cooking methods doubly mediated by nature/culture. Boiled food, in this case, does not require direct contact with fire; however, the use of a receptacle—a man-made object linked to culture—and hot water helps to identify this cooking process as being closer to culture. Similarly, smoking entails the use of fire but this is indirect, aided by another natural element (wind), which he also considers

suggests, refers both to the inside of the house as well as women's bodies.[14] Locating women inside the home, following patriarchal and phallocentric logic, further reinforces the idea of *endocuisine* as a practice performed by women. In opposition, *exocuisine* takes place in open spaces and includes roasting game for celebratory purposes and special occasions, including the reception of guests.[15] Roasting meat only requires a bonfire and a stick to hold the meat—in the most rustic and simple way, of course—which conveys the idea that this cooking method is more suitable for men, freeing them from carrying cooking utensils that would slow down the hunting game.

Associating exocuisine with men prevails nowadays, as seen in advertisements during sports games that portray a group of men gathered around the grill. Whenever these events take place, men take on the role as cooks, setting barbecues and roasting large amounts of meat outdoors. On these occasions, the pit fire is assumed to be a male space in which the cooking, portioning and distribution of meat is controlled by men. Furthermore, as Michael Pollan states, roasting is more than cooking outdoors:

> with the meat exposed to the flames, [...] the process itself [is also] exposed to the larger social world—[as] a public ritual conducted by men and open to outsiders.[16]

Overall, endo and exocuisines identify and limit cooking spaces, highlighting that the binary of man–woman is a factor that determines who cooks our food, where, and how. Anthropologist Adrienne Lehrer suggests that endo and exocuisines include other binaries, such as high–low, emphasising a system of hierarchies in

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as a receptacle. Hence, smoking is considered closer to culture. Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle", 29, 33.

[14] Pollan, *Cooked*, 97.

[15] In this respect, Michael Pollan also notes the key role of fire in the process of cooking: "It [roasting] is a powerful thing, the scent of meat roasting on an open fire, which is to say the smell of wood smoke combined with burning animal fat. We humans are strongly drawn to it. [...] Anthropologists tell us some such practice is very nearly universal in traditional cultures; indeed, you might say it is the absence of such a ritual in our own culture that is probably the greater anomaly. Though it may be that the faded outlines of such rituals can still be glimpsed in something like whole-hog barbecue." Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle", 30; Pollan, *Cooked*, 28–29.

relationship to class and power related to cooking practices.[17] Boiled food, she explains, characterises preserving meat and its juices almost in its entirety, thus conveying the idea of a cost-effective practice. Dishes like cassoulet use low-cost ingredients (inexpensive meat cuts and seasonal vegetables) that are boiled in water but, importantly, both meat and its juices are eaten in their entirety. Conversely, roasting is a cooking process that has a higher degree of loss and destruction due to its closeness to fire.[18] In this sense, Lehrer suggests that this sort of cooking is used by upper classes who can afford the loss of a certain amount of food.[19]

Following the triad: Shifting from structuralism to post-structuralism

Lévi-Strauss's idea of culture as a process of dual organisations permeated scholarship in cultural studies, anthropology, and sociology. Mary Douglas, Adrienne Lehrer and Luce Giard, for example, have discussed food and cooking, signalling relationships between gender, food, and language.[20] The three authors signal the positive impact of Lévi-Strauss's ideas while at the same time agree that an analysis based on binary oppositions gives restrictive and exclusionary results.

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[16] Pollan, *Cooked*, 97.

[17] Anthropologist Adrienne Lehrer follows Lévi-Strauss's triadic model to examine the semantic structure of cooking vocabulary within different languages. Lehrer proposes a tetrahedral model that includes frying as another axis of the culinary configuration, apart from boiling, roasting, and smoking, where she signals the similarities and differences of terms from language to language. Within this model, she discusses cooking terms, cooking substances, the amount of heat that is applied, and the cooking utensils that are used, using binary oppositions. However, Lehrer emphasises this model of analysis homogenises cooking practices, even though every culture classifies cooking methods they consider best. In this sense, Lehrer agrees with Douglas in saying that Lévi-Strauss's structuralist analysis has a limited scope when discussing food in relationship to culture. Adrienne Lehrer, "Cooking Vocabularies and the Culinary Triangle of Lévi-Strauss", *Anthropological Linguistics* 14 (1972): 166.

[18] Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle", 30. Other processes of food transformation linked to the idea of destruction, and in close relationship to the binary of rapid–slow, are those of the burned and the rotted. The first one is identified as a process of destruction caused by fire, while the rotted is explained as a natural transformation of the raw, hence linked to nature.

[19] Lehrer, "Cooking Vocabularies and the Culinary Triangle of Lévi-Strauss", 155, 158. Boiling and poaching, explains Lehrer, require specific amounts of water (or other water-based liquids such as wine or stock), but the quantity, intensity and duration of cooking varies from one to the other. Poaching, for instance, is considered a gentle method of cooking which aims to preserve the shape of the food, whereas boiling is a more aggressive cooking method.

Giard, for example, agrees with Lévi-Strauss's idea of *cuisine* as "a language through which [...] society unconsciously reveals its structure", arguing that it helps to discuss issues embedded to food and cooking, for example, 1) the characteristics of food that identifies it as edible matter; 2) the cultural variations of the modes of food elaboration, comprising the combinations of ingredients when cooking and serving, some of which are not permitted within specific cultural contexts, for example the Jewish tradition of Kashrut; 3) the behaviour of subjects at the table; 4) when meals are consumed, like rituals and celebrations; and 5) even the processes of ingestion and expulsion.[21] By the same token, Mary Douglas explores food's cultural taboos in relationship to the notion of pollution, following Lévi-Strauss's structuralist model of analysis. In *Purity and Danger*, she discusses the meanings of dirt within different cultural contexts, particularly focusing on food rituals in the Jewish book of Leviticus.[22] Similarly, in "Deciphering a meal"—one of Douglas's most cited and referenced works in food studies—she argues that food is a code which represents a specific culture and helps to establish "pattern[s] of social relationships".[23] Meals, explains Douglas, are "a structured social event which structures others in its own image"; for instance, she mentions that based on its temporality, meals which are prepared less frequently are often associated with and reserved for feasts and celebrations.[24]

The critiques of Lévi-Strauss's ideas highlight this approach as one which endorses exclusionary practices, especially because of the binaries of nature–culture, subject–object, and mind–body. Post-structuralists and ecofeminists like Verena Conley explain that Lévi-Strauss's dialectic logic presumes a discourse that favours a hegemonic Western logic that assumes culture over nature, and which fails to acknowledge the complexities of human life. In *Ecopolitics: The Environment in*

[20] Other authors include Joy Adapon, *Culinary Art and Anthropology* (Oxford ; New York: Berg, 2008); Melissa Elliott Skidmore, "Consuming Cultures: The Culinary Poetics of Francophone Women's Literature" (Ph.D., University of Texas, 2005).
[21] Giard, "Doing-Cooking," 180–81.
[22] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*, Routledge Classics (London and New York: Routledge, 1966).
[23] Mary Douglas, "Deciphering a Meal," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 36.

Poststructuralist Thought, Conley argues for a more embracing approach that no longer relies on binary oppositions, instead favouring a more respectful approach to other beings, i.e. to think of humans as part of all living species and to reject the idea of a human-centred existentialism.[25] Similarly, Jacques Derrida criticises Lévi-Strauss's binomial logic, specifically in *Of Grammatology*, where he opposes the classification of language based on binary oppositions, arguing that this gives rise to an exclusionary system of interpretation that perpetuates a biased relationship of power between objects, concepts, and/or subjects. The use of binaries, explains Derrida, posits two sides of a relationship, one side that acts as the dominator while the other is dominated.[26] Feminists like Val Plumwood, Donna Haraway and Hélène Cixous further emphasise that the oppositions of nature–culture, high–low, and men–women endorse gender inequalities, for example assuming cooking is an action considered to be women's task, or natural.[27]

[24] Ibid., 44.
[25] Conley further notes that "Lévi-Strauss speaks against a hierarchical system that advocates expansion and colonialism, [without] being gender-specific." Verena A. Conley, *Ecopolitics: The Environment in Poststructuralist Thought*, Feminism for Today (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1997), 20, 36.
[26] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 20.
[27] Conley, *Ecopolitics: The Environment in Poststructuralist Thought*, 107.

2.2 Cooking gender.

Inequality in the kitchen still responds to the binary oppositions highlighted by Lévi-Strauss. However, I suggest, these have been disguised as the professionalisation of cooking, aided by the growing figure of the (male) chef in the media and popular culture, and emphasise exclusionary practices linked to the notion of hospitality. In the following paragraphs, I address relationships of gender inequality in domestic and professional cooking spaces, paying special attention to: 1) the origin of the hierarchical structure of the kitchen; 2) the relationship of domination and power between the chef, cooks, and the *cuisinière*; and 3) the implications of the patriarchal and phallogocentric logic that considers the domestic kitchen as a woman's place versus a professional kitchen dominated by men, like those in catering and *hotêllerie*.

The efforts to portray cooking as a genderless activity are, in reality, a fallacy as it still relies on patriarchal discourses that state that men and women assume different roles. Gender-related asymmetries permeate the kitchen within the hospitality industry and at home. The association of women to nurturing has reinforced the assumption that they belong to the [domestic] kitchen, justifying their enclosure inside this place. Men's active performance in cooking, however, has led to a re-evaluation of this activity, from a diminished and non-intellectual activity into a valuable and recognised professional endeavour. This idea still reinforces the marginalisation of the cook in direct relationship to gender, as well as other binary oppositions like high–low or domestic–professional, and this has helped to culturally define culinary discourses and narratives.

In like manner, the question of sexual difference, the division of labour and the segregation of women in professional cooking spaces is portrayed in visual culture. The film *Les Saveurs du Palais* (2012), for example, presents a story inspired by the life of Danièle Mazet-Delpeuch, the first female chef working in the *Palace de l'Élysée* kitchen, the official residence of the President of the French Republic

François Mitterrand (1988–1990).[28] Before the arrival of Madame Mazet-Delpeuch—Madame Hortense Laborie in the film—the kitchen is assumed to be a space reserved and dominated by male chefs and cooks. *Les Saveurs du Palais* shows cooking as a professional activity which entails unequal relationships between those who cook, the spaces where it is performed, and those for whom food is cooked and served.

In *Les Saveurs du Palais*, the disparity of working conditions due to gender is clearly exemplified, showing the rejection and harassment faced by women in the so-called "professional" kitchen, especially by high-ranking male chefs. This film depicts the conflicting gender opposition at play within the professional kitchen, operating at all levels, not only as a fictional story but also emphasising that this sort of situation is no different in real life. The kitchen led by a male chef is organised in ranks; conversely, the kitchen led by a female chef is portrayed as a creative, private, and comforting space, where cooking is a pleasurable, professional activity. For instance, Laborie is portrayed as a relatively famous *cuisinière* from the Périgord region known for cooking traditional French dishes.[29] Her arrival in the capital and at the residence of the head of state inserts her into a male-dominated space where phallogocentric and patriarchal logic is constantly exercised. Her arrival challenges those who doubt her cooking abilities, labelling them as domestic, inappropriate, or not sufficiently haute cuisine for the President and his guests. Laborie is relegated from the main kitchen and allocated a smaller one, far from other cooks. Yet, she is encouraged to cook traditional dishes directly by the head of state who is bored with haute cuisine dishes and wants to eat simple and traditional food that reminds him of a simple life in the French countryside.

[28] Christian Vincent, *Les Saveurs du Palais*, DVD, Biography, Comedie (Wild Bunch Distribution, 2012).
[29] I use the term *cuisinière* following the tradition in the kitchen that uses it to refer to a woman cooking and differentiates it from the cook and/or the chef. The term suggests, furthermore, that this woman does not hold the same place/importance in comparison to the chef, the head of the kitchen.

Scholars have paid special attention to gender inequalities and cooking, and how women are treated differently in professional kitchens compared to men. Charlotte Druckman, for example, recalls the essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" by art historian Linda Nochlin to focus on women's practice inside the professional kitchen in comparison to men. In "Why are there no great women chefs?", Druckman argues that the traditional narratives consider the domestic kitchen as a woman's place, and reinforce the professional kitchen as a space dominated by men.[30] She highlights that the genderisation of the kitchen is closely related to binaries of high–low and mind–body in relation to who performs the cooking, and also by the time food is eaten and appreciated. Druckman explains that even if food does not taste different because of sexual difference, there are two main reasons that reinforce gender roles.[31] The phrase "women cook with the heart, [and] men cook with the head" positions women who cook in an unreflective manner, as if their actions are merely the result of a generous gesture to others, or even because they "have" to do it.[32] In other words, it assumes that women's cooking is "homely", simple, done straight from the heart and to please others—as a natural task inherent to their role as nurturers. Home cooking posits women, in the words of Jenny Lawson, as *domesticated goddesses*,[33] a discourse that relates the cooking done by a woman at home directly to her role as nourisher, provider, carer, and also as a mother.[34] Conversely, men's cooking is assumed to be a highly intellectual activity, of creative genius, but most importantly, as Druckman mentions, cooking becomes a "declaration of ego".[35]

The equation of women to the domestic and men to the professional spheres, furthermore, requires consideration of hierarchies and ranks established in professional cooking spaces, especially in light of the terms chef, cook, and

[30] Charlotte Druckman, "Why Are There No Great Women Chefs?," *Gastronomica: Journal of Food and Culture* 10, no. 1 (February 2010): 24–31.
[31] Ibid., 27.
[32] Ibid., 25.
[33] Jenny Lawson, "Food Legacies: Playing the Culinary Feminine," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 21, no. 3 (November 2011): 337–66.
[34] Sherrie A. Inness, *Secret Ingredients: Race, Gender, and Class at the Dinner Table*, 1st ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 71.

cuisinière. Kauffman explains that the term *cuisinière* encloses women in the traditional domestic role with responsibility for cooking, whereas the terms chef and cook are male nouns which refer to a subject that cooks, takes decisions, and acts as a leader.[36] The role and status of the chef started to be recognised in this way at the end of the eighteenth century in France, a period when gastronomy emerged as a major topic of discussion. During this time, women were not allowed into luxury restaurants unless they were accompanied by their husbands. Furthermore, only those men with unrestricted access to restaurants were gradually considered as *connoisseurs*. The role of the chef as we know it emerged during this time, and in light of the ideas of *connoisseurs*, male chefs gained a higher status, justified by their skills and sense of aesthetics, which supposed the emergence of the category of the "artist-cook", as Giard explains.[37] Overall, the terms *chef* and *cook* have served to exclude women, underestimating their work and knowledge both in professional and domestic spaces.

The status of the chef and the growing professionalisation of the kitchen in the hospitality industry required a model of organisation that made the production line more effective and standardised. The kitchen is organised following a hierarchical model where the head chef acts as leader of all operations. This model was established by Georges Auguste Escoffier—one of the most recognised chefs and *restaurateurs* of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, also known as the "king of chefs"—while he was in charge of the Savoy Hotel in London.[38] Escoffier's model is based on military brigades, hence why his business partner, Cesar Ritz, referred to it as "a little army of hotel men for the conquest of London".[39] Organising the kitchen became more like a front line where the head chef commanded the orders to his subordinates who were then in charge of executing the cooking and

[35] Druckman, "Why Are There No Great Women Chefs?," 26.
[36] Kaufmann, *The Meaning of Cooking*, 159.
[37] Giard, "Doing-Cooking", 218.
[38] Hanna Briggs, "Escoffier: Britain's First Master Chef", *BBC Food*, November 12, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/0/20123168.
[39] F. Ashburner, "Escoffier, Georges Auguste (1846–1935)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (United Kingdom: Oxford DNB, May 2011), http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101050441/Georges-Escoffier.

presentation; however, once the dishes were at the *pass*, the chef gave his final judgement and approval before serving the food to clients.[40] The use of military terminology is not accidental; as Druckman argues, kitchen brigades are divided into lines, each of them dedicated to the preparation of a specific dish or component to make the service faster and more effective.[41] Escoffier's system was rapidly adopted by other chefs, and is still the standard system of organisation and division of labour in the kitchen.

Other elements that endorse a hierarchical system in the kitchen include the use of uniforms and their symbolisms used to differentiate the ranking of those in the kitchen, just as in the militia. The chef's hat or *toque* apart from contributing to sanitary purposes like avoiding hair in the plates, it reinforces the phallocentric structure of domination.[42] The *toque* becomes a phallic symbol that delimits power, spaces and ranks between those who wears it, and those who are subjected to their commandment. Furthermore, as Giard notes, the *toque* has also contributed to the exclusion of women in the kitchen; women were not allowed to use it for a long time. Thus in this sense, Giard considers that the toque served as a "symbol of the profession" as well as a "phallic one," bearing in mind that the height of the hat is directly related to the rank of the cook; which at the same time reinforces his manliness and ego.[43]

Furthermore, the genderisation of the kitchen entails women adapt their behaviour to professional cooking spaces, often trying to obscure their femininity by adopting masculine mannerisms in order to be accepted by their male peers. As a result, Druckman says this gives place to the "defeminization [of the] professional kitchen".[44] It is worth noting here that the term "feminine" is used in culinary

[40] The pass is a term used in the kitchen, derived from the word le *passage* in French, and meaning the way. It is where the assembling and final plating takes place before the plates leave the kitchen and arrive on the customer's table. Pim, "Two Chefs at the Pass", Blog, *Chez Pim*, (March 15, 2007), http://chezpim.com/travel/two_chefs_at_th.
[41] Druckman, "Why Are There No Great Women Chefs?," 30.
[42] This is the name of the tall, white hat used by chefs and was popular with Carême and Escoffier.
[43] Giard, "Doing-Cooking", 217.
[44] Ibid., 29.

criticism to describe visual representation and the aesthetics of a dish in terms of beauty, as "artistically designed plate presentations", according to Ellen Koteff.[45] This suggests that cooking inside professional kitchens gains the status of art, where the dish becomes the creation of an artist, someone trained and knowledgeable in the *art of cooking*.

The exclusion of women from cooking and dining spaces has gradually changed, although it has not been an easy task.[46] In this regard, chef Ann Cooper argues that during the nineteenth century, women from upper and middle classes were gradually accepted into culinary schools with the intention to teach them how to tend to their kitchens at home, emphasising the connection between their cooking and domesticity. However, since the mid-twentieth century, women have increasingly actively participated in the "culinary arena".[47] The presence of women in professional kitchens might have increased, but they still face a number of challenges to succeed, including physical and psychological aggression from sexist jokes to "comments, language, swearing, and rudeness [...] discrimination, harassment, and hazing", all of which, explains Cooper, has been part of the initiation rites for women in the hospitality industry.[48] Enduring this mistreatment and inequality is often expected, in line with the survival of the fittest, assuming these practices are normal behaviour, an inherent phenomenon of the professional kitchen and one that women must deal with. Furthermore, the brigade system and the categorisation of labour often allocates women subservient positions or gives

[45] Koteff explains in her text is that chefs tend to compare these artistically arranged dishes to the labour performed by florists, another work that is often alleged to be performed by women. The notion of femininity linked to beauty or artistically designed dishes is worth being explored in future research projects. Ellen Koteff, "Plated with a Feminine Flair", *FRS Magazine*, July 2013, https://www.fsrmagazine.com/food-beverage/plated-feminine-flair.
[46] Some female chefs have commented that they do not see gender as a barrier to success in the hospitality industry; however, they do say that women in this profession have to juggle between the long hours of these jobs, attending their children, and running a house. Richard Vines, "Times Are Changing': 19 Top Women Chefs on Gender Equality in the Kitchen", *Financial Post*, May 8, 2015, online edition, sec. Careers, http://business.financialpost.com/executive/careers/times-are-changing-19-top-women-chefs-on-gender-equality-in-the-kitchen; Deborah A. Harris and Patti Giuffre, "'The Price You Pay': How Female Professional Chefs Negotiate Work and Family", *Gender Issues* 27, no. 1 (2010): 27–52.
[47] Cooper, *A Woman's Place Is in the Kitchen*, 10, 20.
[48] Ibid., 93, 95.

them tasks that are deemed more suitable for them, for example in the pastry—or *pink*—section.[49] Patriarchal and phallogocentric logic prevails in the kitchen, whether you are female or male. The brigade system might help to organise the kitchen, but it still reinforces the division of labour due to gender.

The professional kitchen is a space that reverses the gendered stereotype of the kitchen as a feminine and domestic space, and turns it into a male-dominated, powerful, and exclusionary space. Relationships of power between higher and lower ranks increase exponentially if gender bias is added to the equation, giving place to a hostile environment for those seeking to serve and to offer a hospitable gesture to others. Some of these hostile practices are performed by male cooks and chefs, but in some cases by other women. Excused as a common practice, these practices reinforce gender roles that aim to convince women not to enter professional kitchens or to send them back to "where they belong", to the domestic kitchen, as shown in *Les Saveurs du Palais*. The film shows how Madame Laborie is repeatedly encouraged by the male head chef to avoid making herself at home inside this new cooking space, and to reconsider going back to her domestic—and rural—kitchen. Bearing this in mind, I contend that within the hospitality industry, the contradiction of hospitality becomes more apparent: only those considered guests, i.e. those paying to be served and to be fed, are treated hospitably. Meanwhile, those who materialise the gesture of hospitality by cooking food are treated with hostility. Moreover, the sovereignty of the kitchen still lies with that who holds power over this space and others.

[49] Anna Brones argues that the pastry section is often referred to as a culturally appropriate section of professional kitchens in which women can work. However, this categorisation once again binds women to determined cooking spaces and activities within phallogocentric logic. Anna Brones, "Cupcake Feminism: Is What We Bake a Matter of Gender?", *The Kitchn*, May 15, 2015, http://www.thekitchn.com/cupcakes-and-feminism-is-what-we-make-a-matter-of-gender-219424.

Hospitality and the kitchen: Why do women cook?

Women's exclusion from the professional kitchen also responds to hospitality's discourse. The paradox of hospitality—of welcoming and unwelcoming gestures constantly at play—requires consideration of women's identification as those responsible for materialising the gesture of hospitality, an argument which leads us back to gender roles related to the threshold and in the kitchen, as I will explain.

In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida explains that the host holds sovereignty over a place both at the micro and macro levels: the former refers to the domestic sphere, while the latter extends the notion of hospitality to a global scale, especially concerning migratory issues.[50] It is important to note that Derrida's view of the domestic focuses exclusively on the relationship of the master of the house and the foreigner, and does not include women, not even mentioning if they have an active or passive role. In contrast, Judith Still re-examines this issue and emphasises that hospitality "regulates relations between inside and outside, private and public" and in which sexual difference is at play.[51] Women's role in hospitality responds to the "conjugal, paternal and phallogocentric" model, i.e. it is subsumed to the subject who settles down the laws of hospitality, whether that is the "the familial despot, the father, the spouse, the boss, or the master of the house".[52] This traditional phallocentric schema comprises the idea of women as servants or mediators between the host and the guest, which ultimately reinforces women staying in the domestic space.

Sexual difference and patriarchal logic are constant and reiterative problems of hospitality. Still explains that women are not portrayed as hostesses or guests, but as mere servants bound to domestic spaces. They are contained inside the home to be no more than maids to the master of the house, even though they are the ones who "put into practice" hospitality. In other words, according to Still, women are

[50] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 5.
[51] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 11.
[52] Ibid., 67.

portrayed as being responsible for activities, such as the ritual washing of the guest, providing meals and arranging the lodging,[53] i.e. women are considered responsible for activities that aim to please the (male) guest and fulfil his needs, as servants of both the guest and the host—always the master of the house—or intermediaries between the host and the guest. For both parties, women are no more than another means of service. This point is key to understanding how cooking, the kitchen, and hospitality relate to each other, given that women act as "the material ground of hospitality by cooking and serving meals, cleaning houses and [being] providers of entertainment".[54] Moreover, Still signals the need to discuss domestic and everyday activities like cooking due to the shortage of philosophical and literary analysis of hospitality in relationship to women, but especially because women are often bound to fulfil "everyday nourishing" of others, both physical and emotional.[55] Activities considered feminine endorse the idea that women are carers and nourishers, but are not subjects who can assume the sovereignty of a space, like the kitchen, or act as givers of hospitality, as hosts.

Domestic cooking, in this sense, has reinforced phallocentric and patriarchal discourses that emphasise women as underestimated subjects whose labour is not fully recognised; in fact, their labour is disguised as hospitality. Cooking is assumed to be a generous act of hospitality that women offer to others, whether that is the partner and their children, or guests; however, this logic is imposed on women, making them believe it is their duty and therefore justifying the continuity of traditional roles that are mirrored in the professional realm.[56] Cooking should

[53] Still analyses Homer's *Odyssey*, as well as Jewish and Christian texts, especially the books of Genesis and of Judges in the Old Testament. Ibid., 60.
[54] To this extent, Still adds that women can be offered as sexual partners by the host, or sometimes assumed by the guest as another object contained in the host's threshold that he can consume, in this case by committing rape. Ibid., 122.
[55] Ibid., 124–25.
[56] It is worth noting the comments from two recognised female chefs in regard to gender roles and their profession. Hélène Darroze comments: "At one stage, you just have to make a choice. You have to be very, very involved for long hours—a difficult job when you are a chef. Many women want to be a wife; they want to be a mother. And I'm not sure that everything is compatible." Monica Galetti, similar to Darroze, mentions the difficulties of the job, especially in relationship to pregnancy: "at a certain stage in their career, it comes down to the choice of whether or not to have a family. A pregnant woman in the kitchen is not ideal or easy: I've been there. Taking time out to raise a child obviously will affect your time in a kitchen, which is normally 7 a.m. until midnight. Not everyone can

therefore be thought about within the logic of hospitality, distancing it from patriarchal and phallocentric assumptions, bearing in mind that cooking spaces require constant exercise of an ethics for and to the other that ultimately materialises as food.

The kitchen as a domestic place, or as a space for hospitality?

Thinking of cooking and hospitality requires consideration of the relevance of the space. The kitchen, as I have argued, is a place that has served the continuity of a male-centred discourse, when posited as a domestic female space—as a "woman's place". This idea, however, suggests that a woman holds sovereignty over this place. But can the kitchen be assumed as a space where the hospitable gesture emerges?

First thing to remember is that hospitality has an ambivalent relation to place. In *Of Hospitality*, Derrida explains the impossibility of granting hospitality without making reference to a specific place. To this extent, Mark Wigley argues that Derrida's writings foresee an architectural discourse as he constantly refers to the "place" where ethics take place, but more importantly, as Wigley suggests, Derrida's texts endorse exploring "the critical slippage between having a place, making a place, taking a place, and taking place".[57] The house remains a fundamental site of enquiry, as a space that delimits the boundary of the host's sovereignty and signalling the limits between the inside opposed to the outside.[58] Consequently, the house is key for hospitality to take place because it is where the host welcomes and receives the guest, foreigner, and stranger. As Wigley argues, the house is "an institution of domestication itself";[59] it is a place of constant struggle where relations of power between the master of the house and the rest of the residents take place, but also between the host and the guest, and the host and the servant. But more than the

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afford childcare and nannies." Vines, "Times Are Changing': 19 Top Women Chefs on Gender Equality in the Kitchen".

[57] Mark Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction: Derrida's Haunt* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 176–77.

[58] Ibid., 104.

[59] Ibid., 118.

reception of guests, a point I will return to in the next chapter, it is worth considering that the house demarcates internal limits and different spaces, each of them with a specific function. In this sense, the analysis of the kitchen in hospitality's discourse requires discussion about how subjects located inside the "familiar abode"— especially the one who cooks—are violently domesticated by a structure that disguises such violence, what Wigley argues as a "mechanism of mastery".[60] The host commands those inside the house to perform activities which are often disguised under the cover of inclusion but in fact serve to exclude. When the master of the house delegates cooking to another subject, often a woman, this leads the subject to believe they have an active role in hosting yet, in reality, it is the master of the house who is acknowledged by the guest for this act of hospitality.

The kitchen bears great importance in terms of hospitality, and also holds a special place inside the house, hence why it is often referred to as the *heart of the home*. It is the space where meals are created for guests; however, this place was not always located inside the threshold. Its relocation to the interior of the home was the result of the evolution of cooking techniques, from open fires outside the house to the use of cast iron stoves, and later to gas and/or electrical stoves, thus enabling cooking to take place inside a closed space.[61] Elizabeth Cromley explains that the relocation of the kitchen helped to change urban and architectural patterns, and explains that, in some cases, the detachment of the kitchen, making it an independent space, was in response to race, class and gender exclusions.[62] As Klein and Morton explain, in Southern English colonies in the United States, having external kitchens was common practice that delimited those who served (slaves) from those who were served (the master of the house, his family and his guests).[63]

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[60] Ibid., 134.
[61] Gena Philibert-Ortega, *From the Family Kitchen: Discover Your Food Heritage and Preserve Favorite Recipes* (Cincinnati: Family Tree Books, 2012), 53.
[62] Elizabeth C. Cromley, *The Food Axis: Cooking, Eating, and the Architecture of American Houses* (USA: University of Virginia Press, 2010).
[63] Danielle Klein and Berlisha Morton, "Mammy's Secret Smile: Challenging Stereotypes and Power Dynamics in the Southern Creole Plantation Kitchen", in *Reading and Representing the Southern Kitchen* (Gradute Symposium on Women, Work, and Food, University of Mississippi, Oxford, 2013).

Cromley adds that the kitchen was a space where women, both servants and housewives, worked while at the same time they remained separated from the rest of the house. It was a place "that friends would never see", and in this way protected both guests and residents by "spatially segregat[ing] kitchen-and-service zone from [other] social spaces".[64]

It was not until the nineteenth century when the kitchen was relocated inside the house, gaining a central space mainly because activities linked to nourishment took place. The notion of the kitchen as the *heart of the home*, however, entails a relation of power and of violence between those who inhabit the house, those who visit it, and those performing an action for guests. Needless to say, the displacement of the kitchen also relocated the cooking, therefore endorsing the cultural assumption of the kitchen as a place for women.

In *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, geographer Dolores Hayden explains how material feminists challenged the enclosure of women in domestic spaces in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[65] The terms *woman's sphere* and *woman's labour* were questioned and revised in light of the process of industrialisation and the exponential rise of capitalism in order to create alternative pathways which helped to overcome the isolation of women in domestic and urban spaces, as well as the invisibility of their labour by patriarchy. A woman's place, argues Hayden, is a "spatial boundary [where] the unpaid domestic labour [took place, thus giving rise to an] economic boundary of [the] woman's sphere".[66]

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[64] Elizabeth C. Cromley, "Transforming the Food Axis: Houses, Tools, Modes of Analysis", *Material History Review* 44, no. Fall 1996 (1996): 8.

[65] Hayden argues that material feminism was a movement that "dared to define a 'grand domestic revolution' in women's material conditions", following Marxist socialism and feminism that "stated that women's work must be controlled by women—economically, socially, and environmentally". Heidi Grasswick argues that New Material Feminism, in contrast, endorses the acknowledgement of the "political uses to which biological essentialism has been put historically", giving place to discourses that include embodiment and material objects such as the "forces, processes, capacities, and resiliencies with which bodies, organisms, and material objects act both independently of and in response to discursive provocations and constraints". Dolores Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution: A History of Feminist Designs for American Homes, Neighborhoods and Cities* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), 3, 6; Heidi E. Grasswick, ed., *Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011), 70.

[66] Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 13.

Domestic labour still is not recognised as a job in comparison to labour taking place in factories or in any other workplace. For this reason, material feminists proposed transforming "the private domestic workplace, the kitchen, in accordance with theories of domestic evolution".[67] This transformation entailed strategies that aimed to reframe urban and domestic spaces, shedding light on new ways of social organisation, including "housewives' cooperatives, new building[s with] kitchenless house[s], day care centre[s], public kitchen[s], community dining club[s, and a proposal for] ideal feminist cities".[68] It is worth noting that material feminists placed great interest in redefining women's material conditions as part of this "grand domestic revolution", in Hayden's words, in order to change the conceptualisation of the *housewife* and the "design of the domestic workplace" towards a notion of collectivity.[69]

Material feminists aimed to relocate the kitchen, to remove it from houses, and/or convert the kitchen from an isolated domestic place in which women had to perform *domestic drudgeries* into communal spaces where labour was equally distributed; however, this was not always accomplished. The reason, explains Hayden, was that the men remained the owners of the home, and women were only considered managers of the space.[70] Note that this still refers back to the idea of women as gatekeepers of food, resulting in an emphasis on the kitchen—and the home—as a woman's place. Second-wave feminists in the sixties and seventies further discussed this, emphasising their discontent in terms of sexual division in the household, and demanded that men should actively participate in women's work.[71] Even if the notion of domesticity was questioned, cooking and the kitchen were ignored mainly because, as Avakian and Haber explain, these activities were only considered "marker[s] of patriarchal oppression and, therefore, not worthy of

[67] Ibid., 17.
[68] Ibid., 3, 231.
[69] Ibid., 12.
[70] Ibid., 3.
[71] Ibid., 291.

attention".[72] This notion also assumed a rejection of taking part in cooking or other activities that the patriarchal logic framed as feminine, like knitting. In other words, the aim was to disengage women from domestic drudgery, or as Hayden refers, from the "*feminine mystique*".[73]

Bringing down the kitchen as a "woman's place"

Following on from Wigley, the genderisation of the kitchen requires thinking about domesticity and domestication as notions that give apparent power to women over this place. The kitchen, as I mentioned, is part of the domain of the master of the house, that who is sovereign of the entire space. Thus, the idea of the kitchen as a woman's place aims to disguise a pattern of domination and domestication of women using narratives that supposedly communicate a sense of independence. The notion of the feminine mystique gives the "false idea" of housework as a "fulfilling 'career' that [is] equally rewarding as work outside the home".[74] In this sense, feminists in the 1970s promoted the slogan "Out of the house" as a response and strategy to encourage women to pursue a professional career, and to achieve equality with men. However, women who were doing both domestic and professional work simultaneously were named *superwomen*, a term which has been heavily criticised by feminists as it served to justify double enslavement: at home and in the workplace.[75] To some extent, therefore, women were sold the idea that a fulfilling life included excelling in their roles as housewives and also as successful professionals.

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[72] Arlene Voski Avakian, ed., *Through the Kitchen Window: Women Explore the Intimate Meanings of Food and Cooking* (New York: Berg, 2005), 2.
[73] Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 3.
[74] Inness explains that Betty Friedman's *Feminine Mystique* (1963) contravenes the image of femininity and of the correct behaviour that women supposedly pursued, and where domestic chores and child-bearing was their only interest. Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 65.
[75] Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 293; Charlotte. Brunsdon, "Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella", *Cinema Journal* 44, no. 2 (2005): 112; Janann Sherman, *Interviews with Betty Friedan*, Reprint, Conversations with Public Intellectuals Series (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 342–43.

With the feminine mystique in mind, Sherrie Inness proposes the notion of the *cooking mystique* to refer to the "social [construct of] beliefs about food and gender" that has been imposed on women based on four main ideas: 1) cooking as a natural duty of women; 2) a duty that women happily accept; 3) cooking as a creative act; and 4) cooking as a means to show and prove love for family members and friends.[76] The sociocultural assumption of the above is emphasised by the media, suggesting that the role as cooks and gatekeepers of food is an aspirational goal that will fulfil women's lives.[77] It is worth noting, however, that Inness does not refer to women's cooking in a professional sphere. The idea of leaving the house and joining professional workplaces, as feminists like Charlotte Brunsdon and Angela McRobbie have endorsed, intended to differentiate women's identity from those "other women [housewives and homekeepers]" and to avoid reproducing and rehearsing the images of the women in the kitchen which television shows transmitted.[78] More recently, Jenny Lawson has argued that the media, specifically television cookery shows that target housewives, are responsible for portraying women as *domestic goddesses*, i.e. subjects who work and are independent but who happily do domestic chores yet embrace them not as a duty but as pleasurable activities that they convey as hospitable gestures to others.

Since the late 1960s and especially during the 1970s, artists addressed to gender-related problematic arising in the kitchen, following ideas of feminist scholars. As art historian Lucy Lippard argues, those artists that used domestic or household imagery in rejection of gender roles, emphasised their commitment to challenging assumptions that link women to domestic drudgery.[79] One clear example of the discomfort expressed by second-wave feminists and their effort to disengage women from the domestic and feminine (and cooking) mystique is the video performance *Semiotics in the Kitchen* (1975) by Martha Rosler. This performance

[76] Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 65.
[77] Inness mentions Peg Bracken's cookbook *I Hate to Cook* (1966) showing women's discontent in relationship to domestic chores, specifically related to cooking and the assumption that this task was a natural pleasure. Ibid., 68.
[78] Brunsdon, "Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella", 342.

shows the domestic kitchen as a space from where she opposes and counteracts patriarchal logic. The artwork has been constantly addressed by scholars as the rejection of domesticity and cooking as women's natural duty.[80] The performance deals with marketing strategies like those of Betty Crocker and in cooking shows like that of Julia Child in the 1960s and 1970s that reinforced the kitchen as a woman's place.

In *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Rosler enunciates an alphabetically ordered list that includes the use of different kitchen appliances, cooking techniques, and the subjects bound to the kitchen: women. Rosler dislocates everyday objects and the format of a televised cooking show that often conveys a sense of warmth and homeliness, and which she transforms into a rather cold, violent and enraging discourse that references women and their performance in the kitchen arena. As Rosler explains, this artwork intended to "transform [the woman] into a sign in a system of signs that represent a system of food production, a system of harnessed subjectivity".[81] *Semiotics of the Kitchen* presents "women as the creature in the kitchen. [But in this case,] the box [or television screen where the performance is shown, again] serves that function of the frame, or the cage" where women are contained.[82] The video shows Rosler facing the camera statically while holding a blackboard menu. Written in chalk, like in restaurants or bistros, the cook presents the title of her performance as a *menu du jour*.

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[79] Lucy R. Lippard, *The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Essays on Feminist Art*, Art Criticism. Women's Studies (New York: New Press, 1995), 62.
[80] Brunsdon, "Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella"; Lynn Hershman, Transcript of Interview with Martha Rosler 2006, Video, May 12, 2006, https://lib.stanford.edu/women-art-revolution/transcript-interview-martha-rosler-2006; Leslie Land, "Counterintuitive: How the Marketing of Modernism Hijacked the Kitchen Stove", in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies : Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, eds. Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber (United States of America: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 41–61.
[81] Museum of Modern Art, "Martha Rosler. Semiotics of the Kitchen", *MoMA*, 2011, http://www.moma.org/collection/works/88937.
[82] Hershman, Transcript of Interview with Martha Rosler 2006.



27. Screenshot from Martha Rosler's video performance *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975)

The camera pans out to show Rosler standing in the middle of a kitchen, behind a table. She is later seen putting down the blackboard and preparing herself for "cooking" as she puts on an apron. At the same time as she dresses up, the audience hears Rosler mentioning the word *A*pron, thus marking the beginning of the alphabetically ordered list of utensils. It is worth mentioning that by the time Rosler wears this apron, the artist is fulfilling the stereotypical image of a woman in the kitchen. Her posture and the setting further emphasise the parody of Rosler's performance, as she intends to mimic the scenery presented in television cooking shows: a domestic kitchen. Similarly, the enthusiastic character, positive energy, and the organised working manner reflected by presenters in these shows contrasts with the seriousness and rather cold histrionic style that Rosler performs. Cooking is not the main aim of this "show", as the public will soon notice. The alphabetical order continues, and the kitchen tools on display clearly intend to demonstrate more than their function as kitchen appliances, even if Rosler also mimics how to use them. The *E*ggbeater, for example, is energetically beaten inside an empty bowl; the *I*ce pick is repetitively and violently used to "stab" the wooden board. Rosler presents herself as the ideal image of women as "domestic goddesses". Nonetheless, she does not appear as a happy woman cooking in a kitchen, but as

one that is no longer satisfied performing this role, as the patriarchal schema and the media have led women to believe. In *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Rosler avoids acting as a presenter that cooks and shares her culinary knowledge; on the contrary, what Rosler shows is her anger for being allocated a specific place due to gender constraints where women are also expected to excel and look good.

The discomfort, anger, and frustration becomes more evident when she shows how to use the *N*utcracker, crushing imaginary nuts as she looks straight to the camera, as if she intended to make direct eye contact with the viewer. It is worth noting that cooking show audiences were mainly housewives who, as Laura Shapiro explains, did not know that the purpose of these TV characters was to accomplish a lucrative strategy that aimed to "reeducate homemakers" by portraying an interest in the consumers, without involving them.[83]

Rosler not only challenges the patriarchal schema that fixes women in the kitchen; her anger is also the result of industrial and capitalist discourses that undermine housework as an unpaid job, justifying it as women's natural labour and source of satisfaction.[84] In this sense, Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen* criticises women's oppression on two fronts: as a critique of the home as a "spatial [and] isolated domestic workplace"; and as "an economic critique of unpaid household work".[85] A similar strategy also occurs by the time Rosler is about to finish the alphabet; for the letters U to Z, Rosler holds a knife and fork and brandishes them as she mimics the shape of the letters. By the time she mentions the "U", it appears as if she indirectly refers to "You", calling forward the feminine "other", i.e. women who are presumably watching her cooking show. Rosler's infuriated state is evident in her body language. For the letter "Y", she raises both arms wide open, moves her head

[83] Laura Shapiro, "'I Guarantee': Betty Crocker and the Woman in the Kitchen", in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies : Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber (United States of America: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 30.
[84] Shapiro argues that the industrialisation of the kitchen brought to light the need to create corporate spokeswomen (like Betty Crocker) that would re-educate housewives about cooking with the excuse of saving time and avoiding unnecessary drudgery that would result being able to better please their husbands and children. Shapiro, "'I Guarantee': Betty Crocker and the Woman in the Kitchen".

backwards, and as she enunciates the letter "Y"—or in this case "why?"—Rosler appears to question patriarchal and phallocentric logic that has enclosed women in the house, encaging them inside the kitchen, questioning why these discourses still try to reinforce women's accomplishments in light of domestic chores, but also questioning why women in these shows continue to endorse practices that encourage "educating" other women in domestic drudgery. To some extent, the *samurai-style* position that Rosler adopts by the end of the video visually encourages women to subvert the patriarchal discourse where women are located in the kitchen, and to embrace a more active role in public and political arenas.



28. Screenshot from Martha Rosler's video performance *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (1975)

Since the 1990s and with more emphasis through the beginning of the 21st century, feminist scholars have claimed the need to study food practices as a means to understand, according to Avakian and Haber, "how women reproduce, resist and rebel against gender constructions as they are practices and contested in various sites".[86] Contemporary scholars no longer consider the kitchen "off limits" for women's studies, and at the same time, food studies has recognised food practices

[85] Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 295.
[86] Avakian, *Through the Kitchen Window*, 2.

are gendered.[87] Both disciplines interweave and complement each other in order to highlight cultural and spatial particularities of the kitchen, acknowledging cooking and the so-called "woman's place" in a positive manner. The analysis and writings about food and the kitchen have moved from "the invocation of a monolithic woman, and taken the contextualisation of gender within other social formations", bearing in mind poststructural, postmodern and postcolonial theoretical discourses.[88] As a means to introduce the key concept of difference, scholars embrace the third-wave feminist perspective including both first-wave feminism that demanded equal rights with men and second-wave feminism that emphasised "women's right to remain *outside* the linear time of history and politics".[89]

The relationship between food and women is one that lingers between empowerment and disempowerment. Cooking food allegedly gives women a sense of power, reflected in the control of edibles. In this same fashion, the kitchen is appropriated and reframed as a place of empowerment where women can act freely and have the possibility to stand against the patriarchal system by establishing this place as a place for women's community. Nonetheless, as some authors have noted, the discourse of oppression and domination is not simply erased by suggesting the kitchen as a communal space.

Feminist literature scholar Maite Zubiaurre examines feminist discourses that posit cooking as a "powerful language geared towards female liberation", signalling how they dismiss the idea that the kitchen also mirrors class and racial hierarchy outside the home.[90] Once again, this suggests that the kitchen is not a space that welcomes all *others* but is one where "community, solidarity and egalitarian justice among women" is only shared by women from the same sociocultural and economic background.

[87] Ibid., 7.
[88] Ibid.; Elizabeth Nathanson, "As Easy as Pie: Cooking Shows, Domestic Efficiency, and Postfeminist Temporality", *Television & New Media* 10, no. 4 (July 1, 2009): 311–30.
[89] Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time", in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, Reprint (United Kingdom: Blackwell, 1986), 187.

In her article, Zubiaurre proposes the terms *kitchen tales* and *table narratives* to differentiate and examine the intricacies posited by literary works where the kitchen is interpreted as a "locus for female identity formation and communal solidarity among women [...] where cooking turns into a powerful language of self-representation".[91] *Kitchen tales*, she explains, assume women in a domestic yet magical realm—including, as Zubiaurre mentions, figures of witches, virgins, nurturers and mothers—but in which they have no public influence whatsoever. By contrast, *table narratives* portray women taking part in commensality, as consumers of food, rather than merely being producers of edibles.[92] Zubiaurre examines Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water For Chocolate*, challenging feminist readings of this work that contend the kitchen is a site of female community and solidarity, and where cooking and knitting are considered alternative activities of insurgence against the patriarchal order. She does, however, agree with scholars Meredith Abarca and Kari Salkjelsvic, who propose that Esquivel's novel sheds light on transforming the kitchen from an "invisible, non-productive domestic space into an aesthetically and ethically productive sphere".[93] The kitchen, according to Esquivel, is set up under patriarchal logic and framed as "woman's place", even though the women inside it embrace it as a space that gives them some sort of liberation from schemes of domination, domestication, and submission. Nevertheless, Zubiaurre highlights that positing the kitchen as a space that empowers women generally fails to recognise that the idea of female bonding is not always achieved.

The romanticised idea that posits the kitchen as a place that empowers women is challenged by scholars such as Zubiaurre, whose analysis suggests this way of thinking undoubtedly refers, once again, to a relationship of domination and of

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[90] Maite Zubiaurre, "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction: From Kitchen Tales to Table Narratives", *College Literature* 33, no. 3 (2006): 30.
[91] Ibid., 34.
[92] Ibid., 30–31.
[93] Meredith E. Abarca, "Los Chilaquiles de Mi 'Ama': The Language of Everyday Cooking", in *Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American Women and Ethnic Food*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 31. Also cited in Zubiaurre, "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction", 35.

domestication that needs to be contested in terms of gender, class and ethnicity, bearing in mind that the logic that permeates in all of this is that of difference, of considering the *other* as a stranger.[94]

Most importantly, however, now is the time to contest the kitchen as a space that no longer endorses or privileges the individual, but that instead seeks the communal. The image of the kitchen has changed drastically, from a position that supposes it as a closed and hidden space that served to exclude others, gradually transformed into an open space, embracing the welcoming, hosting and sharing of food within a logic of inclusion. Under these circumstances, it is therefore necessary to question if the kitchen is, or can become, a space of hospitality disjointed from patriarchal and phallocentric logic as a woman's place. The same for cooking, an activity supposedly designated to women—although only within the domestic sphere. This idea is particularly emphasised by contemporary artists who stage relational artworks in the kitchen, or cook as a collective practice inside museums and galleries.

The kitchen: A place for hospitality, a place that welcomes others

The kitchen as the centre of the house has been considered, since the second half of the twentieth century, as a space of conviviality, communality, and hospitality. The domestic space is reframed by scholars, interior designers and architects from its undervalued position, highlighting: that the kitchen is no longer a space designed and allocated to a specific gendered subject if one considers the notion of hospitality; feminist ideas regarding the domestic space and the kitchen; contemporary architectural discourses of an *open kitchen*; and relational artistic practices that simulate or emulate the culinary arena. The kitchen in these particular cases, I contend, transforms from an exclusionary place into one that welcomes others, a space for hospitality.

[94] Zubiaurre, "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction," 35.

Contemporary architectural discourses have modified the cultural relevance of the kitchen from one which was once hidden—to prevent guests witnessing the messy process of cooking, smelling odours from waste, but, most importantly, to disguise the subject responsible for cooking, often the servants—and have transformed it into an open, relaxed, and comfortable place where the host can receive guests, entertain them, and cook for them, all at the same time.[95] This model, known as an *open-plan kitchen*, makes the heart of the home accessible, showing all activities related to the preparation of food.[96] It appears, to some extent, that by opening the kitchen to guests, particularly by showing the activities that take place in there, the host further emphasises his hospitable gesture, allowing guests to enter freely and without any restraint in his abode. As Derrida argues, giving hospitality assumes letting the stranger in, i.e. granting *open access* to everything—and everyone—that is contained inside the host's domain so that the guest remains comfortable and welcomed. In this sense, opening the kitchen transforms the cook into what Cromley argues is a "kitchen manager", a subject who also "participate[s] in the social life of the house" while simultaneously displaying his culinary skills and knowledge.[97]

Open-plan kitchens have changed the behaviour of the host who is now willing to actively participate. In Caroline McGhie's words, the "host want[s] to be in the midst of the action, [and] not cut off down the hall".[98] Instead of subordinating other subjects to materialise the hospitable act, it is the host him/herself who will transform the intangible welcoming into material forms, i.e. into food and drinks. Needless to say, this again reframes the hierarchy of the home in which the kitchen becomes the heart of the host's dwelling. However, it is worth questioning, for

[95] Cromley, "Transforming the Food Axis", 16; Kelly Hoppen, "Kitchens: The Heart of the Home", *Huffington Post*, August 18, 2011, Online edition, sec. Huffpost Lifestyle, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/kelly-hoppen/kitchens-the-hearth-of-th_1_b_930136.html.
[96] Cromley, "Transforming the Food Axis," 16–17.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Caroline McGhie, "Kitchens: The Happy, Hi-Tech Heart of the Home", *The Telegraph*, February 12, 2010, Online edition, sec. Property: Interiors and shopping,

example, what sort of hosts designers are thinking about. Is it a male or female subject they conceive as a host? Is the hosting and the open-plan kitchen still architecturally conceptualised under the logic of phallocentric and patriarchal discourses? In other words, it is necessary to consider the conditions in which the kitchen surpasses the dichotomy of subordinator–subordinated, and where the host becomes the subject that no longer commands another subject(s) to produce goods or services for the guest and members of the family. When thinking of the kitchen as a space that promotes a communitarian approach, rather than being an isolated space, the host embraces the role of producer of the hospitable act.

This suggests that the activities taking place inside this space would be equally distributed among those performing or willing to perform the role as a host. Hosting turns into a communitarian act instead of an individual one. Furthermore, considering that the kitchen has been progressively moved and dislocated from the outside to the inside of the home, covered and uncovered, it is worth revising the contemporary architectural discourse that claims the kitchen is an open space where the cooking is no longer disguised. The notion of openness, I propose, allows the guest entering the abode to participate in the hosting activities. Related to this, Hayden notes that material feminists' ideas regarding architectural and urban design plans and proposals might take place in the future considering the environmental and demographic changes taking place in cities, such is the case of the gradual transformation of the domestic space into community kitchens, or even kitchenless houses. Hayden suggests this could help end "women's labour in all societies".[99] At the same time, I suggest we need to reinforce the transformation of the hospitable gesture by embedding the host in a communitarian approach where the kitchen is opened to guests, and s/he no longer commands other subjects to cook and serve, because everyone will do so. As a result, the guest will no longer

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http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/interiorsandshopping/7207023/Kitchens-the-happy-hi-tech-heart-of-the-home.html.

[99] Hayden, *The Grand Domestic Revolution*, 302.

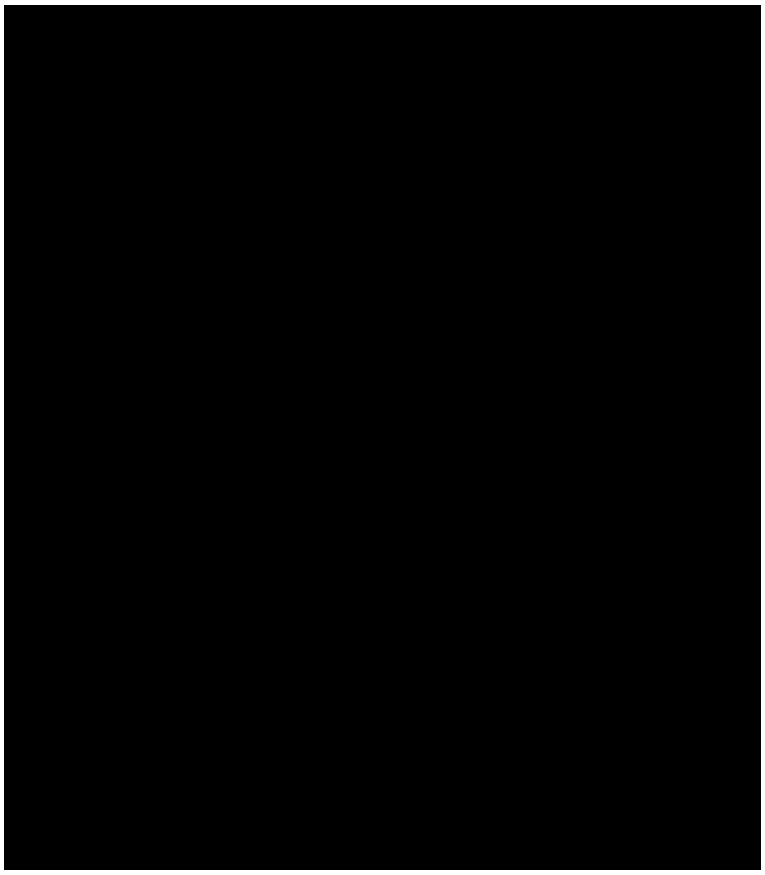
stand in a position where s/he needs to contest the authority of the master of the house, as Derrida argues.[100]

This communitarian approach is mirrored by artistic practices. Artists address the kitchen in a more inclusive manner, portraying cooking and hosting as activities that are not necessarily related to a specific gendered subject. Artists from the sixties and seventies like Daniel Spoerri, the founder of *Eat Art*, or Gordon Matta-Clark opened restaurants where artists cooked for their public and the artistic community, hence introducing food as part of artistic practices that made the public active participants of the artworks.[101] The public became performers, co-creators, and consumers of art, literally. Or in the words of Renate Buschmann, food-based artistic practices intended to "designate artworks enriched with the edible that featured reflexions on eating and taste as an integral component, and which in the end did not preclude their consumption".[102] Similarly, artworks since the early 1990s have embraced discourses of hospitality and architectural and interior design, envisioning the kitchen as an "open" space where the host is allowed to intervene directly in the materialisation of hospitality, namely cooking and serving.

[100] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 5.

[101] Spoerri's restaurant inside Galerie J in Paris (1963) was the first time in art history that an artist acted as a cook in their own restaurant, hiring art critiques as waiters. In the case of Matta-Clark's restaurant FOOD in Soho, New York (1971), was conceived as an open space for other artists, where they could work and eat, a space without restrictions. Elisabeth Hartung, "Comida, arte y comunicación. La comida como nuevo modelo de recepción artística", in *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX.*, ed. Darío Corbeira (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002), 132.

[102] Renate Buschmann, "Evocations of Pleasure and Disgust. Daniel Spoerri and the Establishment of Eat Art", in *Eating the Universe: Vom Essen in Der Kunst*, ed. Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Galerie im Taxispalais (Innsbruck, Austria), and Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (Köln: DuMont, 2009), 235; Cecilia Novero, *Antidiets of the Avant-Garde: From Futurist Cooking to Eat Art* (USA: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).



29. Le coin du Restaurant Spoerri, 1968



30. Gordon Matta-Clark in FOOD in 1971

Rikrit Tiravanija, an Argentinian-born artist known for his performances and installations, proposed culinary strategies in which the kitchen functions as an open

and itinerant space that welcomes members of the public. Tiravanija cooks for the public to help engage participants in temporary relationships where they share both meals and conversations. His Thai food installations dislocate the domestic and private place of the kitchen, transforming it into hospitable public places in a similar fashion to those of the sixties and seventies.

Artists like Tiravanija emphasise the change in contemporary art practices, focusing on the public's participation as a key role in the artworks, but most importantly, as Nicolas Bourriaud suggests, proposing them as *open*-ended relational artistic practices that address the connections of "human relations and their social context beyond private and autonomous spaces".[103] For Bourriaud, artworks like those of Tiravanija reflect the critical approach of artists in the nineties towards social and cultural practices, in this case, for example, suggesting how cooking highlighted the sociality and conviviality of eating with others.



31. Rikrit Tiravanija in Art Basel 2011

[103] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Collection Documents Sur L'art (France: Les Presses du Réel, 2002), 142.

Tiravanija's cooking actions open the cooking space as part of an artistic practice and, to some extent, his action mirrors architectural discourses that frame the kitchen as an "open space".[104] In Elisabeth Hartung's words, Tiravanija creates a "cultural framework that endorses the attention of the public through everyday acts within an artistic context".[105] He overturns and repositions the kitchen from a domestic place to a space open for and to others, where hosting is performed in a less restrictive manner. In other words, even if the artist cooks for the public, this action is not imposed as a task. Within these artworks, artists are not servants but hosts who willingly renounce the power of the space, instead allowing an equal relationship between those who enter the gallery and those he talks to over dinner. Tiravanija's actions are characterised as *performed artistic hospitality*, welcoming others to share the experience of preparing meals and eating. Within this logic, the kitchen acts as an artistic space but also one where cooking takes place as an act of hospitality.

[104] Darío Corbeira, "Comer o no comer: comer, crear, pensar, disfrutar", in *Comer o no comer o las relaciones del arte con la comida en el siglo XX.*, ed. Darío Corbeira (Salamanca: Centro de Arte de Salamanca, 2002), 15–22; Paul Ardenne, *Un Art Contextuel: Création Artistique En Milieu Urbain, En Situation, D´intervention, de Participation* (Paris: Flammarion, 2002).
[105] Hartung, "Comida, arte y comunicación. La comida como nuevo modelo de recepción artística," 82.

2.3 Culinary language in the contemporary art scene.

Learning to cook can take place in two different contexts: the domestic realm or the academic/professional space.[106] It is common belief, however, that the subject who teaches to cook in the domestic realm is addressed as a woman, as professional chefs, both male and female, often justify their desire and love for cooking as an experience inherited by and learned from their mothers, grandmothers or other female relatives.

The transmission of recipes intends to share culinary knowledge, whether that is as cookbooks or sole recipes. In both cases, these culinary texts can be passed from one generation to the other, giving the new owner the role of guardian or protector, rooted to notions of protectiveness, ownership, and the homeland. However, recipes and cookbooks can also be gifted to someone who does not necessarily belong to the same familiar group, or even to a foreigner. Moreover, recipes form part of both oral and written traditions; they constitute the "know-how" of cooking, one that is constantly passed to others, transformed and modified along the way.

Contemporary art practices reframe culinary knowledge and its transmission as visual texts. In this section, I focus on visual representations of recipes showing the evolution of culinary language from oral tradition to written form, including the image of food as another kind of text, often more important than what is written. My interest, however, is not in artworks that depict food, but in those where artists show their interest in the cooking process by drawing, sketching or painting recipes. Particularly, I compare Sonja Alhäuser's pictorial recipes where she erases any trace of written text; and Michelin-star chef Ferran Adrià's pictographic code using molecular cooking techniques developed alongside graphic designer Marta Méndez, as a new approach to writing recipes. In these cases, the recipe becomes a visual narrative where the portrayed becomes the main text. Put it more simply, the images not only become a feature that accompanies the step-by-step narrative, but

[106] Cooper, *A Woman's Place Is in the Kitchen*.

in most cases they effectively portray what is intended to be cooked. Furthermore, I suggest that by doing so, artists' culinary language becomes an essential part of the hospitable relationship with the public who views the recipes. Culinary knowledge is gifted to others as part of an artistic artwork, but most importantly, showing a hospitable gesture beyond those who partake in the activities in the kitchen. In contrast, recipes shared by chefs' like Adrià are only shared with those who belong to the professional kitchen. His practice and approach to culinary knowledge emphasises how culinary language, gender and the professionalisation of the kitchen still respond to a logic of exclusion despite being embedded within a narrative of hospitality.

The evolution of culinary language: From tales to recipes and cookbooks.

The kitchen is more than just a place for cooking. According to cookbook scholar Janet Theophano, it is a place where "mothers, servants, children and others read and wrote [...] Cookbooks and recipe collections were a 'place' where they could engage in compiling, editing, categorising, composing, and responding to written texts."[107] The kitchen is therefore a place where literacy is developed and where recipes are passed from one generation to the next. Historically, the exchange of culinary knowledge was a word-of-mouth tradition, passed through songs and storytelling. Oral tradition then evolved into the written form to preserve the history and endorse the continuity of culinary knowledge and traditions of a family, community or nation.

Cookbooks and recipes have become an intriguing object of study for historians, food and women studies scholars, gastronomers and even genealogists, offering different approaches, mostly focused on the analysis of the role of women and of

[107] Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (New York, N.Y: Palgrave, 2002), 156.

these books in the particular space of the kitchen.[108] A cookbook is "much more than a recollection of recipes", as Abigail Dennis argues.[109] It is a text that reveals the social and cultural influence of women in the domestic space, functioning as "maps of the social and cultural worlds [women] inhabit".[110] Take for example the pattern of inheritance of cookbooks which, as Theophano argues, has since the early fifteenth century in Britain and the United States responded to class, ethnicity, and economic status.[111] In the case of mother to daughter, Theophano explains that newly-wed women were expected to take care of their own home, husband and children, but often had little knowledge or experience in domestic chores like cooking, cleaning, budgeting the husband's income, or even medicinal remedies. To help them fulfil their duties, mothers often offered them a recipe book that contained advice on how to run a household. This book-gifting was a sign of affection in the sense that the book helped to tie bonds between both subjects.[112] Moreover, the gifting of cookbooks constituted a ritual between both parties, considered as a highly valuable gift that helped to reinforce the link with the maternal figure, and a sort of good luck charm.

It is worth noting, however, that even if cookbooks and recipe books followed matrilineal genealogies, this was largely a privilege of upper-class women, considering that this social group partially benefited from education, especially because they could read and write. As women gained access to education, the practice of writing and inheriting cookbooks extended to the lower social classes, a phenomenon which was also endorsed by publishing houses that saw cookbooks and household manuals as profitable goods and pushed for their mass production

[108] Arlene Voski Avakian, "Shish Kebab Armenians?: Food and the Construction and Maintenance of Ethnic and Gender Identities among Armenian American Feminists", in *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies : Critical Perspectives on Women and Food*, ed. Barbara Haber and Arlene Voski Avakian (United States of America: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 257–80; Kennan Ferguson, "Genre, Gender, Genitor: The Form of Creation and the Politics of the Recipe", in *Western Political Science Association*, 2011, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1767022; Abigail Dennis, "From Apicius to Gastroporn: Form, Function, and Ideology in the History of Cookery Books", *Studies in Popular Culture* 31, no. 1 (2008): 1–17.
[109] Dennis, "From Apicius to Gastroporn", 13.
[110] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 13.
[111] Ibid., 99–116.
[112] Ibid., 86.

and commercial distribution. Most importantly, though, this literature was publicly accepted as a means to disseminate the behaviour housewives were expected to follow. Furthermore, despite the fact recipes and cookbooks were mainly passed on by women, men became increasingly interested in these narratives, even though this took place at the same time as the gendered division of labour in the kitchen. Professional male chefs began writing texts for a professional male reader, such as such as *Le Guide Culinaire* by Escoffier et al., an iconic text among chefs and kitchen staff containing recipes and technical procedures in a language that assumes the reader has the knowledge to understand and decipher the procedures and terms mentioned.[113]

As a result, recipes that once belonged to a particular subject or community became public information; furthermore, even if recipes originated in the familiar abode, they change and evolve influenced by other events, trends, and sources of information including cookbooks, household manuals, foreign culinary traditions, and other printed media. They are "works-in-progress" adapted to "the needs of each household" but also to the current economic, social and cultural spheres.[114] However, the content and language of a cookbook and a recipe is not always communicated in the same fashion, bearing in mind that the author can be someone who compiles their family's culinary tradition, a gastronome, a food critic, a professional chef (a celebrity chef), or a food scholar. Moreover, the language might vary to account for the potential reader, so the narrative might be an introduction to the art of cooking, or aimed at professional cooks and culinary students familiar with jargon. In this sense, these culinary texts sometimes accomplish didactic, informative, instructional, patriotic or propagandistic functions, and one way of doing this has been through illustrations and visual aids accompanying texts.[115]

[113] Auguste Escoffier, Philéas Gilbert, and Émile Fetu, *Le Guide Culinaire: Aide-Mémoire de Cuisine Pratique*, Digital version 2009 (Flammarion, 1948).
[114] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 187.
[115] Dennis, "From Apicius to Gastroporn", 1.

Sometimes, these images show how the dishes should look once finished or how to master a specific technique, but in other cases, they are used as decorations for the texts in order to "stimulate the appetite and to provide an anticipatory thrill" of the final result.[116] Starting with drawings and illustrations, these images soon developed into black-and-white photographs and later high-resolution colour images, though all forms can be and are used. Drawings and photographs are used to portray food in an enhanced visual way as a marketing strategy to stimulate the appetite of readers and increase the profits of food industry businesses. This increasing interest in delivering appealing images has resulted in the emergence of *food stylists*, experts that enhance the image of edibles by manipulating the lighting, framing, colours, sizes and shapes of dishes; according to Dennis, these images act as *gastroporn*, i.e. as "visual stimulation of food photography as art, accompanied by evocative and descriptive texts".[117] Needless to say, the use of images in such a manner is of special interest for cookbooks and cooking magazines which now allocate larger areas, or even full pages, to show images and photographs of dishes as a focal point. At the same time, technological devices like smartphones and social media applications like Twitter and Instagram have enabled easy sharing of images of food, enhancing the images and portraying the food as mouth-watering objects. In these cases, the image of food becomes a more powerful medium to communicate the idea of a dish, having a greater impact in comparison to standalone text. But what happens when the written text, the recipe per se, is transformed into a visual text that aims to communicate the same procedures and techniques as the ones narrated in the written form? In other words, what happens when the image focuses on the process rather than the final dish that is prepared?

[116] Ibid., 10.
[117] Ibid., 11.

Sonja Alhäuser: Illustrated recipes mapping performances

Sonja Alhäuser, as mentioned in the previous chapter, creates food-based installations accompanied by drawings that take shape as pictorial recipes and which become part of the documentation process of her artistic practices.[118] In these comic-styled drawings, the artist portrays the step-by-step procedure of a recipe—and of her performances and installations—from the early stages, including the collection of ingredients, the *mise-en-place*,[119] the cooking process, and in some cases she shows the digestive process as it develops inside the stomach and the intestines, a progression that ends with the excretion of faecal matter.

Alhäuser's drawings follow a cyclical visual narrative that forces the viewer to gradually concentrate on different details and situations to be able to decipher the main event. These recipes and pictorial self-explanatory culinary descriptions help the public to understand the scenes and actions performed within the installations: they mark the beginning, purpose and ending of the artworks and of some of the ingredients that Alhäuser uses. In Nachtigäller's words, Alhäuser presents scenes made "with a sketch-like realism and fleet-footed ramification [where Alhäuser portrays] the chain leading from the breeding of an animal and its end in the cooking pot".[120] To achieve this, Alhäuser uses a series of non-verbal iconography similar to that used in comic strips or storyboards.

At first glance, the composition of the image may seem chaotic as different scenes overlap with each other, but when viewed closely, it is clear that the image is carefully arranged. The comic-like symbols give a non-linear grammatical structure that helps the viewer follow every particular action, emphasising that the individual scenes are not isolated events but part of a chain of events related to a common

[118] Alhäuser, interview.
[119] This French term is translated as "putting into place" or as the "set up". It is widely used in gastronomic jargon to define the tasks of organising and arranging ingredients used to cook a dish. Senén Pérez, "Mis-en-place", *Diccionario Gastronómico* (México: Trillas, 2003), 80.
[120] Roland Nachtigäller, "Introduction", in *Sonja Alhäuser: Immerzu* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhanlung Walter König, 2007), 90.

story: cooking a recipe and both eating and digestive processes.[121] Alhäuser's visual language occurs, in the words of Neil Cohn, "within a single panel, potentially carrying syntax of a phrasal level or higher [showing the] pieces of an action or event all at once".[122] Take for example *Caipirinha für Zwei (*2009), the pictorial recipe for making a caipirinha, the traditional Brazilian drink using cachaça, a distilled spirit made from sugarcane juice.



32. Sonja Alhäuser. *Caipirinha für Zwei*, 2009

Over a lightly tinted vanilla-coloured canvas, Alhäuser shows her particular way of preparing this Brazilian drink. In the left upper corner of the image, six ice cubes float from an ice tray into a manual ice crusher. Alhäuser signals that in order to crush them, it is necessary to turn the handle, as indicated by the swirling red arrows. Once the crushing is done, the crushed ice can be poured into two glasses

[121] American cartoonist Mort Walker proposes an international set of symbols (*symbolia*) compiled after researching cartoons and comic strips from around the world. Mort Walker, *The Lexicon of Comicana* (United States of America: Comicana Books, 1980).
[122] Neil Cohn, "A Visual Lexicon", *Public Journal of Semiotics* 1, no. 1 (2007): 43.

containing a greenish mix of what appears to be crushed limes and caster sugar. Alhäuser meticulously instructs the viewer in the adjacent mini-sequences how to cut the limes into quarters, following the zigzag cutting of limes, and the curved red lines indicate the pathway into the glasses, where the limes are poured over a spoonful of sugar. As Cohn notes, path lines are used in visual representations to depict "unseen aspects" and trajectories of a moving object, or a fictional representation of the path of air, including smells, by using wavy lines. [123] These lines appear throughout the entire canvas, sometimes depicting movements of objects, signalling the actions performed by subjects, such as the movement of hands during a particular step of the recipe, and in some cases too, the lines appear to be merged with other elements of the composition, such as the intestines that surround the entire image.

Another of the mini-scenes shows how the ingredients are mixed. A hand holding a muddler appears to twist and crush the limes inside the glasses so they release their juices and mix with the sugar. It is worth noting that the muddler is emphasised by Alhäuser as a key element in the composition because it is placed in the centre of the frame, and also because the visual language that surrounds it is a non-verbal symbol, a starred-bubble, that denotes its relevance in comparison to other objects in the frame. It is as if Alhäuser wanted to remark on the central role in the traditional process of crushing limes and sugar while making caipirinhas, thus the juices and the entire flavour is contained and preserved inside the glasses. The muddling of limes and sugar is repeated in both glasses, as the path lines suggest. After this step, the mini-scenes of lime-crushing and ice-crushing unite when the crushed ice is poured into the glasses containing the lime and sugar mix, and almost immediately the cachaça is poured from a bottle depicted in the centre-top of the frame.

Sometimes the mini-scenes have a straightforward visual narrative, and the symbols and images are clear, as in the case of the limes. In other cases, however, the

[123] Ibid., 48.

message is encoded and can only be deciphered after careful examination. This is the case with the cachaça bottle labelled with an image of a lobster, a drawing that seems odd if the viewer is unfamiliar with caipirinha, its origin and production.[124] Here, Alhäuser depicts the logo of "Pitú", a renowned brand of cachaça produced in the region of the same name, referring to the name of a brook in Brazil famous for the abundance of these lobster-like crustaceans.[125] Apart from the red lobster in the bottle, the viewer has no other possible reference to know that the spirit is cachaça. Alhäuser emphasises her aim to use visual language instead of any written text, showing that neither the brand name nor that of the ingredient become necessary, as Alhäuser assumes this is knowledge shared by all those viewing the scene. However, what Alhäuser does emphasise is the alcoholic content of cachaça. As the bottle gradually inclines to a horizontal plane, a blurry image reading "40%" fades progressively, giving the impression of the ethereal alcoholic content of the spirit evaporating as it is poured into the glasses. Once the cachaça is served and mixed with lime juice, ice and sugar, a straw falls from the top of the canvas as if it was suddenly thrown into the glass. Note here, once again, the use of path lines that visually give sense to the movement of the straw from one scene to the next, giving sense to temporal and spatial relationships of all the objects and subjects depicted in the scene. In this case, the straw arrives by the time the caipirinha drink is finished and the subject begins to drink it.

Furthermore, Alhäuser's pictorial recipe presents more than ingredients and processes. As in most of her drawings, the viewer follows the pathway of edibles inside the body of the subjects, all the way through the digestive tract. As the green drink in *Caipirinha für Zwei* enters the mouth, the viewer reads the image in a different way: the recipe suddenly transforms into an image that emphasises the interior of the body, an invisible part of the eating process. The body is now viewed in a similar fashion to medical illustrations of the digestive tract that focus on a

[124] The so-called lobster is really a "Pitú", a large crayfish-like Brazilian shrimp. It appears in its natural color on each bottle of Pitú cachaça the world over. None genuine without this trademark." Cachaça Pitú, "The Pitú Cachaça", *Cachaça Pitú*, 2010, http://www.pitubrazil.com/#/cachaca/?sub=8.
[125] Ibid.

particular system of organs to explain their individual function. Alhäuser's watercolour obliterates most of the organs and in a cartoonist style, she only focuses on the path followed by the caipirinha as it flows down into the oesophagus and then splashes into a round-shaped stomach, which even though it is not the accurate shape of this organ, the viewer is able to understand. The artist depicts a narrative that develops as a series of events in which individuals and objects connect each of the mini-scenes. Thus, in this sense, even if she does not show the entire digestive system, she gives a pictorial notion of the organs involved, giving the impression that the caipirinha continues its way into the first part of the small intestine, the *duodenum*, an organ that Alhäuser depicts as a frame panel containing all the mini-scenes. Alhäuser disentangles the guts and presents them outside a body, surrounding the whole recipe, extended as if she wanted to highlight the longitude of the organs. Moreover, Alhäuser opts to show only some parts of the intestines, showing that the extension of this organ is larger than the pictorial scene but, most importantly, showing how both subjects portrayed in the scene drinking the caipirinha have an embodied connection as their intestines interlace, as shown in the lower part of the canvas.

In *Caipirinha für Zwei*, the arrangement of frames follows a circular narrative, compressing numerous scenes and actions in a single one, "recognising relationships [taking place] across sequences".[126] The viewer is guided through these relationships by the entire sequence of symbols within the pictorial narrative. The use of the symbols gives sense, structure, and meaning to the seemingly chaotic scene. The symbols offer the viewer a starting point from where to focus their gaze and begin reading the recipe. At the same time, the use of arrows, signage, and bubbles or dialogue balloons like those used in comics allows Alhäuser to avoid using textual narratives to explain a recipe, and enables the viewer to understand the visual language contained in a series of images. Hence, *Caipirinha für Zwei* presents a single image containing a complex idea, a recipe, with enough information to achieve successful outcome, its step-by-step preparation.

[126] Cohn, "A Visual Lexicon," 39.

It is worth noting that a large number of Alhäuser's pictorial recipes present *thought bubbles* which enclose non-verbal contents. Written text is avoided in the majority of the cases, except for determined objects like the content of alcohol, as presented in *Caipirinha für Zwei*. Most of the time, though, these bubbles contain other images that express an idea or attitude related to the image shown. They reveal thoughts, memories, dreams or desires triggered in the depicted characters once they have eaten food, as a consequence of the sensory experiences, as "food memories" that participants of Alhäuser's edible installations and performances would encounter.[127] In *Erdbeershake* (2002), for example, Alhäuser portrays a woman drinking a strawberry milkshake who appears to have a mental image that is contained inside a thought bubble showing another image: one of a naked woman enjoying a bubble bath; however, what remains a mystery is whether the character is the same woman who is drinking the milkshake. The imaginary scenarios presented in these thought bubbles might, to some extent, be projections of attitudes and feelings that both the artist and/or the public can experience in similar situations.



33. Sonja Alhäuser, *Erdbeershake* (2002)

[127] Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Cornell University Press, 2002); Frank Sibley, *Approach To Aesthetics. Collected Papers On Philosophical Aesthetics.*, J. Benson & (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Signage is also used to emphasise the idea of movement of objects, as well as the visual path suggested to be followed by the public. Through the use of arrows, Alhäuser signals the mechanical motion applied to some of the objects, as in the case of the ice crusher machine. But also, it can signal the change in position of objects, differentiating each scene or frame and in this sense signalling the temporality of the actions, from the beginning and until the end of the entire process.[128] These *symbolia*, following Walker, focuses the attention of the public on specific actions, objects, or figures that will make it easier to understand, according to Alhäuser, the context and relevance as a means to avoid misinterpretations.[129]

The audience distinguishes the multiple mini scenes separately, moving their gaze through the frame, and transferring their attention from one scene to the other. It is worth noting that the drawings in which Alhäuser shows more elaborate recipes, the iconography is more detailed. Each of the lines and symbols have a specific purpose, strengthening the meaning and understanding of the recipe, and sometimes constituting part of the artist's culinary language. Alhäuser mentions in this regard that her love for symbols is clearly emphasised in her drawings and sculptures, inviting the public to "enter this world of symbols" that constitutes the artist "own language", one which is easy for her to understand; although she recognises that when the public sees them for the first time, they "do not understand everything."[130] For example, if Alhäuser wants to communicate that the recipe needs flour, she uses an image of an ear of wheat, and to every grain of wheat she gives the equivalence of fifty grams.[131] In Alhäuser's pictorial recipes the number of grains depicted in the drawing are in relationship to the amount of flour used in the recipe. A similar approach is shown by the time Alhäuser depicts temperatures and timeframes, especially for baking.

[128] The effect of constant movement resembles to those in futuristic paintings which, as Mario de Micheli explains, "tried to capture reality in its unitary multiplicity, in his ceaseless movement." Mario De Micheli, *Las Vanguardias Artísticas Del Siglo XX*, ed. Pepa Linares, trans. Á.S. Gijón, Alianza Forma (España: Grupo Anaya Comercial, 2002), 219.
[129] Alhäuser, interview.
[130] Ibid.

Nonetheless, these symbols are only accurate and clear for the artist, considering that the pictorial equivalence and meaning is not shared as a common language with the public. These pictorial recipes, as Alhäuser refers to them, are different "from those of normal catering".[132] The public partially deciphers and understands the meaning of the images—the ear of wheat acts a symbolic reference to flour, the same with the shrimp figure appearing on the bottle of cachaça—although this does not apply to the quantities of the product, their origin, or even the temperatures and times of cooking or baking as they are as accurate as in a written recipe.

It is important to remember that, as previously mentioned, Alhäuser's drawings have two main functions: they act as pictorial recipes that allow the public to understand the action, and they are Alhäuser's "performance plans", constituting the only documentation of her installations and performances.[133] This explains why these recipes do not include more written text; they constitute a structured system, code, or sequences, similar to any other visual language or image. These pictorial recipes are Alhäuser's graphic and culinary archive, acting like a cookbook, keeping food memories and instructions that she shares with others, those with whom she does not have a relationship.

Ferran Adrià: Encoding the culinary genome

Michelin-starred chef Ferran Adrià holds a relevant place in gastronomy and culinary history: he has been applauded for his innovative techniques, but he has also been criticised as being a "bad influence" on young chefs aiming to follow his culinary approach as they skip learning the basics of cooking and jump straight to

[131] It is worth reminding that from the Bronze Age and until the Renaissance, grains of cereal like wheat or barley were used to measure volumes and weights. Ronald Zupko, *British Weights & Measures: A History Form Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).
[132] Smart Museum of Art, *Sonja Alhäuser: Flying Buffet* (Chicago, 2012), http://vimeo.com/37770419.
[133] Alhäuser, interview.

molecular cuisine techniques.[134] Bearing in mind both sides of the coin, what is undeniable is that Adrià has become a culinary reference point, similar to Brillat-Savarin, Escoffier, and La Varenne, whose ideas and creations have shaped the history of modern and contemporary cooking. Furthermore, and most importantly, these chefs, including Adrià, have further legitimated the figure of a (male) chef as an artist, as seen in nineteenth-century discourses endorsed by *connoisseurs*, as I previously mentioned.[135]

Adrià has not only changed the paradigm in professional gourmet cooking, but his innovations and creative processes have further reinforced the notion of the chef as an artist, an idea that became more evident in 2007 when he was invited to participate in the Documenta 12. Adrià's artistic practice during Documenta involved that the director of Documenta, Roger-Martin Buergel, selected the guests to be invited to elBulli in Cala Montjoy on the northern coast of Spain.[136] Every day, Buergel randomly picked two visitors at the art fair, and airfare and accommodation was offered so they could take part in the artistic and culinary experience of eating a menu created by the best chef in the world in the best restaurant in the world.[137] With this approach, Adrià intended to leave the visitors to experience the cuisine of elBulli so that only then, they would be able to decide if his practice—his culinary creations—were worth to be considered as art or not.[138]

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[134] Hillary Dixler, "Has Ferran Adrià Had a 'Catastrophic Effect on the Younger Generation of Chefs'?", *Eater*, July 12, 2013, http://www.eater.com/2013/7/12/6404927/has-ferran-adria-had-a-catastrophic-effect-on-the-younger-generation.

[135] Jason Farago, "Chef Ferran Adrià and the Problem of Calling Food Art", *BBC Culture*, January 14, 2014, http://www.bbc.co.uk/culture/story/20140114-can-food-be-art.

[136] Fietta Jarque, "Ferran Adria En La Expodocumenta...", *El País*, June 14, 2007, sec. Gastronomía, http://www.elpais.com/articulo/semana/gastronomia/encuentro/arte/elpepuculbab/20070609elpbabese_1/Tes.

[137] I will not address the implications of Michelin or San Pellegrino guides, though it is noteworthy that these sorts of classifications respond to a biased system of recognition in which chefs, restaurant owners, and culinary critics have equal share and responsibility in the election of the "best" restaurants. These recognitions function as part of marketing strategies for restaurants and chefs, hence endorsing the idea of chefs as artists or celebrities. Brunsdon, "Feminism, Postfeminism, Martha, Martha, and Nigella"; Mariana Meneses Romero, "Eating the Cutlery, Eating Tacos", *FEAST Journal*, no. 1: Cutlery (January 2016), http://feastjournal.co.uk/article/eating-the-cutlery-eating-tacos/.

Adrià's practice can be traced back to the *Nouvelle Cuisine*[139] movement endorsed in the 1960s. However, rather than copying this style, Adrià assumed cooking as a creative process where he never repeated or imitated his previous dishes, nor those of others. He challenged set ideas in order to liberate his practice by experimenting with classic recipes and cooking techniques. His biographer, Colman Andrews, explains that Adrià reinvented food by introducing new techniques such as liquefaction or spherification, which are now known as part of molecular gastronomy.[140] It is also worth noting that Adrià introduced the notion of a *deconstructed* dish, following the advice of an architecture student working with him, and who suggested the term deconstruction was more accurate than that of *decomposition*, to refer to the division of

> a familiar dish into their constituent parts, changing the physical identity of at least some of those parts and then reassembling the pieces in new ways, so that the dishes take on different forms while retaining sensory connections with the original models.[141]

In addition, Adrià emphasises the importance of triggering his guests' "sixth sense". He explains that a crucial element in his dishes relates the sense of taste to emotional reactions and memories, especially those linked to childhood, to personal preferences, and to cultural traditions which are "unpacked or rummaged through" the entire dinner.[142] Interestingly, this supposes a breakthrough in reconsidering "diminished" senses like smell or taste in relationship to food, despite the fact that

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[138] Jennifer Allen, "Critics Weigh In on Documenta 12 and Art Basel; Ferran Adrià's Role in Documenta 12", *Art Forum*, accessed April 25, 2014, http://artforum.com/news/week=200725.

[139] In the history of cooking, two periods have used the term Nouvelle Cuisine, the first during the mid-seventeenth century, when the French chef François Pierre La Varenne advocated simpler French cooking, using fresh herbs instead of spices and introduced "new" vegetables (peas, artichokes, cucumbers) into the dishes. And the Nouvelle Cuisine movement in the 1960s and 1970s in France. Some of the principles of this new cooking include simplicity in the preparation; use of fresh and seasonal ingredients; avoiding heavy and roux-thickened sauces and marinades; incorporation of regional and traditional dishes, unfamiliar ingredients and combinations; and the use of new kitchen tools. Colman Andrews, *Reinventing Food: Ferran Adrià: The Man Who Changed The Way We Eat* (Phaidon Incorporated Limited, 2010), 167–77.

[140] Ibid., 224–25; Hervé This, *Molecular Gastronomy: Exploring the Science of Flavor*, trans. Malcolm DeBevoise, Arts and Traditions of the Table Series (Columbia University Press, 2013); Vega, Ubbink, and van der Linden, *The Kitchen as Laboratory: Reflections on the Science of Food and Cooking*.

[141] Andrews, *Reinventing Food: Ferran Adrià: The Man Who Changed The Way We Eat*, 39.

scholars in other fields of study, including Brillat-Savarin in the nineteenth century, had already highlighted it.[143] Adrià's practice exemplified the link of memory to sensory experiences, and took advantage of it as part of his culinary narrative.

By the time Adrià became co-owner and head chef of elBulli in 1987, he had embraced an innovative methodology to create new dishes. It involved closing the restaurant for six months so that he and his creative team could research ingredients and techniques at *elBulliTaller*, a kitchen laboratory located away from the restaurant. After this period, the restaurant reopened for six months, during which the newly created dishes were served—however, only to those able to book a table months or even a year in advance.[144] Adrià emphasises that his creative process was not focused on the creation of new dishes, but he aimed to develop new concepts, techniques and "elaborations", which he defines as culinary strategies that can be applied to an array of ingredients instead of a single one, that could give place to multiple culinary variations and possibilities.[145] This creative process also included thorough documentation of every single step, including trial and error. Adrià created an archive of notes, sketches, drawings and photographs of every dish, technique and presentation of dishes, and these were compiled and organised on a yearly basis in a master note~~cook~~book that included testing dates, ingredients, processes, times, dates, time of usage, ideas for usage, sources of inspiration and plating strategies.

Adrià's intention to theoretically approach creativity requires him to draw, write and model the processes involved in cooking, as a way to record, rethink, and re-enact recipes. In 2014, the exhibition "Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity" addressed the latter and presented part of Adrià's archive of recipes, showing "sketches, charts, lists, creative notebooks, and diagrams that underpin[ed] the practical, intellectual, and philosophical breakthrough that" Adrià developed throughout the years at the

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[142] Ferran Adrià, Juli Soler, and Albert Adrià, *A Day at elBulli: An Insight into the Ideas, Methods, and Creativity of Ferran Adrià* (London: Phaidon Press Ltd, 2008), 38–39.
[143] Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste*.
[144] Adrià et al., *A Day at elBulli*.
[145] Andrews, *Reinventing Food: Ferran Adrià: The Man Who Changed The Way We Eat*, 179.

BulliTaller.[146] The exhibition emphasised cooking—Adria's in particular—as if this is not a practice of other cooks, recipes, and cookbooks. As Adrià suggests, his role as a cook does not suppose mastering a specific tool, but assumes that

> in the kitchen, I always have my pencil and notebook in my hand. I cook more theoretically than I do practically. My job is creative, and in the kitchen, the biggest part of my creativity is theoretical. The pencil has a symbolic meaning for me. The type of person who carries a pencil around is the type of person who's open to change.[147]

Adrià's insistence on culinary language, recipes, and the structure of a dish is reflected in the 23 points that he states characterised elBulli's cuisine, following the ten commandments for *Nouvelle Cuisine* by restaurant critics Henri Gault and Christian Millau (1973).[148] First of all, he states that cooking is a language "through which all of the following may be expressed: harmony, creativity, joy, beauty, poetry, complexity, magic, humour, provocation and culture".[149] This open approach to cooking as a language is what allows Adrià to experiment and to innovate: the more "codified culinary language is being created, [the more it helps to establish] dialogues with the world and language of art".[150] Needless to say, this not only signals the chef's aim to inscribe his practice within the artistic domain but also to show how similar the creative processes and practices of an artist depicting recipes like Alhäuser are to those of Adrià.

Adrià wrote ideas, concepts, flavours, techniques and plating strategies for the new dishes alongside sketches, drawings, and schematic recipes that constituted his *working boards*. Similar to Alhäuser's illustrated recipes where the sequential logic of a recipe is depicted, Adrià's recipes are not presented in great detail, but as

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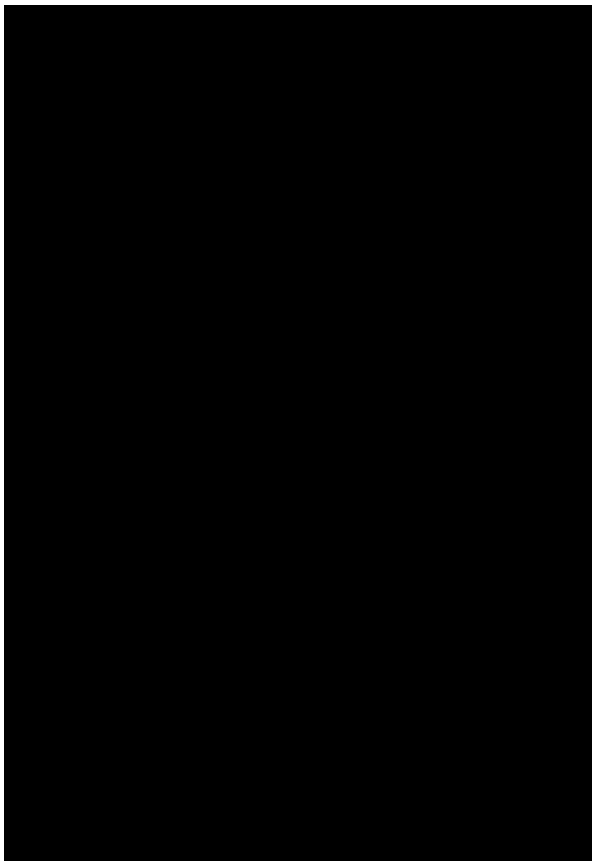
[146] The Drawing Center et al., *Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity* (Drawing Center, 2014); The Drawing Center, "Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity", accessed April 15, 2014, http://www.drawingcenter.org/en/drawingcenter/5/exhibitions/9/upcoming/502/ferran-adria/.
[147] The Drawing Center et al., *Ferran Adrià*.
[148] Jean-Philippe Derenne, "Nouvelle Cuisine", *Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (Encyclopedia.com, 2003), http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3403400437.html.
[149] Sebastià Serrano and Josep Maria Pinto, "ElBulli's Compiled 23 Points Characterising Its Cuisine" (Curatorial text presented during the exhibition "elBulli: Ferran Adrià and the Art of Food", Somerset House, London, 2013).

geometric abstractions. The sketches mimic the shape and arrangement of the components of a dish, each of them differentiated by colours, and accompanied by arrows signalling names or instructions. This schematic approach was used for plating instructions, the composition of plates, and recipes that intended to guide cooks through the entire process of cooking, following the same steps for every single dish throughout the six months the restaurant was open. This was done to ensure consistent flavour and presentation, and in line with Escoffier's goal to organise the kitchen.



34. Ferran Adrià. *Working board N° 3: 2006 Menu*, 2006

Adrià provided instructions accompanied by a sketch of the recipe, a picture of the finished dish, and in some cases a model of the dish using coloured modelling clay as a means to accurately depict the volumetric dimensions of each of the components of the dish. This shows the increasing interest in giving more importance to the three-dimensional representation and the visual presentation of a

[150] Ibid.

dish in comparison to photographs used by chefs when introducing new dishes to a menu.



35. Adrià's notes accompanied by a photograph of the finished dish.



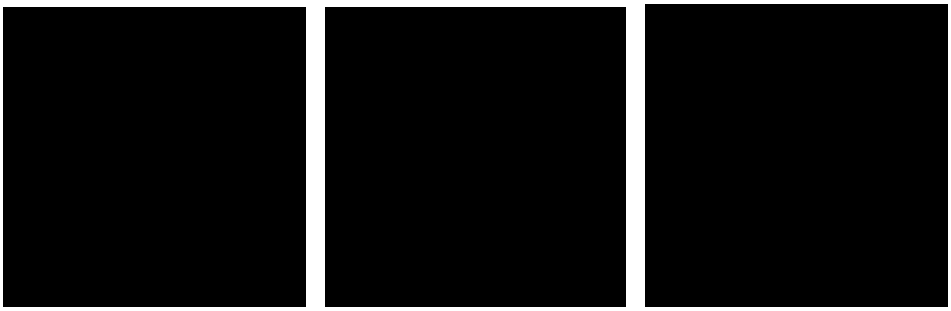
36. Ferran Adrià. *247# The textured vegetable panaché*, 1995

The aim to innovate the cooking process and techniques reflect Adrià's desire to create a pictographic culinary language that avoids giving extensive explanations on recipes. In 2001, Adrià commissioned designer Martha Méndez Blaya to create a series of pictograms to simplify the identification of ingredients, techniques and culinary processes used in the atelier and the restaurant. Méndez Blaya transformed words into coded signage that referred to the new techniques

developed by Adrià and his team, and which appeared for the first time in elBulli's General Catalogue.[151] These pictograms used in the kitchen served as a starting point towards the "the classification of products" for an "evolutionary analysis of the recipes"[152], and aim to simplify technical culinary language to aid the reading and comprehension of terms and recipes. Adrià uses these pictograms in his *Bullipedia* as a means to organise and structure culinary knowledge, part of a repository that would make the practice of cooks more efficient, to create new dishes, and accumulate knowledge; however, as the introductory video of *Bullipedia* shows, it is a tool that will help mostly kitchen professionals.[153]



37. View of the exhibition "Ferran Adrià and the Art of Food" (2013)



38. From left to right: Freeze-dried and dehydrated products, Furred game, Meat

[151] Adrià, Soler, and Adrià, *A Day at elBulli*.
[152] The Drawing Center et al., *Ferran Adrià*, 61.
[153] elBulli Foundation, *Bullipedia*, YouTube, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IuZrrSoRh7k.

Adrià's approach to the depiction of recipes greatly differs from that of Alhäuser. The two show culinary language is complex as it is embedded with multiple cultural, technical, and historical narratives. These examples show how culinary language continues to evolve to the extent that nowadays, images and depictions of food are more than visual adornments. For both, sketching and drawing are part of their creative processes. In the case of Alhäuser, she takes recipes and translates them into the canvas, adding her personal *symbolia* to the cooking instructions; by doing so, she avoids using written language and relies on the reader's comprehension of the images. Moreover, these drawings serve both as cooking instructions, as well as a guide for her installations and performances. Similarly, Adrià's drawings help him order the processes that were reproduced by his kitchen staff in order to have a similar result in every service. In other words, his sketched recipes were the creative apparatus that organised the culinary creations in the kitchen of elBulli but just as with Alhäuser's, now they act as the "leftovers" that show how his creative process developed.

The mode in which these two cases depict recipes also supposes changes in the relationship between the viewer/reader and the creator of the recipe. In both cases, the recipes are not inherited following a matrilineal genealogy. They are, to some extent, texts opened to a wider array of readers who can choose whether or not to use the instructions in these culinary depictions, although Alhäuser's and Adrià's are more difficult to decode due to the abstract content. These visual recipes have different target audiences. On the one hand, Alhäuser's illustrated recipes are shared with those attending her installations regardless of whether they participate actively. The public observes them as part of the artistic experience, as the backstage process shaping Alhäuser's feasts. On the other hand, Adrià's sketches were intended as creative notes used by him and shared only with his creative team in order to cook the dishes, which was in fact the final purpose. It was only after elBulli closed that these documented recipes were brought out of Adrià's archive and presented as historical and artistic texts that narrate the story behind the success of this Michelin-star chef. Like an exhibition of Leonardo's notes and

sketches, exhibitions like “Ferran Adrià: Notes on Creativity” or “elBulli: Ferran Adrià and The Art of Food” are now sharing these images with a larger audience. Showing them, however, does not intend to present them as recipes that can be reproduced, but as the legacy of Adrià as an influential figure in the history of cooking. Furthermore, the exhibitions are used as a means to portray cooking as a culinary language that follows a creative process similar to that of an artist, using preparatory drawings, sketches, models and working compositions as part of the planning for the final artwork execution: the cooked dish.

Moreover, both cases open the culinary spaces as platforms in which they welcome others to participate in a gift-giving relationship where culinary language and knowledge is passed on. Alhäuser and Adrià take culinary narratives out of the domestic and professional kitchens, highlighting that the hospitable gesture to share them is also different. Alhäuser’s practices, for example, entail a communitarian practice that shares culinary knowledge, even though she does not follows any sort of matrilineal pattern of inheritance. On the contrary, she challenges the assumption that women share culinary knowledge (recipes), mainly, in the so-called “feminine space”. Her texts are not part of household manuals endorsing the behaviour of women, nor is the practice of writing and sharing recipes assigned to a specific gender. Her visual culinary images do not suggest that culinary knowledge is exclusive to those with a professional cooking background. They are visual images that give an open interpretation of cooking.

Adrià’s approach, however, is strictly methodological and “deconstructs” culinary knowledge, considering recipes as texts that evolve in light of the contemporary needs of the chef and of the eater. With *Bullipedia*, for example, Adrià intends to extend the culinary beyond traditional spaces, however, this results contradictory. On the one hand, he shows a desire to perform a communal sharing of knowledge, suggesting that the practice of collaboration with “experts from different fields (gastronomic culture, history, industrial design, etc.)” will reinforce the evolution of the professional sector.[154] The idea of Bullipedia as a wiki resource endorses the

[154] Serrano and Pinto, “ElBulli’s Compiled 23 Points Characterising Its Cuisine”.

communal approach to culinary knowledge and language; needless to say, this initially conveys the idea of the kitchen as space that gradually challenges its status as a closed and discriminatory space, transforming it to one that is opened to a wider range of participants regardless of their gender or status. On the other hand, the intention to include specialists as potential collaborators and readers of culinary knowledge—and mainly benefiting practitioners in the hospitality industry—supposes the gesture of collaboration is one which excludes those who do not necessarily take part in or contribute to this form of knowledge. This is to say, Adria's aim to share knowledge indeed shows how the hospitality industry and the practices taking place within contravene the idea of Derridean "hospitality", i.e. welcoming others regardless of status or position.

2.4 Of culinary nostalgia and hospitality: Migrating (with the) recipe

Apart from a gender perspective, recipes—and food practices—should be discussed in terms of cultural appropriation and migration bearing in mind that food is closely related to places and past experiences derived from the moment one eats them. In my case, the sudden craving for one of my grandmother's signature dishes—pork ribs in *morita* chilli and green tomato sauce—reminds me of those I have cooked and eaten it with. This recipe is part of my family's culinary heritage and can be traced back to my great-grandmother. She taught it to my grandfather, and him to my grandmother. Since then, the recipe has passed to my aunt and my father. But probably my interest in this recipe, of both keeping a record of it and preparing it, has never been more emphasised than while living in London.

Reflecting on this nostalgic feeling and in light of Derrida's and Boym's ideas about hospitality and nostalgia, I focus my attention on immigrants' experiences as foreigners when they cross boundaries, understanding that, in Svetlana Boym's words, "the border crossing [constitutes] a transformative experience".[155] Nostalgia, I argue, plays an important role in food practices and bears close relationship to hospitality and migration, as Derrida refers in *Of Hospitality*.[156] In specific, I examine how both hospitality and nostalgia are reflected in culinary practices, including culinary language and the sense of belonging. I particularly explore the notion of *culinary nostalgia* embedded in recipes, bearing in mind the ideas of Boym in *The Future of Nostalgia*, and I argue that the need for a cultural group to preserve its culinary knowledge and culinary traditions derives, in part, from culinary nostalgia.

The compilation, protection, research and promotion of culinary practices, furthermore, has attracted the interest of scholars from disciplines such as anthropology, cultural studies, food studies and gastronomy, and has also become of interest to governmental and non-governmental institutions. For example, in 2010, UNESCO included the culinary traditions of Mexico and France in the

[155] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (United States of America: Basic Books, 2001), 330.

Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list.[157] In this section, however, I explore artistic practices that address culinary nostalgia and the migration of a recipe; specifically, I focus on Jennifer Rubell's installation *Made in Texas* (2011), which presents a clear example of the process of adoption and adaptation experienced by migrants in terms of food culture.

Hospitality, migration, and nostalgia

When discussing the laws of hospitality, Derrida notes that the foreigner is recognised as a foreigner in terms of birth: who is born inside a territory is only recognised as a citizen due to the "law of bloodline", a right which simultaneously constitutes an exclusion as it involves the immediate denial or free entry to other countries.[158] In light of this paradox, Derrida questions what would happen if the traveller remains in a foreign land, hence turning the focus of his analysis to migration and particularly to "displaced persons", a category that includes "exiles, the deported, the expelled, the rootless, the stateless, lawless nomads, and absolute foreigners", those *others* who sit out of a specific geopolitical entity but which, according to Derrida, share a common feature: experiencing of nostalgia.[159]

Nostalgia derives from *nostos* meaning "return home" and *algia* "longing", a term that despite its Greek etymology, explains Svetlana Boym, was coined in 1688 by a Swiss doctor to refer to the newly diagnosed sickness that spread among displaced people, especially among Swiss soldiers fighting abroad.[160] In *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), Boym argues that nostalgia is not an individual feeling but a historical emotion, explaining it as a "sentiment of loss and displacement" that is triggered by

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[156] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*.
[157] UNESCO, "Traditional Mexican Cuisine - Ancestral, Ongoing Community Culture, the Michoacán Paradigm", 2010, http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00400; UNESCO, "Gastronomic Meal of the French", 2010, http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/RL/00437.
[158] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 87.
[159] Ibid., 88–89.
[160] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 7–8.

"a longing for a home that no longer exists or has ever existed".[161] From the nineteenth century, the longing for the past was suddenly institutionalised as a strategy to preserve the legacy of a country, understood as an effort to protect the history and common past of a country, a "past [which] became 'heritage'".[162] This resulted in burgeoning interest to create national and regional museums and institutions that collected and protected objects. The same happened to individuals, who became more interested in knowing their origins. Even though the past and history began to be brought to light, argues Boym, a negative perception of nostalgia persisted because the term was initially assumed as a disease.[163]

It is worth noting that both Boym and Derrida distinguish nostalgia in terms of what a subject longs for and how this is reflected in their behaviour. Boym identifies two types of nostalgia, according to how the longing is framed. On the one hand, *restorative nostalgia* focuses more on the return to the home, the *nostos*. It is not fully identified as an aching remembrance, but as a way of telling the truth about the past, about the origins, the traditions, the values, the family, and nature.[164] Restorative nostalgia focuses on the collective by promoting and maintaining national and religious discourses.[165] On the other hand, *reflective nostalgia* pays more attention to the longing, the *algia*. As the name suggests, this category focuses on a "meditation on history and [the] passage of time".[166] In this sense, reflective nostalgia explores issues inherent to the individual and to cultural memory, but most importantly, it aims to critically reflect upon them.

For Derrida, nostalgia is in the first instance related to the foreigner's deceased family. He explains that the desire to make a pilgrimage to the place where ancestors are buried helps to identify what or where the homeland is. The burial place, argues Derrida, is key for situating "the ethos" and to define the "home, the

[161] Ibid., XIII–XVI.
[162] Ibid., 15.
[163] Ibid., 16.
[164] Ibid., 41–49.
[165] Ibid., XVIII.
[166] Ibid., 49, 55.

city or country where relatives, father, mother, grandparents are at rest" as a "place of immobility from which to measure all the journeys and all the distancings".[167] Derrida's second type of nostalgia links the home to language. The "mother" language, explains Derrida, is the "ultimate homeland", one that can be considered as the "last resting place" for those leaving the original home, as is the case of displaced persons.[168] The mother language is an immobile home in the sense that we carry it with us from birth to death; it is one that we are unable to leave. These definitions suggest that both Derrida and Boym link nostalgia to migration—especially to displaced people—but most importantly, as I will address in the following paragraphs, both authors link the homeland to language, to hosting and to the original place, thus emphasising the close relationship between hospitality and nostalgia.

Feeling *at home*, argues Boym, requires knowledge that "things are in their places", an idea that refers more to "a state of mind" than a location.[169] Despite this, Boym suggests that the home and the homeland portray a paradox between that which is identified as *homey*—the familiar, the intimate or friendly—and that which is *uncanny*, or the fear of the familiar. In Boym's own words, nostalgia appears by the time the "lost home and [the] home abroad appear haunted", thus that which was once familiar, comforting, and safe becomes something unknown and strange.[170] Nevertheless, immigrants face what Boym calls "limitations of nostalgia": there is constant appreciation of the new home but simultaneously, the images of the original, the one that was left behind, constantly haunt the new arrival. As a result, an experience of "uprootedness and defamiliarization" arises, giving place to the preference for the non-native over the original place, what Boym names *diasporic intimacy*.[171] The exiled, the foreigner, is always positioned within a double conscience, navigating constantly between two different times and spaces: the period during which s/he lived in the original homeland, and another that appears

[167] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 87.
[168] Ibid., 89.
[169] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 251.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid., 16, 252, 255.

by the time s/he moves to the new homeland—to the one that has *accepted* them, or granted the right of hospitality. However, as Derrida and Boym explain, living in the new home entails constant treats and challenges, especially, or most obviously, in terms of language. When moving to another country, the foreigner is urged to learn and adopt the language of the country they are migrating to, an issue which Derrida identifies as an act of violence.[172] Furthermore, foreigners and non-native speakers are always treated with suspicion in the new homeland as they "hold a double [or half] destiny", meaning that they are outsiders in their homelands but also in the new one.[173]

Migrants, either by choice or force, experience a constant situation of "estrangement and human solidarity, affect and reflection", what Boym refers to as the *ethics of reflective nostalgia.*[174] She explains this as the moment when the longing is embraced as a means of resistance against a nationalistic nostalgic discourse that posits the *other*, the guest, the foreigner, as a "conspiring enemy" because of its origin.[175] This is to say, that the ethics of reflective nostalgia is the recognition of difference, of the cultural background of the *other* as part of a collective recollection, but at the same time, it accepts its singularity. The resistance assumes "responsibility toward[s and of] others", which, like Derrida's notion of hospitality as *ethics*, entails being open to those who come to the threshold regardless of their situation, their identity, and in this case their origin.[176]

According to Boym and Derrida, hospitality and nostalgia share similar problems, including issues concerning temporality, spatiality, and language. Both Boym and Derrida shed light on migration and the relationship between the host and the guest while also emphasising the relevance of a place, as Mark Wigley extensively argues.[177] In the same manner, both hospitality and nostalgia address the ethics of

[172] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 132–33.
[173] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 256.
[174] Ibid., 337.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid., 342.
[177] Wigley, *The Architecture of Deconstruction*.

the other, addressing its *ethos* in relationship to a "dwelling place", to "one's identity, one's space, one's limits" in order to identify the "home".[178]

Of culinary language and culinary nostalgia

Language signals difference. It is one of the first cultural markers by which foreigners are pointed out as *others*. The "natural or national language", the mother language, is assumed as otherness, stresses Derrida; it is the one in which the "foreigner is addressed or in which he is heard", comprising an "ensemble of culture, values, norms and meanings that inhabit the language".[179] It is, furthermore, that which identifies who is a stranger to one's cultural or social norms. Migrants acquire a "bilingual consciousness", understood as more than the sum of two languages and, according to Boym, as the "acquisition of a new and different state of mind".[180]

Language is one of the migrants' first challenges in the host country in terms of communication with the locals. Speaking different languages adds to the intricate relationship between the host and the guest, and as Derrida explains posits two restrictions in terms of hospitality. The first one, *auto-mobility*, refers to the ability of the subject to maintain the mother language while s/he is hosted in another country. As mentioned in previous paragraphs, language is the ultimate home: it moves with us, and we become permanent carriers of language.[181] The second restriction that Derrida mentions relates to someone's real name (proper name): if this "does not belong to language, a proper name cannot be translated like another word in another language".[182] It is worth remembering that for Derrida, asking for a name as a means to identify the foreigner, the possible guest, is contradictory to the notion of absolute hospitality because ideally the host does not need to know the identity of the guest. However, in terms of conditional hospitality, the name is relevant as it enables communication and closeness between the host and guest. In

[178] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 149–51.
[179] Ibid., 132, 137.
[180] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 257.
[181] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 90–91.

this sense, by the time the guests/foreigners are identified with a name, they are no longer considered unknown entities.

Food is a cultural marker that is central to a community's cultural identity, one which is cherished and protected by migrants.[183] As Arlene Voski Avakian mentions, it helps to construct and maintain ethnic and gender identities. In her article, Voski Avakian explains that among immigrant women, cooking gatherings often entail storytelling that emphasise nostalgia for the past and for the home that was left behind. Food is home, this idea is internalised among those who move to other countries, and explains why migrants' relationship to food is characterised by a strong sense of "protectiveness, a feeling of ownership".[184] The auto-mobility of language relates, in this sense, to culinary texts and recipes as these emphasise language and food as *being at home*. No matter where migrants or displaced people go, recipes function as part of the home they carry with them, along with memories and experiences. In this sense, and similar to language, food is closely related to nostalgia, emphasising a sense of belonging. Recipes involve nostalgia as an act of remembrance.[185] This responds first and foremost to memories of who taught the person how to cook the meal, where this happened, or the occasion when the dish was prepared and eaten. Furthermore, learning a recipe "by heart" supposes the subject is able to repeat the process regardless of any spatial displacement. The subject becomes a carrier of culinary knowledge, enabling migrants to "counter tendencies toward fragmentation of experience [when] travel[ling] across national borders".[186]

It should be noted, however, that migrants are often fearful when those alien to their cultural tradition try to recreate their national dishes, as this supposes a threat

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[182] Ibid., 137.
[183] Avakian, "Shish Kebab Armenians?: Food and the Construction and Maintenance of Ethnic and Gender Identities among Armenian American Feminists", 258, 265.
[184] Ibid., 265.
[185] Christine Folch, "Fine Dining: Race in Prerevolution Cuban Cookbooks", *Latin American Research Review* 43, no. 2 (2008): 208.
[186] David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory*, Materializing Culture (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 75–77.

to their cultural values. This relates both to national dishes cooked by someone from a different cultural background, and also when the host assumes something is traditional when it is not, which might lead to misinterpretations of what home is for the other. Appadurai explains this fear of the non-authentic in light of regional cookbooks. He explains that these texts are written with two different purposes in mind. First, he distinguishes cookbooks written by culinary citizens living in their home country/region, arguing that these texts emphasise the notion of the "authentic" as they contain more complex recipes that use techniques and ingredients sometimes considered "disgusting" by anyone who is unfamiliar with the culinary tradition, or that are only available in the country of origin. These texts, argues Appadurai, intend to "popularise and disseminate the most appreciated items" among those embedded in the same culinary tradition.[187] Appadurai's second category refers to cookbooks written by "outsiders", i.e. by those who do not belong to the culinary tradition. In this case, these texts include recipes that are easier to prepare, portraying a sample of more portable and adaptable dishes which intend to distinguish and differentiate the foreign cuisine they aim to reproduce.[188] In the same way, Delores Phillips suggests that cookbooks written by immigrants in relationship to their culinary tradition present, in general, a homogenous view of their homeland. Furthermore, these cookbooks modify *original* recipes to satisfy the palate of readers who are foreign to the culinary tradition, but also in light of the availability of ingredients in the "new" homeland.[189]

To some extent, the misinterpretation of culinary traditions means immigrants embed their home food with a *nostalgic value*, which, according to Roland Barthes, reinforces national continuity and identity even when located far from the original home.[190] Similarly, scholars like Lital Levy, Anita Mannur, and Mark Swislocki discuss food practices and its relationship to the nostalgia experienced by diaspora

[187] Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (January 1988): 17.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Delores B. Phillips, "Quieting Noisy Bellies: Moving, Eating, and Being in the Vietnamese Diaspora", *Cultural Critique* 73, no. 1 (2009): 57, 66.

groups. The three authors use the term *culinary nostalgia* to explain past memories triggered by food, suggesting that *food*, like language, is posited *as home*, and it is simultaneously embedded with *nostalgic value*, especially in light of migration. It should be noted, however, that the link between nostalgia and food is not at all new: Marcel Proust's *Swann's Way* (1922) contains one of the most cited passages exemplifying nostalgic eating. In the text, Proust describes eating a *madeleine* and how it triggers memories and sensory experiences that remind him of another time and another person.[191]

Levy, Mannur and Swislocki use culinary nostalgia to suggest culinary practices migrate—as language—alongside the subject. Lital Levy uses *culinary nostalgia* to refer to "cookbooks-cum-community histories" written by descendants of Arab Jews living in Iraq and Egypt.[192] However, he does not discuss the term thoroughly, arguing only that cookbooks written by expatriates are embedded with a nostalgic feeling.[193]

Similar to Levy, Anita Mannur explains that culinary texts are "suffused with nostalgia" and reflect individual and collective memories of Indian immigrants in the United States.[194] She explains that the sensory experiences linked to food, such as smells and its affective value, influence the way in which nostalgia restructures memories of the home/homeland for the foreigner, resulting in practices that aim to

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[190] Roland Barthes, "Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption", in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 24.
[191] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past: Swann's Way*, trans. C.K. Scott-Moncrieff, 2014th ed., vol. 1 (Australia: University of Adelaide, 1913), https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/proust/marcel/p96s/index.html. Furthermore, as Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai explains, the nostalgia experienced by exiles is mirrored in cookbooks as they contain regional recipes, and this functions as some sort of "Proustian device" aiming to reframe national cuisine. See Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine", 18.
[192] Lital Levy, "Historicizing the Concept of Arab Jews in the Mashriq", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 98, no. 4 (2008): 453.
[193] It is worth mentioning that Levy refers to Carol Bardenstein's text where she mentions the term "nostalgia cookbooks" which is borrowed from David Sutton's book *Remembrance of Repasts* where he argues that nostalgia is a component linked to authenticity and to the traditional. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts*, 142; Carol Bardenstein, "Transmissions Interrupted: Reconfiguring Food, Mem- Ory, and Gender in the Cookbook-Memoirs of Middle Eastern Exiles", *Signs*, Gender and Cultural Memory, 28, no. 1 (Autumn 2002): 357.

dislocate the image of their nation's culinary practices away from clichéd and tropicalised versions adapted to please the palate of American citizens. Mannur suggests that cookbooks written by expatriates are embedded with a strong patriotic sense which aims to re-educate Americans, but also to encourage members of the diaspora group to protect their "Indianness".[195] It is worth noting that, as with Levy, Mannur does not explain what the term culinary nostalgia means. Instead, she insists on nostalgia as a characteristic inherent to migrants' conscience, resulting in the appearance of *culinary citizenship*, which she explains is a "a form of affective citizenship which grants subjects the ability to claim and inhabit certain [...] positions via their relationship to food".[196] Immigrants, in this sense, embrace culinary citizenship to respond to the constant need to recall and reclaim the homeland, moving between two different places, the original homeland and the one that hosts them, between two spaces that are simultaneously both "limiting and emancipatory".[197]

Of Levy, Mannur, and Swislocki, the latter was the first to explore the notion of culinary nostalgia in depth; he proposes it as a useful category for "critical reflection upon a changing world".[198] Swislocki explains Shanghai's regional food culture is directly related to the way Chinese "connect to the past, live in the present, and imagine the future".[199] He refers that childhood food memories are used by food writers as a Proustian strategy that endorse thinking about the past as a better and more just world, in comparison to the discomfort of the city-dwellers towards modernisation and urbanisation that gradually claimed the land and fertile soil to build and expand the city.[200] Swislocki identifies a pattern of remembrance which

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[194] Anita Mannur, "Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Diaspora", *MELUS* 32, no. 4: Food in Multi-Ethnic Literatures (Winter 2007): 11.
[195] Ibid., 17.
[196] Ibid., 13.
[197] Ibid., 28.
[198] Rorotoko, Mark Swislocki. On his book Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai, April 2, 2010, http://rorotoko.com/interview/20100402_swislocki_mark_on_culinary_nostalgia_regional_food_shanghai_urban.
[199] Mark Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia: Regional Food Culture and the Urban Experience in Shanghai* (Stanford University Press, 2009), 2.
[200] Swislocki, *Culinary Nostalgia*.

makes him focus on *culinary nostalgia*, defining it as a concept that supposes "the recollection or purposive evocation of another time and place through food".[201] Swislocki's notion of culinary nostalgia suggests it is a critical strategy to reflect on how restorative and reflective nostalgia operate in culinary literature and food practices.

With this in mind, it is worth noting that Boym suggests the term *gastronomic nostalgia* which, like Swislocki's idea of culinary nostalgia, endorses a nostalgic reflection of food practices performed in the past, arguing that they are better than contemporary practices.[202] Boym explains that the food movements that emerged in the year 2000, like *Slow Food*[203] and *Slow Eating*—identified as "gastronomic left" movements—aim to change the future of food practices in line with the current politics of food embedded in neoliberalism. These movements challenge food policies related to food trade and agriculture, especially focusing on the rejection of genetically modified products and highlighting the damage to the environment, culinary traditions, and the health of human and non-human species.[204]

Although Boym's idea of gastronomic nostalgia differs from that of Swislocki, Levy, or Mannur, it is still important to consider Boym's insistence on reflective nostalgia as a strategy to create "global diasporic solidarity".[205] This idea is reflected in Voski Avakian's, Mannur's and Levy's texts, where each of them analyses a diaspora group, emphasising experiences of migration in relation to food practices. Traditional dishes portray a longing for the home, whether that is the home and the familial lineage, or the homeland and the nation.

[201] Rorotoko, Mark Swislocki. On his book Culinary Nostalgia.
[202] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 350.
[203] Boym mentions that the *Slow Food* and *Slow Eating* movements originated in the 2000s; however, the *Slow Food Movemen*t first emerged in Italy in the 1970s.
[204] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 350; Rex Dalton, "Transgenic Corn Found Growing in Mexico", *Nature* 413, no. 6854 (September 27, 2001): 337; Alok Jha, "Anyone for a Stem-Cell Burger?", *The Guardian*, August 5, 2013, sec. Science.
[205] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 342.

One way in which immigrants deal with *culinary nostalgia* while counteracting experiences of cultural and culinary fragmentation is by importing some of the original ingredients and utensils to the "new homeland"; as David Sutton notes, this has happened since ancient Greece to counteract the experience of *xenitia*: "the experience of absence from one's home".[206] A subject's feeling of estrangement and dislocation while in a foreign land was eased by *pestellomata*, packages with objects and products sent by relatives to remind the immigrant of their homeland. *Pestellomatas* therefore helped to connect those residing abroad with relatives by sending them "a piece of homeland".[207] A similar phenomenon occurs when food is sent abroad: it satiates the foreigners' hunger for reincorporating the home through the consumption of dishes that remind them of personal, familiar, and national experiences evoked through the senses.

Bearing all of these interpretations of culinary nostalgia in mind, I consider that *culinary nostalgia* can be understood as the reiterative effort of migrants to reflect on, remember, recreate, protect, and preserve culinary traditions—comprising ingredients, recipes, and modes of preparation, serving and eating—that are closely linked to the subject's familiar abode, community, region, city, or country of origin, and to which s/he identifies as his or her own.

Culinary nostalgia, furthermore, embraces a restorative and a reflective approach. The first is explained when the immigrant has a longing for the homeland, their loved ones, or the community with whom s/he shared and ate particular dishes. Through food memories and sensory experiences—smells, tastes, sounds, images and textures—we experience moments that remind us that *food is home*. Furthermore, *restorative culinary nostalgia* helps us to remember and preserve the culinary tradition of a community, group or nation through oral and written language, and in the case of Alhäuser, also through pictorial recipes. *Reflective culinary nostalgia*, on the contrary, is proposed as an ethical stand, a hospitable gesture that recognises and accepts culinary practices of the "other", of the

[206] Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts*, 77.

foreigner who is hosted in our home, acknowledging individual and communal cultural culinary origins. In other words, by the time the host opens the threshold to the foreigner, language is not the only characteristic that makes the stranger evident; culinary traditions also play an important part within this gesture of hospitality.

The settling of a guest supposes that s/he will hold on to their culinary traditions, while also going through a process of adaptation in light of the conditions that are found. As a result, native and foreign culinary traditions start to merge and will grow "in healthy ways as a result of outside influences", as Sherrie Inness suggests.[208] This means that if someone offers an open welcome to the other, it requires the differences both in language and in food practices to be embraced. This includes expecting the guest to change or even reject his/her culinary traditions and assume those of the host. On the contrary, it involves accepting that the food practices of the host and guest will merge, giving place to culinary experiences that endorse a multitude of culinary approaches and possibilities. Instead of only embracing the role as a *culinary citizen*, following Mannur, who only seeks to safeguard and protect his culinary traditions as a foreigner, it supposes adding ingredients to a complex, global, and flavourful melting pot.

Migrating with recipes: Jennifer Rubell's *Made in Texas*

Jennifer Rubell's installation *Made in Texas* (2011) addressed *culinary nostalgia* experienced by first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants; and highlights the relevance of the place—the homeland—in culinary traditions, emphasising that recipes and food practices migrate with the subject, adapting to the conditions of the "new" homeland. Hosted by the East Gallery of Dallas Contemporary in Texas, USA, Rubell's one-evening participatory installation consisted of five different installations displayed on top of white pedestals, each of them portraying the

[207] Ibid., 78.
[208] Inness, *Secret Ingredients*, 59.

activities taking place inside different food enterprises. In this section I analyse *Made in Texas* focusing on the intricacies arising while the activities were performed in the gallery and in relationship to the migration of recipes and culinary nostalgia. In particular, I focus on three of the presentations where salsa, tamales, and cheese were being prepared, to discuss how foreigners hold on to their culinary traditions even in a strange land. However, I emphasise that culinary habits change according to the place where they set up their new "home", and that the portability of recipes shows that culinary traditions are transported to other geographical locations and socioeconomic conditions as they follow the migrant. Nevertheless, leaving the home entails certain complications, like the inability to reproduce the nostalgic dishes due to a lack of ingredients or suitable cooking tools.

*Made in Texas'*s micro-representations of workplaces presented a small-scale and romanticised image of the factory space in which workers were seen performing duties and wearing hair nets, aprons with embroidered logos and names of each of the companies, white shirts, and in some cases disposable shoe covers. Rubell's intention was to make visible the activities taking place "behind the scene" when preparing ingredients or dishes belonging to the region's culinary tradition, *Tex-Mex* cuisine, and to which the community is familiar with, hence the name chosen for the installation. As Rubell points out, her site-specific artistic practices highlight the importance of the place where they take place, not only referring to the location and space—the gallery so to speak—but also highlighting the region or area:

> I went down to Dallas and I just asked the museum to show me around to some of the places where food is made. That's a standard starting point for me. Factories where food is made, places where people produce food. Something I was struck by in the places I went to was this very artisanal quality to the food being made in family-owned factory settings.[209]

[209] Andrea Grimes, "New York Food Installation Artist To Perform 'Made In Texas' Exhibit Thursday, Featuring Local Food Laborers," *Eater*, September 19, 2011, http://dallas.eater.com/archives/2011/09/19/new-york-food-installation-artist-to-perform-made-in-texas-exhibit-this-thursday-featuring-local-foo.php.

Made in Texas, furthermore, shows that regional cuisine is the result of merging different culinary traditions; specifically, it shows how Mexican culinary traditions were brought by immigrants crossing the border, settling in the southern states of the United Stated since the mid-nineteenth century, and bearing in mind that these influences were first and foremost shared when Texas was in the process of gaining independence from Mexico. Moreover, the importance of this installation shows the migratory problems in Texas where more—legal and illegal—foreigners arrive from Mexico seeking a better quality of life, pursuing the "American dream". Culinary traditions that once originated in Mexico have been transformed and assimilated by the host, endorsed by first-generation migrants whose culinary nostalgia and traditions reinforced their cultural identity by cooking and sharing their dishes with others. As I explained, food practices and language are two elements that subsist with stronger force during exile or migration. This is the case of the tortilla chips, one of the first ingredients presented in Rubell's *Made in Texas*. The public encountered a mountain of "locally made tortilla chips" where the visitors could, if desired, nibble on them.



39. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Pedestal with tortilla chips.

The tortilla chips introduced the public to the project, signalling corn as a staple ingredient of Tex-Mex cuisine. Furthermore, they were eaten with the salsa that was being prepared on the second pedestal, representing the workshop of Moises Silguero, the 2010 winner of the "Texas State Fair Salsa-Making Competition". Silguero prepared his award-winning salsa recipe on the stage and in collaboration with some of his workers. Silguero brought industrial blenders, pots, and other appliances used to prepare salsa on an industrial scale. Furthermore, the production chain also included the bottling and packaging of the salsa. It is worth emphasising, that in this case, the action communicated the idea of labour and the product itself being created on a pedestal, displayed as an artistic object. Most importantly, once the jars were closed, they were labelled with artwork labels containing the *name of the artist*, the date of *creation*, the salsa *producer* and *owner* of the recipe, and the *gallery*: "Jennifer Rubell 2011, Casa Silguero Green Salsa, Dallas Contemporary". Needless to say, this raises questions of authorship—to which I will turn my attention in the following paragraphs—as if this handmade ingredient was posited as an art object.



40. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Making salsa



41. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Pedestal allocated to Silguero's salsa making.

First of all, it is worth recalling that the Latin root of "recipe" (*recipere*) implies a relation of exchange which makes them dynamic texts, changing and varying as they are subjected to revision, interpretation and reinterpretation by those using them.[210] Janet Theophano explains that these changes respond to: 1) moving to another region, country or continent; 2) the recipe's transference from one generation to the next, where the person who receives it modifies it according to his/her particular taste and needs; and 3) socioeconomic conditions, such as wars, natural disasters, or economic crises.[211] This gives sense to the immigrants' need to recover and recreate food from the homeland, what Delores Phillips calls the "portability of the provincial".[212]

Rubell's exhibition highlights the process of "adaptation/adoption of eating habits" and the influences on the local community—the host—as it "mix[es] and modif[ies] both culinary cultures" simultaneously,[213] portraying salsa as an ingredient that is embraced as part of the host's culinary tradition. The case of Silguero further

[210] Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster, *The Recipe Reader: Narratives, Contexts, Traditions* (USA: Ashgate, 2003), 44.
[211] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 50.
[212] Phillips, "Quieting Noisy Bellies", 51.

emphasises this as the salsa contest focused on a recipe that is now part of the Texan community, as the name of the award suggests it was only for Texan salsa makers. This suggests that a recipe brought by immigrants was then assimilated and adopted by the host. In the case of *Made in Texas*, it shows familiar and cultural traditions as fertile ground for culinary nostalgia, reflecting salsa as a food product through which immigrants continued to practise their culinary habits, helping them recover their "ethnic and national affiliation" once they left their homeland and while they created a bond with the new one.[214] Making and eating salsa allows the immigrant to insert and adapt themself to the country where s/he arrived without being invited, without losing the bond with the original home, what Giard would refer as "a nostalgic narrative of the country, city or town where a person is born".[215] Consequently, immigrants live between two different cultural identities: the paradox of belonging and estrangement. The need to cook, eat, and share recipes of one's culinary tradition requires adaptation of the recipe to the ingredients available in the host country, considering factors such as seasonality, price, or quality.

Furthermore, the scene dedicated to Silguero's salsa recipe therefore emphasises the importance of the transference or inheritance of a recipe, which allowed him to reproduce it, win a contest, and commercialise it. Yet, the installation questions Silguero's authorship in two different ways. On the one hand, Silguero acts as the current guardian of *his* salsa recipe. On the other hand, the jar labels suggest this is no longer a recipe by Silguero but that of Rubell. Her name is stated first, *à la manière* of artwork labels, transforming Silguero's recipe from one that is relevant in the community, or Texas, to one that is also inserted in the art scene.[216] The making of salsa during the show involves the gift-giving of a recipe, not only in terms of

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[213] Marina De Camargo Heck, "Adapting and Adopting: The Migrating Recipe", in *The Recipe Reader: Narratives*, *Contexts*, *Traditions*, eds. Janet Floyd and Laurel Forster (Ashgate, 2003), 205–6.
[214] Ibid.
[215] Giard, "Doing-Cooking", 190.
[216] Giard explains that in some cases, recipes and cookbooks were linked to the abode by identifying who prepares the dish and who owns the recipe: "signed with a simple feminine first name, often embellished with a mythical familial title [such as] 'Cousin Adèle,' 'Aunt Aurora,' [this] initiate[d] the process of reconstituting the world from the familiar and maternal abode". Ibid., 216–17.

giving someone else an object but also by transforming a recipe into an artistic object. Even if Rubell's intention was to make visible the backstage action of an award-winning recipe by reproducing Silguero's workshop on a small scale, the fact that Rubell publicly displayed the entire process suggests that the audience—and Silguero—validated the action of making salsa as a *ready-to-eat* art object.



42. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Bottled salsa tagged with the label: "Jennifer Rubell 2011, Casa Silguero Green Salsa, Dallas Contemporary."

Making tamales

The third pedestal presented in *Made in Texas* was a replica of Silguero's mother's kitchen, where, along with other women, she was seen preparing *tamales* to be eaten by the public. This cooking scene portrayed the preparation of tamales inside a domestic kitchen. Like Silguero's salsa recipe, tamales also went through a process of adaptation and adoption, incorporating ingredients found in the new homeland, Texas or California.[217] The case of Silguero's mother's *tamales* catering service

[217] Jeffrey M Pilcher, *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 105–29.

highlights the history of this dish in the United States, and portrays the influence of restorative culinary nostalgia among immigrants, acting as *culinary citizens* by cooking tamales which remind them of home and build on the idea of community abroad. In other words, the installation presents the preparation of tamales as a cooking process that shows a "culture's stories and myths", commemorating the ancestors."[218]

Moreover, the installation shows a domestic scene in which communal cooking, culinary nostalgia, and self-employment give sense to the exchange of traditions between the host nation and the "new" arrival. It is important to remember that selling tamales was a strategy to preserve and protect culinary traditions of immigrants from Mexico, but at the same time, the installation exemplifies how selling (their own) food allowed immigrants to sustain themselves and to begin earning money in a foreign country. In particular, women aimed to contribute to the household economy by relying on their culinary knowledge.[219] Here, it is worth recalling Appadurai's idea about the dichotomy between low and high cuisine: even if tamales were initially associated with "poverty and disease", and were racially and gender related to poor women from Mexican backgrounds who cooked and sold them to support their families, they were gradually accepted and no longer considered in such a manner.[220]

In this case, even if tamales are presented as part of an artistic practice, they taste *like home*, as the action of cooking and sharing showed cooking tamales as an experience tied to the familiar abode, and probably to relatives living in other places. Tamales are therefore a "celebration of nationhood" while also being a "political act",[221] one that emphasises the role of regional cuisines as a conglomerate that helps shape a national cuisine with different "ethnic roots".[222]

[218] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 83.
[219] Pilcher, *Planet Taco*, 105, 129.
[220] Ibid., 111.
[221] Glynis Ridley, "The First American Cookbook", *Eighteenth-Century Life: The Cultural Topography of Food* 23, no. 2 (May 1999): 1.
[222] Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine", 5.

The history of tamales in the U.S. makes visible the *ethnic other*; cooking them insists on building a culinary identity for those abroad, but also for those still residing in the country (homeland). In other words, Mrs Silguero's *tamal* recipe, highlights the use of provincial and regional ingredients only available in a particular place, and it also portrays a pattern of inclusion and exclusion of the foreign other, the migrant and his/her culinary traditions.



43. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Tamales and Silguero's salsa

In addition, *Made in Texas* counteracts the invisibility of the other—the foreigner—but also those working inside the kitchen, which particularly addresses the genderisation of the kitchen: Mrs Silgueiro and other women are presented making tamales as part of the art show. In the installation, the kitchen-like space Rubell presents accomplishes two different purposes. First, it makes publicly visible the process of making tamales, dislocating it from the domestic and enclosed space. Second, it portrays the arduous, ritualistic, and communitarian effort required for making tamales. This kitchen space addresses Zubiaurre's notion of *kitchen tales* where women share recipes and experiences with each other, what Theophano suggests is "a token of affection, [of] intimacy", though "not necessar[ily as]

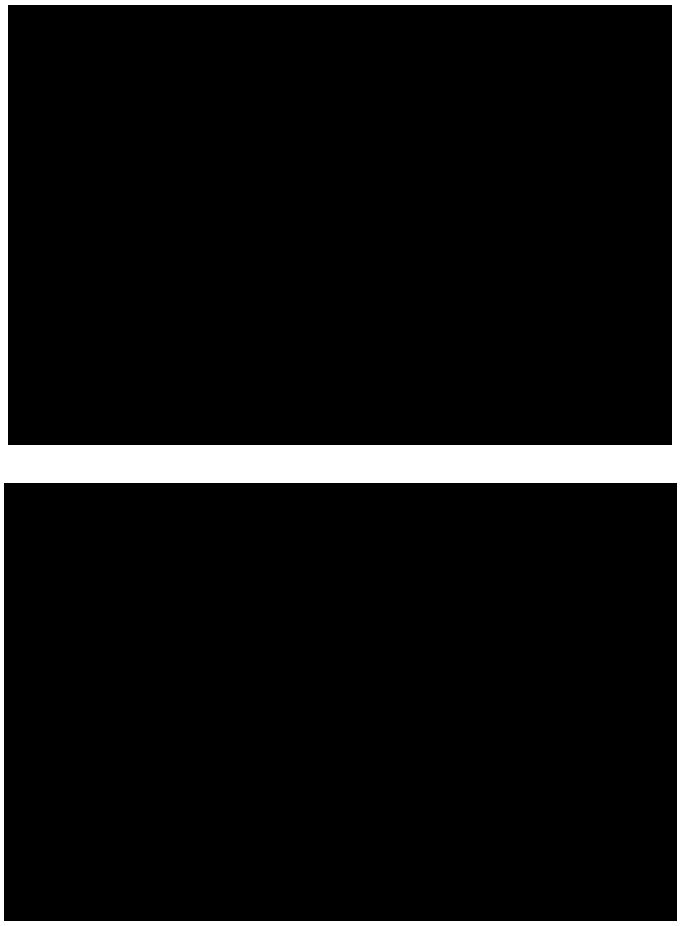
evidence/indication of a symmetrical relationship".[223] Even though Rubell intends to show the making of tamales on an industrial or business-like scale, by staging the installation in close resemblance to the domestic kitchen, Rubell emphasises the familiar and/or communal practice involved in making tamales; this was enhanced as the tamales were shared and eaten by the public, garnished with two different salsas, one prepared by Mrs Silgueiro and the award-winning one made by her son.

Not mozzarella but Oaxaca cheese

The fourth pedestal staged activities performed by the Mozzarella Company, one of the "earliest artisanal cheesemakers in Texas", specialising in the production of *Oaxaca* cheese.[224] This variety takes its name from a state in southwest Mexico where this cheese is popular. It is worth noting that labelling a recipe or food product in terms of its geographical origin does not always mean the product comes from there.[225] The Mozzarella Company's website describes Oaxaca cheese as "Mexican mozzarella. Hand-stretched into long ribbons of string cheese and rolled up like a ball of yarn. Mild flavor."[226] This definition helps to clarify the cheese in the public arena and to a wider range of cheese eaters who can easily identify the texture or flavour of Oaxaca cheese if compared to mozzarella.

Rubell's installation shows the process elaboration of Oaxaca cheese using the stretched-curd or *pasta filata* technique used in making Mozzarella and Oaxaca, and which gives these cheeses a fibrous structure, characterised by their melting and stretching properties.[227] Female workers are seen stretching by hand the strings of cheese and then rolling them up into cheese balls. In this case, culinary nostalgia makes itself evident, even though Rubell shows the stage as a small-scale factory.

[223] Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 41.
[224] Grimes, "New York Food Installation Artist To Perform 'Made In Texas' Exhibit Thursday, Featuring Local Food Laborers".
[225] Giard, "Doing-Cooking", 222.
[226] Mozarella Co., "About Our Cheeses", *Mozarella Company*, 2016, http://www.mozzarellaco.com/mozcochey.html.



44, 45. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Making Oaxaca cheese by the Mozzarella Company.

The production of a cheese in a different region to where the recipe is originally from shows the interest of immigrants to preserve their culinary traditions and feel closer to home. In some way, the production and commercialisation of Oaxaca cheese therefore responds to culinary nostalgia and also economic reasons. Immigrants have been able to enjoy Oaxaca cheese despite the distance between Texas and the state of Oaxaca. In some cases, business entrepreneurs see the opportunity to fill a gap in the market by making food products from different regions available to the community which is used to eating them; this also makes the product available to those unfamiliar with the items. This is the case of the Mozzarella Company in Texas, founded by Paula Lambert in 1992, which focuses on

[227] Patrick F. Fox et al., *Fundamentals of Cheese Science*, ed. Patrick F. Fox (Maryland: Aspen Publishers, 2000); Tim Smith, *Making Artisan Cheese: Fifty Fine Cheeses That You Can Make in Your Own Kitchen* (Quarry Books, 2005).

the production of artisanal cheeses from various regions, including Texas, Mexico and France.

It is worth reminding that reproducing a particular dish is closely linked to the notion of preservation and protection of the home country, an action performed by displaced persons as a means to feel rooted to their ancestral traditions, to the homeland. This explains why food and traditional ingredients are key in diaspora and immigrant communities. They often refer to them "nostalgically" because in most cases, immigrants are unable to eat them as often as they would like; they are not part of the host's culinary tradition.[228] In this case, rather than receiving batches of cheese from Mexico, as *pestellomata*, immigrants have an easier way to acquire Oaxaca cheese in Texas, one that is cost-effective but also follows the artisanal recipe. Furthermore, it is worth recalling that Derrida refers to the proper name and its characteristic of being untranslatable, in close relationship to hospitality; this is reflected in how the name of the cheese is respected as there is no translation for Oaxaca. In this sense, what the name suggests is that this product has gone through a process of protection in terms of culinary tradition. *Oaxaca* cheese therefore carries the homeland in two different ways, in terms of language but also as traditional and regional food originally from somewhere else.



46. Jennifer Rubell. *Made in Texas*, 2011
Rolling strings of Oaxaca cheese by the Mozzarella Company.

[228] De Camargo Heck, "Adapting and Adopting: The Migrating Recipe," 211.

Rubell's installation shows that culinary nostalgia is more than a craving for food; instead, it is a desire to remain connected to the homeland by giving a sense to individual and collective culinary practices that remind foreigners of the original threshold, and of those who are no longer present. Rubell emphasises recipes as complex culinary texts embedded to hospitality's discourse that serve as a bridge that links the guest to the host while reminding them of their own background. Recipes bond culinary traditions, making it possible to suggest this is a gesture of hospitality taking place within the realm of culinary knowledge and language. Due to their characteristics of auto-mobility and portability, recipes transform culinary cultures as one opens the house and the country to the unknown other, to the one we are not familiar with. It is to act ethically and hospitably in recognising the other, we should not forget, that cuisines are influenced from abroad.[229] Otherwise, this would signify that we are denying the opportunity to reinvent and reframe ourselves as hosts, which would condemn our culinary culture to the past. In other words, it would contravene the idea of an open welcome to others, allowing us to be hosted while being hosts.

[229] Alberto Peralta de Legarreta, "Acerca de Lo Gastronómicamente Mexicano," *Gastronómica de México*, 2009, 1.

Chapter 3

Welcoming, taking a seat, and eating with the other

The moment of eating and drinking with others, *commensality*,[1] has biological, social and economic relevance in everyday life. Sociologists, anthropologists, gastronomers and philosophers have been interested in this moment, exploring the reasons for and implications of sharing meals, especially considering that this is a practice shared among different cultural groups, facilitating relationships and strengthening social bonds.[2] Anthropologist Tan Chee-Beng explains "hospitality commensality" as the moment when a subject foreign to the household is invited to eat with the family with the intention to establish or to maintain social networks.[3] In other words, commensality is often linked to the notion of hospitality, sometimes assumed as the same event. However, the purpose of commensality does not respond to the idea of offering hospitality on every occasion; in some cases, it serves to prove if the guest's intentions are of a hostile nature, as I will explain.

The aim of this chapter is to examine hospitality and commensality in light of participative installations, highlighting that the role as host is not stable as it shifts from one subject to the other depending on the activity they perform. These concerns are discussed throughout the chapter in relationship to the notions of the welcome, the gift, hospitality, and *hostipitality*.[4] In particular, I explore what eating with an(other) involves by examining the relationship between the guest and the host as it develops even before meals are eaten. Commensality is more than sitting at the table and sharing food with someone else: it includes manners and rituals of how food is presented and offered to others; the presentation of dishes and how they are served, including the cutlery and other utensils and paraphernalia used for eating; and the sensory

[1] Chee-Beng, "Commensality and the Organization of Social Relations".
[2] Pat Caplan, *Feasts, Fasts, Famine: Food for Thought*, Berg Occasional Papers in Anthropology 2 (Oxford: Berg, 1994).
[3] Chee-Beng, "Commensality and the Organization of Social Relations", 25.
[4] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*; Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*.

experiences and conversations that arise while sharing food.[5] I argue that to understand the conditions under which commensality takes place, it is necessary to bear in mind the previous moments, especially when the host welcomes the guest. Bearing all this in mind, my analysis focuses on practices that use commensality a strategy through which the public is invited to participate in the development of the artwork. In specific, I analyse Ana Prvacki's project *The Greeting Committee* (2012), Mary Ellen Carroll's collaborative installation *Open Outcry* (2012) and Alhäuser's performance the *Flying Feast* (2012). All of these artworks address the notion of hospitality and emphasising three crucial moments, two of them taking place before commensality.

The chapter is, in this sense, divided in three sections. The first one focuses on the *welcome*, understood as the moment when the guest/stranger arrives at the doorstep and waits to be given the right of hospitality. I discuss Prvacki's project *The Greeting Committee* as an artistic practice that uses the traditional Serbian jam-like sweet of Slatko to welcome the public. Prvacki's practice enables discussion about welcoming rituals where food or drinks are used to introduce guests/foreigners/strangers to the host's abode. I argue greeting as an anticipatory step of commensality which directly affects the relationship between the guest and the host as it determines the purpose and conditions in which the new arrival enters the threshold, clarifying the rules and tasks that each of the parties is responsible for or expected to carry out. The second section focuses on the moment when guest and host *take a seat* at the table. For this I explore Carroll's collaborative installation *Open Outcry*, a project that is staged as a dinner party but where the dining table is emphasised as a crucial element to provide the best conditions for interaction between host and guests. Finally, the last section examines the moment of *commensality* per se, when host and guest eat together. I focus my analysis on Sonja Alhäuser's performance the *Flying Feast* (2012). This performance shows that commensality is not, nor should it be, bound to the home or the table. Alhäuser shows that commensality as hospitality is determined by where it takes place, whether that is a private and

[5] Susan Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces. An Introduction", ed. Susan Pollock, *eTopoi: Journal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2: Between Feasts and Daily Meals. Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces, no. 2012 (2012): 1–20.

domestic space, or public or other “open” spaces. Overall, my argument emphasises that the first two moments require the same attention as commensality, considering that they both have a direct impact on the relationship between the host and the guest by the time they eat together. Furthermore, the chapter takes into consideration the growing body of literature about commensality developed by anthropologists, sociologists, historians, gender scholars, and food scholars.

3.1. *The Greeting Committee*: Sweetening the welcome.

In 2012, Ana Prvacki presented the installation *The Greeting Committee* as part of the exhibition "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art" at the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago.[6] The greeting committee consisted of members of the museum staff and art students from the University of Chicago greeting museum visitors with Slatko moments before they entered the exhibition. I argue that although food is a powerful strategy to convey a welcoming gesture and plays a key role in making others feel at home, in fact, welcoming a stranger with food is not always an act of hospitality, even if it is intended as such; on the contrary, it tests the hostile or non-hostile intentions of the new arrival. This gives place to different outcomes, including misunderstandings between the host and the guest, or misreading the intentions behind this gesture of hospitality. Prvacki's installation sheds light on the latter while also highlighting the welcome as the beginning of an ethical relationship with the other. Moreover, it signals differences in cultural traditions in terms of offering food; the gift of food is read differently if host and guest do not share the same customs. Gifting food transforms the stranger into a welcomed guest; however, the acceptance or rejection of food determines the way in which the guest will be acknowledged by the host.[7]

Prvacki's installation was planned as a participatory action where visitors encountered an unexpected aesthetic experience, requiring them to respond to the welcoming gesture of members of a greeting committee. A greeting ritual was put into practice by the greeting committee who approached the new arrival with a tray with a glass jar filled with Slatko, disposable spoons, and glasses of water. Visitors were offered a spoonful of Slatko, an extremely sweet, tart, shiny, red, gooey substance made with strawberries, sugar, and water.[8] At

[6] Smith, *Feast*.
[7] I am referring here to the moment when the host and the guest face each other for the first time, but also the encounter should be understood in relation to the artistic practice, as suggested by Bourriaud, where the "state of encounter (where the work) may operate as a relational device containing a certain degree of randomness, or a machine provoking and managing individual and group encounters". Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 30.
[8] Slatko is a traditional Serbian thin fruit preserve made with fruits like strawberries blueberries, cherries or plums. Alan Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*, ed. Tom Jaine, Oxford Companions (OUP Oxford, 2006), 351.

this point, the welcoming gesture seems obvious: to greet the visitors by offering them food and drink. We are familiar with being greeted with food, but do we as guests always expect this presentation ceremony due to the practices of the hospitality industry? Does the welcoming gesture taking place at home differ from the one that is exercised in a hotel, restaurant, or museum? How genuine is the welcome we are offered by the time we arrive at someone else's doorstep? Food might be read as the initial welcoming gesture that portrays an openness to the arrival of a stranger, an "act of politeness" that allegedly proves the host's hospitality.[9] The gift of food, apart from establishing the first contact between both parties, determines the status and role played by the subjects involved in the process: 1) who acts as host; 2) who helps the host to prepare and deliver the gift of food; 3) who is the guest or receiver of this hospitable gesture, and what is expected of her/him. The welcoming gift of food demarcates boundaries. In other words, Prvacki's performance addresses the ethics and politics of hospitality with specific focus on the first encounter between the host and the guest.

The Greeting Committee draws from the Serbian tradition of offering Slatko to question the importance of the welcome and of welcoming rituals in hospitality's discourse. Slatko was not randomly chosen nor intended to function as food party for the exhibition's visitors. On the contrary, it was the medium by which the welcoming was enacted. The reason for choosing this type of food highlights the artist's Serbian background and traditions but in particular the story of the first encounter between her Rumanian mother and the family of her Serbian father. Prvacki explains that this encounter held great expectations for both parties, but at the same time, it highlighted the differences of cultural traditions, giving rise to a misinterpretation of the welcoming ritual because of the guest's ignorance of the codes and manners embedded in Slatko.[10] Prvacki explains that the arrival of an expected but also unknown guest creates expectations, and this was no different for Prvacki's paternal family. Their attention was on the new arrival who was doubly strange: an unknown guest for the family but also a foreigner who arrived from a land that was equally unfamiliar. The visit would

[9] Elizabeth Telfer, *Food for Thought: Philosophy and Food* (United Kingdom: Routledge, 1996), 83.

clarify the identity of the foreigner and its status. Would she be a friendly guest or a potential threat? The only way to confirm either of the possibilities required following the traditional welcoming ritual where the host presents him/herself in front of the new arrival with a tray containing a jar of Slatko, a spoon, and a glass of water. The expected reaction from someone familiar with this ritual would be taking a spoonful of Slatko, eating it, then leaving the spoon in the tray, and finally drinking a sip of water.[11] This was not the case for Prvacki's mother, whose intention to make a good first impression to her future in-laws had an unexpected turn: she not only ate a spoonful of Slatko under the inquisitive gaze of her husband's family, but she kept eating Slatko as an act politeness.[12] There were different reasons for this misunderstanding: firstly, the difference in the languages spoken; secondly, the unfamiliarity with the ritual; and thirdly, the host's refusal to highlight the guest's faux pas.[13] The language was an obstacle that forced both guest and host to communicate by exchanging humming noises that resulted in contradictory assumptions: after each spoonful eaten by Prvacki's mother, she emitted a *Mmm*\ sound that signalled satisfaction and/or pleasure of eating Slatko. The family answered back using a slightly similar sound *Hmm*\, signalling confusion, consternation, surprise, or even scepticism of their guest's behaviour.[14] This answer, however, resulted in a misinterpretation, on the one hand as an invitation—or a forceful suggestion—to keep eating Slatko, and on the other hand as a question without any enunciation about the guest's action. No members of the family were aware of their guest's unfamiliarity with Slatko, nor did they tell her or stop her from eating it. On the contrary, they allowed her to keep eating it, assuming this behaviour as an act of hunger or pleasure. For them, they were acting hospitably, showing good manners by leaving the guest to eat. In this sense, while Prvacki's mother was welcomed, she was also being carefully observed and misjudged.

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[10] Smith, *Feast*, 278.
[11] According to the *The Oxford Companion to Food*, the ritual of Slatko is similar to the Greek tradition of Glyko, which is also the name of a preserve of fruit in syrup, to be served with a spoon. In Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, and the Balkan region, this is the standard offering to a newly arrived guest or to a traveller needing refreshment. Davidson, *The Oxford Companion to Food*.
[12] *Ana Prvacki: Inspiration*, Youtube, Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art (Chicago, 2012), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PP8spWyn3c.
[13] An embarrassing social mistake. Merriam-Webster.com, "Faux Pas," *Merriam-Webster* (Merriam-Webster), accessed November 20, 2014, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/faux pas.
[14] *Ana Prvacki: Inspiration*.



47. Ana Prvacki. *The Greeting Committee*, performed by the artist, 2012

The welcome: Gifting food as hospitality

The arrival of the other has been discussed by Derrida and Levinas. In *Adieu*, Derrida argues that the welcome of the other is the event that constitutes the basis of any act of hospitality, marking the beginning of the ethical relationship with the other.[15] It is worth noting, however, that this text draws forth Levinas's ideas in *Totality and Infinity*, where the welcome is argued as being the encounter of alterities, a moment which defines subjectivity. The "welcome of the Other", argues Levinas, is hospitality, understood as the moment when the ethical and political responsibilities towards the other are determined.[16] Furthermore, both Derrida and Levinas argue that the greeting and the reception of the other is the moment when one opens the self and the threshold to the needs of the other. Nevertheless, the welcome or hospitality is determined by who arrives and the conditions of the arrival. The welcoming gesture is different for someone who is already expected or invited as opposed to an unexpected stranger that arrives at the doorstep; for example, for Prvacki's mother, Slatko was prepared in advance to be offered at her arrival, but this would not be the

[15] Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 26.

case when receiving an uninvited guest. In both cases, however, the welcome relates to the host's sovereignty, identifying who is the subject situated "at-home": I can only welcome someone into a place which belongs to me, or where I have certain power or authority.[17] Being "at-home" suggests the host is willing to receive the new arrival, as is the case for the family that welcomed Prvacki's mother.

The Greeting Committee is more than a re-enactment of the Serbian ritual of welcoming. This artistic practice points out the aporia of hospitality, the differences between absolute and conditional hospitality—of invitation—as discussed by Derrida in *Of Hospitality*. Absolute hospitality operates within a logic of absolute surprise, meaning that the host will offer hospitality regardless of who arrives. Absolute hospitality, furthermore, does not need, nor is it expected, to be reciprocated. Conditional hospitality, that which involves an invitation, is an act of hospitality where the host is aware and expects the arrival of a guest; there is no surprise about the arrival, and the gestures of hospitality have been planned in advance.[18] *The Greeting Committee* highlights the conditionality of the welcome. In this artistic project, there is a clear aim to receive guests; however, because these actions are characterised by their artificiality and careful planning, as Prvacki explains, they "kill genuine hospitality".[19] *The Greeting Committee* therefore focuses on the welcome of a "welcomable guest", highlighting it as an act that responds to norms and codes,[20] in this case to cultural and social rituals of greeting and welcoming performed during the encounter between the host and the guest, including the gifting and exchange of objects or edibles such as Slatko. Norms, protocols, and rules of etiquette regulate the welcome and delimit boundaries between individuals; in this sense, greeting protocols and rituals are identified as the laws of hospitality that determine who is welcomed or rejected upon arrival.

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[16] Derrida notes that the word hospitality in Levinas's text is usually avoided and replaced by the term welcome. Ibid., 19, 21; Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 24:254.
[17] Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 15–16.
[18] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 83.
[19] Prvacki and Aristarkhova, *Ana Prvacki & Irina Aristarkhova*, 8.
[20] Simon Morgan Wortham, *The Derrida Dictionary*, Bloomsbury Philosophy Dictionaries (Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), 72.

Welcoming guests with food is not exclusive to Slavic cultures, but is a practice shared by different cultural traditions and for different purposes.[21] The foodstuff that is exchanged may vary from culture to culture but in general, the act of offering a gift plays a crucial role for the members of a social group, as Marcel Mauss explains in *The Gift*. This text focuses on the gift and the dynamic of gifting, which Mauss argues is a reciprocal action which helps to establish social ties between individuals or communities. This logic of reciprocation means that once I am offered something, and I receive it, I am indirectly assuming the responsibility to return the gifting gesture—not the object or a similar one—to the one who offered it to me. To forget or deny this logic of return, emphasises Mauss, contradicts the purpose of gifting and puts social bonds at risk.[22] Moreover, the act of gifting is directly related to the hierarchy of the giver and the receiver, and to the value of the gifted object, although this does not necessarily mean an economic value.[23]

Derrida re-examines the notion of the gift in *Given Time* and challenges Mauss's understanding of the gift, proposing it outside the logic of return. He explains that similar to hospitality, the gift responds to the logic of impossibility, as an aporia, i.e. the condition of possibility of the gift, "some'one' giv[ing] some'thing' to some 'one other'", annuls or cancels the possibility of the existence of the gift, thus signalling its impossibility.[24] A gift cannot be recognised as a gift by the giver or the receiver. Derrida also emphasises that for a gift to be a gift, it must not be reciprocated: any form of reciprocation situates the gift within a logic similar to an "exchange, economy, potlatch, trade [or] contract".[25] Furthermore, a gift depends on temporality: the gift appears in a specific moment, as an "event", but time itself regulates the gift; in Derrida's words, "the gift gives time".[26] The aporia of the gift and hospitality need to be examined in relationship to the context and the moment they take place. The gift and hospitality, or hospitality

[21] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (London: W. W. Norton, 1990); Carole Counihan, *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning and Power* (New York: Routledge, 1999).
[22] Mauss, *The Gift*, 23.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Jacques Derrida, *Given Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.
[25] Ibid., 12.
[26] The moment when the gift appears is referred to by Derrida as an "event" which he also emphasises should not be expected: "event and gift, the event as gift, the gift as event must be irruptive, unmotivated—disinterested." Ibid., 41, 123.

as a gift, are events in time in which neither of the subjects, the giver and receiver, expects them to appear: they are unforeseen events.



48. Ana Prvacki. *The Greeting Committee*, 2012

Food becomes a powerful strategy to convey the welcoming gesture and plays a key role in "making guests". Ethnography and anthropology studies show that gifting and offering food helps individuals and communities to establish non-hostile contact with the other, allowing social bonds to emerge.[27] Elizabeth Telfer suggests, for example, that offering or gifting food functions as a symbol of trust and interdependence between the host and the guest. It shows the host's intention to be hospitable, not only because giving food or drinks intends to quench the hunger or thirst of the guest, but also because these edible gifts show the amount of time, detail, and resources invested in receiving the guest. The offering of food portrays specific rituals, manners and protocols aimed to welcome a guest, each of them belonging to a particular cultural context.[28] The variability of these rituals presumes that they are not known or shared by the guest and host, thus giving place to a misunderstanding of the welcoming act.

[27] Mauss, *The Gift*, 7; Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*; Andrew Shryock, "Breaking Hospitality Apart: Bad Hosts, Bad Guests, and the Problem of Sovereignty," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18, no. Special Issue: The return to hospitality: strangers, guests, and ambiguous encounters. (June 2012): S20–33.
[28] Telfer, *Food for Thought*, 83–84.

In Prvacki's *The Greeting Committee*, both notions of the gift and of hospitality interweaved during the welcoming ritual when Slatko was gifted to visitors, as was the case when Prvacki's mother experienced it. Both were moments when hospitality was gifted to the new arrival, a gesture of hospitality that takes shape as edible gifts. These offerings, however, cannot be posited as unconditional acts of hospitality, if following Derrida's thinking. On the contrary, they are welcoming events conditioned by the impossibility of the action. The gifting of Slatko was unexpected for the newly arrived strangers, yet they were expected to reciprocate the gesture, as I will discuss in the next subsection. However, at this point, I want to emphasise that in Prvacki's artistic action, the welcome prompts the emergence of a moment of hospitality when the Slatko is offered to the newcomer. Slatko highlights the encounter between the host and a stranger who, later, becomes a guest. In other words, the offering of Slatko during the welcome is a transformational gesture of hospitality that modifies the status of a stranger to become a guest.

Welcoming: Transforming the stranger into a guest

The arrival of a stranger—an unknown, unnamed, and unidentified subject—at the host's threshold and the way in which s/he is welcomed results in two possible outcomes: the foreigner is either received as a guest or acknowledged as an enemy.[29] Nevertheless, even if the foreigner is welcomed as a guest, their status remains ambivalent as the welcome does not offer instantaneous integration as a member of the community that welcomes them. Furthermore, and even if the welcoming gesture suggests the host no longer sees the new arrival as a hostile stranger, the intentions of the guest will still be tested,[30] i.e. by the time the stranger is welcomed with a gift, they are indirectly compelled to receive it to be accepted by the host. The stranger has no option but to enter into the conditional logic of gifting and of hospitality, and their intentions are scrutinised to the same extent as an untrustworthy subject.

[29] Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 28.
[30] Julian Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality", *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, no. 1 (2012): 504.

In *The Greeting Committee*, the welcoming gift reaffirmed the host's sovereignty over their domain, laying down the conditions that the stranger needs to comply with as a guest. Prvacki's mother, for example, accepted the offering of Slatko and ate it in order to please the host. She followed the rules created by the host as a means to prove her friendly intentions, thus allowing her to be accepted as a guest. A similar situation occurred with the members of the public who were offered Slatko in the Smart Museum of Art before entering the exhibition. In both cases, Slatko transformed strangers into guests, even if the contexts of the welcome differed from each other: one was an invited and expected guest, whereas the public were to some extent expected but not fully identified. Stranger and foreigner had no option but to enter into the conditional logic of gifting and hospitality to be fully accepted as a guest, and were therefore compelled to receive Slatko and eat it. Rejecting the gift could signal hostile intentions, lack of manners, or ignorance about the welcoming ritual that could have offended the host. Once the edible gift was accepted, the intentions of the foreigner entered into a passive state. Thus, in this sense, the welcome gift functions as an act of prevention, allowing the host to protect themself and their home from a stranger to whom the doors are about to be opened.[31]

At first glance, the offering of Slatko is understood as a "gesture of friendliness" that needs no reciprocation—at least not materially.[32] However, it is the idea of non-reciprocation that becomes troubling, because this is only assumed if the new arrival is not familiar with the Serbian offering of Slatko as a rite of incorporation that aims to introduce a stranger into a group, and in which the arriving stranger is expected to reciprocate the welcoming after eating the spoonful of the sweet jam.[33] The expected counter-gift, however, supposes a moral repayment moments after the guest leaves the host's threshold, an action that is closely related to the symbolism of the sweetness of Slatko.

[31] Prvacki and Aristarkhova explain that the greeting, particularly the handshake, began as a literal disarming, a demonstration that one had no weapon in hand. Prvacki and Aristarkhova, *Ana Prvacki & Irina Aristarkhova*, *6*.
[32] Telfer, *Food for Thought*, 83–84.
[33] Pitt-Rivers argues that the introduction to a group is often an "occasion for an 'ordeal' of some sort"; however, in the case of Slatko, it does not involve any kind of submission to any severely uncomfortable experiences. Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality," 503.



49. Ana Prvacki. *The Greeting Committee*, 2012

Food acquires different cultural meanings that vary in accordance with the taste preferences of each cultural group, demographic variables such as age, gender, class or occupation, and the rituals and occasions in which a determined edible is eaten. It is worth noting that sugar, and particularly sweets, hold different cultural meanings closely related to hospitality. As anthropologist Sidney Mintz explains, our attitude towards certain foods greatly depends on the context when they are shared and eaten, and with whom.[34] The acceptance of sweetness varies from one culture to another. Moreover, Mintz explains that sweets are generally identified as edibles that facilitate conditional hospitality; however, as he argues:

> hospitality "means" self-respect; self-respect "means" knowing one's place in the class system; and knowing one's place can "mean" offering appropriate forms of hospitality—greetings, inviting in, serving tea and sugar and treacle tarts, or whatever.[35]

Mintz's argument is unsettling because he acknowledges that hospitality is an act that depends, first and foremost, on the subject's position within a hierarchical system of class that determines to whom and how hospitality is

[34] Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, Elisabeth Sifton Books (United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1986), 338, 355, 364.
[35] Sidney W. Mintz, "Sweetness and Meaning", in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. Carolyn Korsmeyer, Sensory Formations (Bloomsbury Academic, 2005), 113–14.

offered. For Mintz, giving hospitality relies on the resources, power, and authority invested in the host which relates, in this sense, to Derrida's notion of conditional hospitality. The difference between both authors, however, is that Mintz suggests hospitality is a moral act that benefits both host and guest, but in which the host protects his dignity during the encounter with the other. Moreover, Mintz highlights his understanding of the *appropriate forms of hospitality* as the offering of a drink and sweets, in a similar fashion to the Serbian tradition of Slatko. This suggests that the choice of edible, its taste, and its cultural or symbolic meanings varies in accordance with the preferences and traditions of a community, group, or individual. What is assumed as pleasant and hospitable for some may be an unpleasant experience for others, even if the purpose is to convey the idea of welcoming.

Slatko is therefore a symbolically charged edible; its overpowering sweetness provides a meaningful and symbolic welcome that serves to prove the hospitable and generous intentions of the host. Its meaning is, however, understood among those who belong to the same group and/or those who use this welcoming tradition. The extreme sweetness of Slatko aims to accomplish two main purposes. Firstly, Slatko "sweetens the tongue" of the visitor, both literally and metaphorically. It only takes one spoonful to astonish the palate of the guest; however, the intention of this sweetening extends beyond the sensitive. It "sweetens" the visit of guests, communicating to the newcomer that s/he is an expected guest, giving sense to the notion of "home sweet home" where the host will take care of her/him. Secondly, Slatko indirectly tells the guest how s/he is expected to behave after leaving the threshold, and emphasises how the welcoming gesture is expected to be returned, namely by avoiding spreading any sort of gossip about the host, their behaviour, and even the threshold and its contents.[36] Sweetness provokes a shocking impression on the guest's taste buds, making it an unforgettable experience. Slatko is presented as a meaningful and

[36] *Ana Prvacki: The Greeting Committee*, YouTube, Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art (Chicago, 2012), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-PP8spWyn3c.

symbolic event of hospitality, a generous welcome gift that aspires to convince the guest to forget any hostile intentions, or to prevent them from taking place.[37]

The first spoonful that Prvacki's mother ate could have been understood as a generous act from her hosts to introduce her to the family, even though she was unaware of the protocol of Slatko and the meaning of its sweetness. As she kept eating the Slatko, the once pleasant welcome gradually transformed into an unpalatable experience that she continued to perform to avoid offending her hosts, thus leading to exacerbated hospitality, i.e. that which becomes a discomfort—as Derrida notes.[38] The experience was different for the public that participated in *The Greeting Committee* as they were told the purpose of Slatko. The artist intended to bribe the audience with sweets in order to make them talk positively about the exhibition once they left the threshold.[39]

The Greeting Committee showed that welcoming rituals and hospitality are embedded in a logic of exchange. The food offering contradicts the hospitable purpose it aims to deliver, showing the limit between it being a gesture of hospitality and it becoming a commodity related to economic exchange. In this case, food presented as a gesture of hospitality lingered between hospitality and a logic of exchange that served a word-of-mouth marketing strategy that aimed to bring more visitors to the exhibition.

In both cases (the exhibition and Prvacki's mother), the intention of gifting and of welcoming became corrupted from the moment the host(s) intended to benefit from the guest in any possible form. The sweetness of Slatko welcomes the new arrival, but the pleasant and hospitable experience is suddenly transformed into one that prohibits, restricts, and conditions as it aims to protect the host from the guest's confabulations or gossip. Slatko, in this sense, leaves a bitter-sweet aftertaste for those who realise that the welcome they were

[37] Although according to Derrida, a gift "must not be generous[.] One may give with generosity but not out of generosity." Derrida, *Given Time*, 162.
[38] Mireille Rosello argues that even if a host is convinced that s/he feeds the guest to satisfy her/his hunger, "the guest may accept and eat the food simply to avoid offending the host, regardless of whether s/he is hungry". Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (California: Stanford University Press, 2001), 172.
[39] *Ana Prvacki: The Greeting Committee*.

offered implied a reciprocation that subjects their behaviour to the needs and manners of the host.



50. Ana Prvacki. *The Greeting Committee*, 2012

Who hosts and who is the guest?

The Greeting Committee sets up a series of conditions that show how the hosting role shifts among the participants. The encounter between the new arrivals and the host raises the question about who welcomes whom, in light of the aesthetics of participation that engages the members of the public in temporal social relationships. The performance, in this sense, draws forth artistic practices developed since the 1990s which included the public as active agents to transform and influence the outcome of the artwork.[40] Moreover, *The Greeting Committee* addresses the welcome as an ethico-political act to the other, where the roles played between the guest and the host develop in direct relationship to the welcoming ritual and protocolary manners of greeting as presented in the Serbian tradition. The performance requires the active participation of members of the public, and members of the community of The Smart Museum of Art, including the curator, the museum staff, the artist, art students at the University

[40] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 113.

of Chicago, and, most importantly, the mothers of the curator and the artist. The relationship between the host and the guest responds to the place where the action develops; Pitt-Rivers refers to this as "territorial limitations".[41] In *The Greeting Committee*, however, the role as host is transferred from one subject to the other, which points to the fact that the politics of hospitality act within different levels simultaneously.

The curator of the exhibition, Stephanie Smith, acts a host as she invited Prvacki to participate in the exhibition. This invitation, however, supposed that the artist would return the invitation by developing an artistic experience that would take place inside the museum. Smith only opened the museum's door to those artists whose artworks were considered useful to the exhibition's purpose, suggesting that the selected guests were beneficial to the host's intentions. The planning and staging of *The Greeting Committee* required the museum boundaries to be opened up. Prvacki arrived at the museum and was probably welcomed by the curator and the museum staff, who at this point also became hosts. The Smart Museum was the place where all these relationships occurred; it became the "threshold". However, as Derrida notes, even if the host assumes to be at home or the proprietor of a home, the place itself takes an active role in the hosting. In Derrida's words, "the host, as host, is [also] a guest", i.e. the host becomes a guest as he receives hospitality in his own home.[42] In this case, the Smart Museum turned into the place that hosted and welcomed the other; furthermore, even if the curator of the museum was assumed to be the host, she was hosted in the museum. In this sense, the museum is a place of transit in which different dynamics between host(s) and guest(s) take place. Prvacki, for example, became more than a guest by the time she was settled in the museum. She transformed into a temporary host and acquired a degree of sovereignty over the museum, allowing her to exercise certain authority over members of the museum staff and the art students who helped her to deliver the performance. Prvacki designated specific tasks and roles to each of them, an action that reinforced her authority as a host.

[41] These "territorial limitations" point to the relevance of the host's sovereignty over a place. Pitt-Rivers, "The Law of Hospitality", 514.
[42] Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*, 79; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, 123, 125.



51. Ana Prvacki. The Greeting Committee, 2012

As a newly arrived guest, Prvacki took a position of control over the threshold; she was embedded with sovereignty, allowing her to control part of the contents and subjects within it, but, more importantly, setting rules to be followed even by those outside the museum. The preparation of the Slatko was done by the mothers of the curators from the museums included in the exhibition tour. For the installation at the Smart Museum, Prvacki put Deborah Fortel, the curator's mother, in charge of the preparation of Slatko. She was given the recipe directly by Prvacki's mother, and followed the instructions to prepare several jars of Slatko, assisted by some of the art students volunteering at the time. Acting as a host, Prvacki told others the tasks they should do and how they should be done; delegation of the preparation of the Slatko and the gift-giving of the recipe were strategies through which Prvacki reaffirmed her sovereignty. This extended beyond the Smart Museum of Art as one of the conditions was that each of the museums hosting the exhibition—Blaffer Art Museum (University of Houston, 2013), SITE Santa Fe (New Mexico, 2014), Gund Gallery (Kenyon College, 2014), and Weisman Art Museum (University of Minnesota, 2015)—had to involve their staff in the preparation of their own Slatko. This gesture emphasised the transference of the hosting role by giving participants control over the jam. In

other words, it intended to embed participants with sovereignty over the handmade Slatko that they offered to the public as the new hosts.[43]



52. Ana Prvacki. *The Greeting Committee*, 2012
Jars of Slatko prepared by Mrs Fortel and University of Chicago art students

Furthermore, offering museum-made Slatko also intended to create a common goal among those involved in its preparation, to embed them with a stronger sense of property over the Slatko they gifted to the public. With this action, Prvacki not only delegated the preparation of Slatko but also made the hosting role a temporary one, suggesting that relations of hospitality take place in different levels, geographies, and temporalities rather than being transferred from one subject to another. Moreover, this draws attention to the sudden and slightly unnoticeable changes arising within the complex relationship between the host and the guest; it reveals that "the one inviting becomes almost the hostage of the one invited, of the guest [...], the hostage of the one [who] receives, the one who keeps him at home".[44] The invitation and the welcoming of the guest, in this case, includes the possibility that once the subject is acknowledged as a guest, s/he takes control and power over the property of the host. The curator invited Prvacki to perform at the museum, but she probably did not expect her mother to be involved.

[43] Smith, *Feast*, 284.
[44] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 5, no. 3 (2000): 9.

Prvacki's intention was to pass the hosting role to the "host/mother".[45] However, even though the Slatko was prepared by Mrs Fortel and the students, this does not imply that they gained the status of hosts. On the contrary, by making the preparation of Slatko a mandatory action, Prvacki did not transfer her role as host; rather, she only rehearsed and reinforced the patriarchal logic embedded in hospitality. By making Mrs Fortel follow the rules and the logic of the new master of the house, she was placed in the role of hostess, obliged to prepare everything necessary for the welcoming ritual.[46] This therefore reinforced the alleged role of women as servants following the command of the master of the house, of the host. The welcome, moreover, is followed by other gestures of hospitality once the guest is inside the host's abode, for example when taking a seat at the table in order to share food and eat together, an action I will now turn my attention to.

[45] The term used by Prvacki to refer to the curator's mother is conflicting as it suggests that a mother embeds the role of host only in terms of motherhood and when fulfilling the role of nurturers in the sense that phallocentric and patriarchal logic tends to impose. I will further discuss the relationship of mothers with hospitality in the next chapter. Smith, *Feast*, 284.
[46] Judith Still notes that this term is generally denigrated in both French and English languages, and has overtones of commerce, including sex. The hostess, according to Still, is an intermediary and has no authority. Judith Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 21.

3.2. Take a seat

Thinking of hospitality requires us to pay attention to the boundaries delimited by the threshold, between the inside and outside, as well as the relationship between the host and the guest. In the same manner, it requires us to look at hospitality's discourse as it develops within the spaces allocated to the consumption of food. In this section, I focus on a piece of furniture located inside the dining room or the kitchen: the table. More specifically, I focus on the moment the host invites the guest to join him/her at the table to eat together. My interest includes examining Mary Ellen Carroll's installation *Open Outcry* (2012) presented during the exhibition "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art" at the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago, and developed as part of her long-term project *Itinerant Gastronomy*. Her practice is discussed in light of table rituals, table manners, and seating arrangements that present as laws of hospitality established by the host, and which limit the notion of hospitality by excluding subjects from the table. Seating at the table is discussed as a hospitable gesture that responds to a logic of power—inserted within the patriarchal scheme—which influences the interaction between guest, host, and the subject cooking the meal.

The table is an iconic, necessary, and widely used piece of furniture which holds an important role in hospitality's discourse. There are tables for writing, for working, for leisure (such as table tennis), or for placing other objects on them (candlelight tables, nightstand tables, bedside tables), but probably one of the most significant tables of them all is the dining table. This table, in particular, delineates the specific time and place for food sharing and eating with the other. In Western cultures, the use of a table for eating is almost standard, compared to cultures with different modes of commensality and where this piece of furniture is not always necessary. Furthermore, the relevance of the table has resulted in the modification and expansion of domestic spaces; as Elizabeth Cromley explains, since the mid-nineteenth century, the threshold has been conceived in consideration of different zones and uses, within which the dining

room has been designed to accomplish social purposes like the reception of guests and family, and serving them meals.[47]

In addition, the role of the dining table highlights another mode of hospitality: the moment the host offers meals to the guest and they eat together. For this reason, the dining table is often considered responsible for building bonds between friends and/or family, as well as between host(s) and guests. This assumption, however, needs to be thoroughly examined in light of the intentions for creating social bonds and the limitations thereof. The dining table can be modified and redesigned paying special attention to the needs and taste of the host, and it holds a different status depending on a variety of factors, including the economic capacity of the host; the number of guests that are expected to be seated; and even the physical particularities of the dining space and the table, like its size, colour, shape, material, and decoration. Moreover, the domestic dining table is set up by the subjects who intend to eat in this space, and the reason for using it, for example to eat with the family on a daily basis, for the reception of guests, or to celebrate a special occasion. A table in a restaurant, however, is set up to serve meals that function as leisure activities, satisfying the hunger of diners, and at other times to pursue business-related objectives. Each occasion determines a specific mode of hospitality and gives rise to different modes of social interactions between the subjects who gather around it. Consequently, this influences the number of guests that can be seated/hosted, leading to an imminent selection of invitees.

The table, the act of commensality, and its relationship to kinship are addressed by scholars from gender and postcolonial studies, focusing, in particular, on the table as a site of social exclusion.[48] Sarah Ahmed explains, for example, that the table is a metaphorical figure to address the segregation suffered by minority groups within the heteronormative and patriarchal society due to gender, class, or ethnicity. She argues that society needs to open up spaces for everyone at

[47] Elizabeth C. Cromley, "Transforming the Food Axis: Houses, Tools, Modes of Analysis", *Material History Review* 44, no. Fall 1996 (1996): 8.
[48] Parama Roy, "Reading Communities and Culinary Communities: The Gastropoetics of the South Asian Diaspora", *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 10, no. 2 (September 1, 2002): 471–502; Margaret Visser, *Much Depends on Dinner* (Canada: HarperCollins, 2012).

the "big table" rather than seating individuals from these groups "in [smaller] tables as the ethos of multiculturalism", which emphasises their condition of otherness.[49] The dining table is, in this sense, a metaphor through which she explores ideas of bonding and hospitality, signalling the need for openness towards difference. The dining table is a "kinship object" with the potential to bring people together, whether they are from the same familiar structure or from different communities and/or cultures that are, sometimes, foreign to each other.[50] However, the role of the dining table in hospitality's discourse extends beyond figurative language, and indicates patterns of social inclusion and exclusion. The table is a key element that facilitates the relationship between hosts and guests at different levels: individuals, communities, or nations. Around the table, the hospitable intentions towards the other are further emphasised, as it is where "bodies cohere through the mediation of its surface, [through] sharing food and drink that is on the table".[51] The dining table determines a location, function, and hospitable intention, influencing the relationship between the host and the guest. At the same time, it signals that the laws of hospitality and the sovereignty of the owner of the table are always at play, influencing the behaviour that the host has towards the other, and delineating the expected behaviour of the guest while seated at the table.

Open Outcry: from the trading floor to the dining table

Since 1996, American artist Mary Ellen Carroll has been developing *Itinerant Gastronomy*, consisting of a series of site-specific meals hosted by the artist focused on the relationships between language, subjectivity and power. For the exhibition "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art", Carroll proposed and staged *Open Outcry* (2012) as a participatory artwork in which participants would interact and engage in conversations about food politics, agricultural practices, labour and trade fair practices while sharing a meal. In particular, Carroll was interested in participants discussing trade in the politics of the food

[49] Sarah Ahmed, "ORIENTATIONS: Toward a Queer Phenomenology", *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 4 (January 1, 2006): 568.
[50] Sarah Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, E-Duke Books Scholarly Collection (USA: Duke University Press, 2010), 46.
[51] Ahmed, "ORIENTATIONS," 555.

system, with points of view from actors in the fields of art, finance, food policy and technology. The table was emphasised as a key piece of furniture in the artwork, as well as the seating plan, a strategy through which Carroll aimed to facilitate the encounter between participants and the moment of commensality. At the same time, the location was in direct relationship to the menu served to the guests, an approach that permeates Carroll's other *Itinerant Gastronomy* installations.

One of the first things to consider is that the name of the installation refers to a form of exchange of food products and commodities that takes place at the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT), which merged with the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) in 2007, one of the oldest exchange markets in the world, which is one of the reasons why Carroll's *Open Outcry* took place inside its facilities.[52] Carroll's intention was to host a meal overlooking the *pit*[53] where traders exchanged products during the *open outcry*.[54] The menu was created using ingredients traded in the CME and others sourced from small producers—Jude Becker's organic farm, for example, provided the pork belly and attended the meal as a guest. The seven other guests were selected by Carroll based on their areas of expertise. This was crucial because Carroll expected the guests to contribute to the discussion of aforementioned topics, including: 1) communication and financial markets; 2) food as commodity; 3) hunger and the trading of agricultural goods; and 4) taste and the aesthetics of food. Consequently, it can be said that *Open Outcry* was not open to the public, despite the "openness" signalled in the title of the artwork. It followed the dynamic of the open outcry where traders affiliated to the CBOT and CME entered the pit to exchange products—before this practice was replaced by

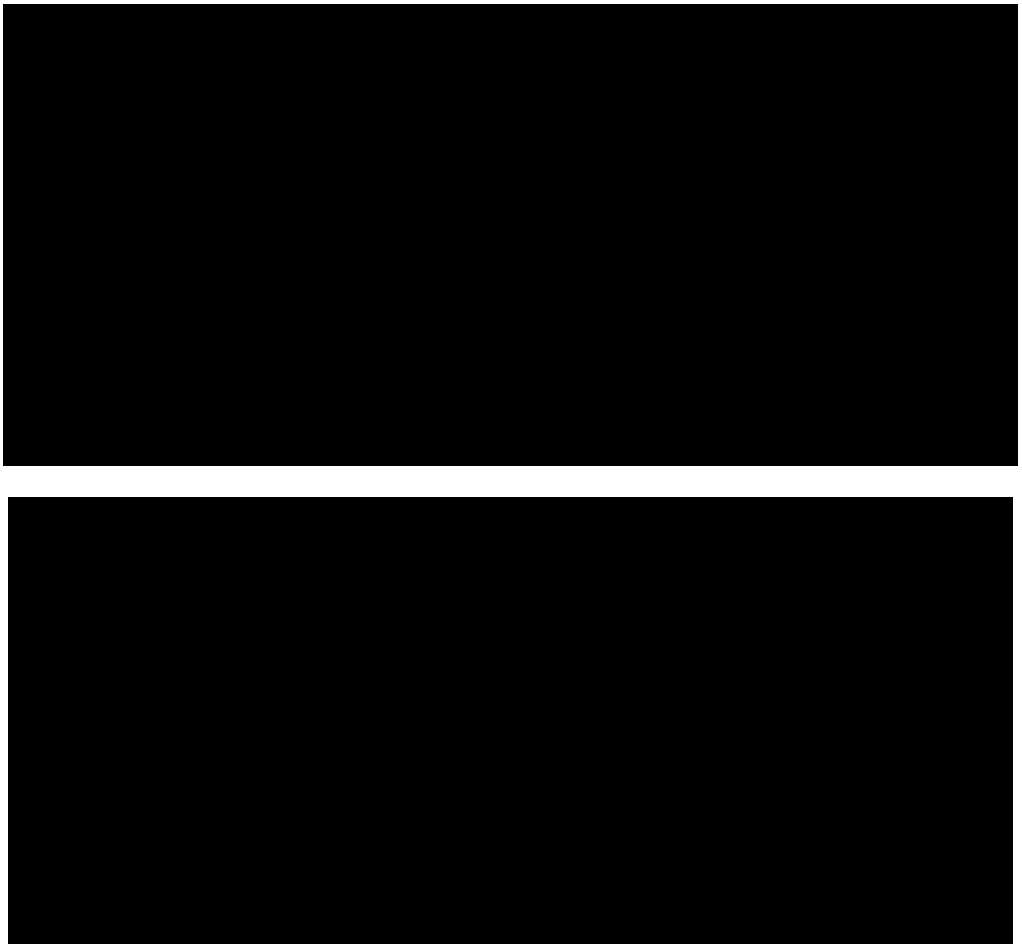
[52] Smith, *Feast*, 166.
[53] The pit is a raised octagonal structure where the open outcry takes place. The trading floor can have different pits. William Alden, "As Silence Falls on Chicago Trading Pits, a Working-Class Portal Also Closes," *New York Times*, March 24, 2015, sec. Bussiness, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/25/business/dealbook/as-silence-falls-on-chicago-trading-pits-a-working-class-portal-also-closes.html?_r=0.
[54] The open outcry is defined as "a system of trading on an exchange in which members stand on the trading floor and make orders to each other by crying aloud. Some open outcry systems have developed special sign languages so they can make and fill orders without needing to be heard over the noise on the trading floor. All exchanges were originally open outcry, but many have gradually shifted toward electronic trading." Financial Dictionary, "Open Outcry," *Farlex Financial Dictionary*, 2009, http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Open+Outcry.

electronic trading; however, in this case, Carroll's guests entered a space overlooking the pit to participate in an exchange of points of views, ideas, and critiques of the current food system. In this sense, Carroll wanted to provide a setting that would induce and facilitate the interaction of the participants, and she therefore paid special attention to the seating arrangement; simultaneously, this signified the dining table and everything placed within as primordial elements of the meal.[55] This artwork placed the trading system of food products on the table, literally and metaphorically, and commensality functioned as a strategy of the interaction and participation for guests to engage in table conversation.

Open Outcry was a collaborative project that involved mathematician Philip Ording—who specialises in systems and knot theory—being in charge of designing a model for seating configurations to facilitate the interaction between the guests. Ording proposed a series of sketches of different seating arrangements, emphasising that the most suitable one would be a dining table assembled in units which could be arranged and modified according to the needs of the meal, the host, and the desired mode of interaction between the guests. Ording's proposal was then reinterpreted by architect Simon Dance to design and build a table that would follow Ording's suggestion. The table Dance constructed consisted of eight modular units, each of them presented as an individual (dining) table with chair, but that altogether could be arranged in many configurations, depending on the type of interaction that was expected from the guests.[56]

[55] Needless to say, Carroll is not the only artist who has used and addressed the dining table in her work. It is worth mentioning, for example, American artist Carrie Mae Weems, whose photographic series "The Kitchen Table Series" (1990) portrays domestic scenes which address different narratives related to gender, class, sex, race, and the dynamics of power between individuals. Her photographs relate to the idea of the table as explained by Ahmed, where the table mediates the relationship between those who sit at the table (men, women, children, friends, etc.). Weems's images show the domestic dining table as an aesthetic strategy that addresses issues of inclusion and exclusion. Smith, *Feast*, 166; Jonathan Munar, "Carrie Mae Weems: 'The Kitchen Table Series'", Blog, *art21 Magazine*, (March 18, 2011), http://blog.art21.org/2011/03/18/carrie-mae-weems-the-kitchen-table-series/#.ViV3vKJ4gnk.
[56] Lucy Bullivant, "Open Outcry", *Domus*, March 23, 2012, http://www.domusweb.it/en/art/2012/03/23/open-outcry.html.

In this case, the seating configuration for *Open Outcry* was a semicircle or horseshoe-shape, facing a window through which the guests could see the trading floor and the pits of the CBOT, following Ording's sketches. Facing this dining table, another table functioned as a lectern from where Carroll and the chef who cooked the food presented the dishes to the guests, giving a brief explanation about the ingredients used and their relationship to the traded products in the CME; this table, however, did not belong to Dance's modular design. Carroll also directed the guests from this location, instructing them and guiding the conversation.



53, 54. Mary Ellen Carroll with Simon Dance/Simon Dance Design
Architectural Models for *Open Outcry*, 2012

Despite the importance of the conversations that emerged at the installation, my interest focuses on the modular dining table and the seating plan as key elements that influence hospitality's discourse, in particular to question the dynamics of power—of inclusion and exclusion—exercised by the host at the table. I consider that Carroll's hospitable intentions as a host respond to the

conditionality of the act itself. In other words, even if *Open Outcry* is presented as a "gesture of hospitality as it brings people together", behind this action the installation excludes others from the table, namely anyone not affiliated with CBOT.[57] This was in stark contrast to other installations from the *Itinerant Gastronomy* series where Carroll shared food with whomever appeared.

Carroll's modular table functioned as an object that delineated boundaries between those who had a reserved seat at the table and those who were left out. One of the first exclusions is the fact that the chef—Ron Jean Gilles, who was in charge of the cooking—was not included nor invited to sit at the modular dining table. This particular arrangement, argues art critic Lucy Bullivant, intended to bring people "as close as possible" to the chef but delimit the scope of the approach considering that the chef "didn't want to mediate the conversation too much".[58] His position outside the table, as well as that of Carroll as director of the meal, influenced the interaction with the rest of the participants. Most of the time, Carroll stood at or by the lectern and, notably, the chef was located on a table dedicated to cooking that was adjacent to the modular dining table. *Open Outcry* not only separated guests from hosts, but also spaces, and activities, reminding us that behind gestures of hospitality, dynamics of exclusion are constantly rehearsed.

Gender and labour segregation continues at the table

Open Outcry separated cooking and dining spaces in a similar fashion to the division that prevails in architectural discourses within the domestic space, as well as in the hospitality industry. As I argued in the previous chapter, this division responded to patriarchal and heteronormative discourses that considered the domestic kitchen as a "feminine sphere"; cooking as a minor activity; and women as those responsible for performing domestic drudgery. Women and servants who partake in cooking or serving food are—sometimes—denied access to the dining room/area and prevented from participating in the activities that take place when the host and the guest share edibles; in some

[57] Smith, *Feast*, 169.

cases, even the wives of hosts are located in separate dining rooms and told to use different dining tables which can be shared only with other women or with children.[59]

Gender plays a crucial role at the table as it is used as an excuse for exclusion, as scholars like Sara Ahmed and Maite Zubiaurre explain. As I previously mentioned, Zubiaurre discusses Hispanic female erotic narratives and counteracts the ideas of feminist scholars that romanticise the kitchen and other domestic areas as places that empower women, and from where they can establish female communities which contest patriarchal logic and power.[60] In particular, Zubiaurre notes that even though the kitchen becomes a space for women, they still remain excluded from the dining table and she urges the need to re-evaluate this object as a strategy to challenge exclusionary practices. She explains that narratives that she describes as "kitchen tales" portray women as skilful subjects dedicated to cooking but who consider this activity as a means to please relatives, friends, guests, and especially the master of the house. Women in these narratives assume this place as their own and where they develop valuable culinary knowledge, which some scholars assume as empowerment; however, the women remain enclosed in the realm of domesticity, irrespective of whether some of them wish to leave these spaces.[61]

In contrast, the idea of *table narratives* proposes the table as the object which unveils the problems of gender and labour in relationship to food practices; the term intends to dislocate women as mere producers of edibles, to position them

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[58] Bullivant, "Open Outcry".

[59] Tamar Rotem explains that in some ultra-orthodox communities, it is still common to find gender segregation both in public and private spaces, particularly in relationship to the dining room, where women are expected to dine separately from men and sometimes in another area, commonly the kitchen. Tamar Rotem, "Separate Tables", News, *Haaretz*, (January 7, 2011), www.haaretz.com/weekend/week-s-end/separate-tables-1.370695.

[60] Zubiaurre especially opposes the ideas presented by Meredith E. Abarca, "Los Chilaquiles de Mi 'Ama': The Language of Everyday Cooking", in *Pilaf, Pozole, and Pad Thai: American Women and Ethnic Food*, ed. Sherrie A. Inness (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001); Kari S. Salkjelsvic, "El Desvío Como Norma: La Retórica de La Receta en 'Como Agua Para Chocolate'", *Revista Iberoamericana* 65, no. 186 (1999): 171–82.

[61] Zubiaurre argues that even if "kitchen tales" reinforces the designation and identification to conventional gender roles where women are seen as nurturers or mothers who have little or no participation at the table during the sharing of edibles and eating. Maite Zubiaurre, "Culinary Eros in Contemporary Hispanic Female Fiction: From Kitchen Tales to Table Narratives", *College Literature* 33, no. 3 (2006): 30–31.

as subjects who actively participate in activities that take place in the dining room, especially at the table and during the commensal act.[62] According to Zubiaurre, this is an act through which women reposition themselves in the public sphere, simply by emphasising that they "aren't food (meant only to satisfy the sexual hunger of the male)"; nor that they "cook food (and hide in kitchens/laboratories, and therefore become nurturing machine and mysterious sorceresses)"; instead, they "eat [...] food, and sit at the table".[63] In this sense, by transferring the attention from the kitchen to the table and to the act of eating rather than cooking, the concept of *table narratives* suggests that the dining table is a space for equality. Furthermore, it highlights the table as a valued space not only because it is where individuals share and consume meals, but also because it is the place from which one offers hospitality to others. Similarly, Sara Ahmed argues for the need to kill the joy of "tables of happiness", suggesting that the term happiness is only applicable to tables conceived within Western, heteronormative, and patriarchal logic that continue to segregate individuals from specific backgrounds.[64]

Zubiaurre and Ahmed consider the table as a site for openness and inclusion, not only for women but also for those others who are still segregated. They contend that regardless of status, race, class or gender, the "other" *should* have a seat at the table, as this creates bonds and/or strengthens relationships or alliances. Zubiaurre and Ahmed propose a critical approach that questions phallocentric and patriarchal logic embedded in hospitality's discourse. Judith Still explains, for example, that segregation of women stems from foundational narratives of hospitality where women play the role of hostesses who cook and serve the host and his guests; however, they are never given similar status as the host who offers hospitality or as a guest to whom the hospitable gesture is offered.

To this extent, it is worth noting Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* (1974–79) as a practice that challenges women's exclusion from the dinner table. Her

[62] Ibid., 31.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ahmed's book *The Promise of Happiness* intends to "to make room for life, to make room for possibility, for chance". Furthermore, she thinks of conferences as a table from where one gives

installation is presented as a ceremonial banquet where three tables are arranged in a triangle with 39 seats. Each of the place settings included an embroidered runner, chalices, cutlery, and porcelain dishes individually shaped into vulvar or butterfly forms that served as a homage to 1,038 women throughout history, from ancient Greece to the modern day. Chicago's *Dinner Party* was a collaborative artwork recognised as an iconic piece of feminist art in the seventies because it gave renewed attention to women in art, philosophy, and other fields of study who were often blurred from the history of Western civilisation, but also because she made use of practices considered feminine, i.e. embroidery, sewing, and pottery; used imagery of female sexual organs; and alluded to domestic spaces where women have often been excluded: the dining table.[65] Chicago's artwork, in this sense, offers a seat to these women, highlighting their input in history and challenging the table as a discriminatory place. The *Dinner Party* uses the table as a place that seeks equality for those who have been effaced, discriminated, and diminished over time in terms of gender and labour. This artwork provokes and challenges phallocentric and patriarchal logic, offering a seat to women as guests rather than servants.



55. Judy Chicago. *The Dinner Party*, 1974–79.

support and opens new seats for those who are not currently seated at the alleged "tables of happiness". Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 20.

By reinserting the idea of table narratives alongside Ahmed's notion of "table of happiness" in the discourse of hospitality, it is possible to suggest a change in the host's behaviour, as well as a strategy through which *others* reposition themselves by taking a seat at the table rather than only serving guests. In other words, it is possible to imagine the cook also taking part in the hosting rather than just being the medium, *becoming* active participants in conversations, rituals, and, most importantly, in the act of eating and enjoying food.

In *Open Outcry*, however, the chef who collaborated by cooking the meal was not included—seated—but remained distant from the modular dining table. In reality, this emphasised the logic of exclusion that Ahmed, Zubiaurre, and Still note: the cook remains segregated even if he could have chosen to be seated at the table, emphasising how the labour of those cooking remains hidden. Had he chosen to *take a place* at the table alongside the host and the guest, he could have greatly influenced the conversations taking place at the time, as he would have given another point of view of food politics, particularly because he was responsible for the transformation and manipulation of the ingredients traded in the CME. If he had decided to appear as a consumer and co-host of the installation, instead of only cooking, he would have contributed to dislocating the logic of separation between cooking and dining spaces, and at the same time he would have challenged the hostility faced by those in charge of cooking, women mainly, as I explained in the previous chapter.

Apart from the division of the spaces between cooking and dining, *Open Outcry* also highlighted a precise distribution of roles that distinguished the host, the guests, and who cooked and served, once again emphasising how labour politics are embedded in the aporia of hospitality. Carroll acted, in this sense, as a host who presented the dishes to the eight guests while she directed their attention to the ingredients, influencing the topics of conversations, thus reinforcing her sovereignty over the place and setting the rules to be followed.[66] In comparison, the interaction of the chef and the waitress was distant from the guest; as

[65] Tal Dekel, *Gendered: Art and Feminist Theory* (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2013), 66–69.
[66] Smith, *Feast*, 169.

"collaborators", they only approached the guests through the manipulation of dishes, serving them at the table. Their input in this artwork was suggested as less important in comparison to the role performed by Carroll. It is worth noting, to this extent, that the server was a female subject, highlighting the issues covered in the foundational narratives to which Derrida and Still pay close attention, but also to the practices of the hospitality industry: women's role remains emphasised as hostesses.[67]

The exclusion of the chef and the waitress from the modular dining table is read differently if considering that the installation and the thematics responded to the laws of hospitality set by another host, the CBOT, and to the economic laws that are at play inside this space. Within this scenario, the CBOT and CME co-hosted the installation, allowing Carroll to take a place and use their facilities, especially the Group Visitor Gallery, a room on the upper floor facing the pits where the *open outcry* used to take place.[68] Considering that the trading floor is a place governed by the laws of supply and demand, dedicated to the exchange of assets and commodities, in this case, both the chef and the waitress entered into a trading dynamic where they were also assumed as commodities that helped to satisfy the needs of the hosts: Carroll and the CME.

The hospitality that Carroll aimed to offer responded to the logic of the market, comparable to a business-oriented logic of hospitality. The chef and the waitress were the medium through which hospitality was made into another commodity. Put it simply, not only food was traded but also the labour of those helping with the cooking and serving. Both chef and waitress helped in offering the gesture of hospitality to the guests; however, in this case, there was not any sort of payment, service charge or a tip given for their services. The only thing that Carroll received in return was the guests' opinions and ideas about inequalities within the food system, although, without realising that they were emphasising

[67] Although I am not suggesting that Carroll specifically selected a woman, a waitress, to perform the service, this highlights the patriarchal logic in which female subjects are set to perform the role of servants of the host and the guests.
[68] Associated Press, "Buy, Buy, BYE: Famous Roar of Chicago and New York Trading Pits to Be Silenced Forever Today as Computers Kill off 145-Year-Old Tradition", *Daily Mail*, July 6, 2015, Mail Online edition, sec. News, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3150578/Traders-recall-rush-roar-famed-pits-close-good.html.

and performing exclusionary practices both in terms of gender and labour. The use of the table, in this sense, depends on the intentions of the hosting but it also reflects the behaviour of the subjects *at the table* because they are, at the same time, part of the structuring of the table. They are what make it possible for the table to be itself: a space for hospitality or hostility.



56. Mary Ellen Carroll. *Open Outcry*, 2012
Itinerant Gastronomy participatory artwork performed at CBOT, CME Group

Table manners: Laws of (conditional) hospitality

Inviting someone to join us at the table and sharing our meal shows that, as hosts, we have granted the right of hospitality; however, this idea of hospitableness should not be considered solely as the offering of edibles, but should also be emphasised through the actions that we, as hosts, perform at the table before, during, and after the meal. The table signals boundaries and temporalities, as I have noted; it distinguishes between the one who extended the invitation and the invitee, between the subject who sits as foreigner and who remains as the host. This piece of furniture does not function as a "kinship object", as Ahmed argues, but "what we do with the table, or what the table allows us to do, is essential to the table",[69] i.e. it points to the distribution of roles

[69] Ahmed, "ORIENTATIONS", 551.

between those who live inside the threshold and those who arrive at the doorstep.

Hospitality at the table is a gesture conditioned by specific laws of hospitality that determine the behaviour that is expected from the guest, what s/he is allowed to do in that specific time and place. Specifically, I am referring to table manners, table rituals, and protocols of etiquette, understood as a series of inherited rules that take shape as non-verbalised actions and which establish the roles and the hierarchies played between those who already have a place at the table and those who are invited—or allowed—to take a seat around the table. This section pays special attention to these rules, arguing that despite the intentionality to act hospitably, the act itself depends on the conditionality of hospitality.

Janet Flammang argues in *Taste for Civilisation: Food, Politics and Civil Society* that food and meal rituals are closely bound to the idea of civility, especially in light of how courtesy and conversation shape civil society. She focuses on table manners and rituals as a "prerequisite for commensality", arguing that sharing food requires mutual trust between the subjects who consume it.[70] Flammang explains that these "conventions [...] make conversation [and civility] possible" as they forbid or prevent damaging actions between subjects.[71] In other words, sharing food eventually required the establishment of a number of codes and rules—laws of hospitality—to determine the behaviour that is expected from the host and the guest at the table. These rules help, according to Flammang, to "ease the awkwardness among strangers and create occasions for greater civility among people by asking them to reflect on the needs of others".[72] Needless to say, table manners and rituals are culturally specific, "a series of *expected* and correct actions that are constantly repeated" with the purpose to "promote togetherness, to reinforce social bonds, and to create the preconditions of civil

[70] Janet A. Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization: Food, Politics, and Civil Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 14, 88–89.
[71] The case of Louis XIV court, for example, banned pointed knives at the table in order to avoid violence among the members invited to sit at the table. Ibid., 93–94, 101.
[72] Ibid., 107.

exchanges in a structured context".[73] In other words, both of the parties involved may—or may not—understand them or practise them in a similar way. Compare for example British table manners to Japanese ones, or the ritual of Slatko that I discussed previously. On the domestic level, Flammang notes that these laws of hospitality are often taught by the mother, which suggests once again that the woman/mother is not only responsible for domestic chores but also for ensuring these rules are perpetuated in order to reinforce civil society.[74]

Although I will not examine etiquette manuals per se, it is worth noting that most contemporary Western table manners stem from ideas contained in Renaissance treatises that began to lay out social customs at the table.[75] The legacy of manuals, protocols, and rules of good manner still shape contemporary table manners and etiquette, and determine the appropriate means for receiving guests; seating them at the table; the expected behaviour of both host and guest while eating, including the appropriate topics of conversation at the table; and even suggesting how to clean the table. These rules of hospitality, in this sense, reinforce civil society and endorse activities of conviviality, such as commensality and the conversations that arise during this time. However, these activities are only available to those subjects who are invited and who share certain commonalities; for example, the society referred to in etiquette manuals complied with the Western canon and heteronormative society, highlighting that not everyone was supposed to be *treated* in an egalitarian way.

Eating together is suggested as an open gesture of hospitality; however, table manners and rituals restrict and exclude subjects based on their hierarchy or status, their gender, and the degree of familiarity or intimacy between host and guest. The exclusion of certain individuals while seated at the table further emphasises hospitality's conditionality. This justifies, for example, gender-related segregation at the table as it responds to a patriarchal logic where those who materialise hospitality—in this case, women—are denied a place at the table. Related to this, Flammang explains that since ancient times, women have only

[73] Ibid., 100.
[74] Ibid., 99.

been allowed to sit at the same table as men on certain occasions, and mentions ancient Greeks had a specific room, the *andron*, which was reserved for men, with the exception of women who served as entertainment. The same happened with the *symposium* drinking parties where only men were allowed.[76] Women were only allowed to sit and share meals with men if they shared the same hierarchy, or if they were related by means of lineage or marriage; however, they were not considered equal.[77] This explained why during political discussions or business affairs, women were set aside or men moved to other rooms, allowing the men to engage in *civilised* conversations and highlighting that these activities are exclusive male affairs.

Nowadays, segregation at the table still persists; however, little attention is paid to table manners and how they influence the act of hospitality. In other words, even if we are familiar with these rules, and society assumes them as normal, they shed light on hospitality's aporia. Rules of hospitality, understood here as table manners, the seating plan, or etiquette, engender exclusionary practices of members of an "accredited victim group", based on class, race, religion, gender, or any category to which individuals are perceived to belong, including physical and mental disabilities.[78] The sovereignty of the host allows him/her to choose who is welcomed at the table and to relocate individuals into separate areas as needed. In some cases, the host follows a specific goal, a familiar, religious, or social tradition which determines who is seated together or far from each other. For example, within the orthodox Jewish tradition, the seating plan is arranged and/or approved by the host in advance, determining who will be relocated: men and women are required to sit at different tables to preserve modesty; even if a couple wishes to remain seated together and does so in their own house, they have to comply with the command of the host: "after all, [… they are] the guests".[79] Having a seat at the table suggests that the guest is given hospitality; however, as the above quote suggests, the subject will be accommodated

[75] Ibid., 95; Janet Theophano, *Eat My Words*, 33; Jesse Rhodes, "Renaissance Table Etiquette and the Origins of Manners", *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 29, 2011.
[76] Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization*, 102.
[77] Ibid., 111.
[78] Bruce Bawer, *A Place at the Table: The Gay Individual in American Society* (Poseidon Press, 1993), 210. Cited in Ahmed, "ORIENTATIONS", 568.
[79] Rotem, "Separate Tables".

following the host's preference. In some cases, the separation and relocation of women depends on the number of seats available, giving priority to men and, for example, sending women to eat in the kitchen, hence emphasising patriarchal logic.



57. *Mise-en-place* with menu for *Open Outcry*, 2012

Table manners and etiquette also include the ways in which the table is set for eating—*dressed for service*; this will depend on the subjects who sit around the table and the occasion of the gathering.[80] Other elements that influence the status of the table, and of the gathering, include the guests, the menu, the cutlery, the dishware, the table linen, and the glassware. Just as with the table, their use and *mise-en-place* differ if they are used every day or if they are specifically for receiving guests. For example, the etiquette for a dinner between friends will be different from a state dinner. These tables include only high-ranked individuals; a head of state, for example, receives his/her counterpart from other nations and hosts state dinners which are planned and executed by giving attention to diplomatic protocols.[81] The seating arrangements do not

[80] David Leatherbarrow, "Table Talk", in *Eating Architecture*, ed. Jamie Horwitz and Paulette Singley (United States of America: MIT Press, 2004), 211.
[81] This topic has come up recently as a contemporary concern in light of the notion of culinary and/or gastronomic diplomacy. Sam Chapple-Sokol, "Culinary Diplomacy: Breaking Bread to Win Hearts and Minds", *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 8, no. 2 (January 1, 2013): 161–83; Costas M. Constantinou, *On the Way to Diplomacy*, vol. Vol. 7 Borderlines, Barrows Lectures (United States of America: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); U.S. Department of State – Office of Protocol, "U.S. Department of State – Office of Protocol. Diplomatic Culinary Partnership Initiative:

include, under any circumstance, subjects who serve, cook, and assist the host and his guests during their meal—as was the case in *Open Outcry*. Instead, they have restricted access and are relocated to spaces out of sight of both host and guests. All of these factors determine how the guest is received at the table, what the host expects from him/her, and the behaviour of both parties, thus emphasising the conditionality of hospitality.

Another issue related to table manners and rituals addressed in *Open Outcry* concerns the seating plan, which in this case followed the customary male/female pairing, a practice that has been suggested in etiquette books since the early nineteenth century. Carroll's guests were seated around the table but were expected to behave in a certain manner which also determined their role in relationship to the host. Where one is seated signals a hierarchy or rank. For example, one or more guests can be seated in a *place of honour*, generally located close to the host or master of the house. The master of the house's place at the table, however, is exclusive and non-transferable; protocol refers to this as the *power seat*, a place which emphasises dynamics of power at the table.[82] Furthermore, the term relates to that of the *head of the table*, signalling that who is seated there is in fact the one in charge of that household or the familiar unit. In other words, the terms *head of the house*, *head of the family*, and *head of the table* reaffirm the host's sovereignty over the threshold, once again, at the table. Nonetheless, the seat close to the host is often reserved for his/her next of kin or the guest of honour, if there is one. The patriarch's wife—the hostess—often sits at the opposite end of the table or in one of the adjacent seats; the guest(s) of honour sits close to the host so they can talk to each other. Locating the power seat is obvious if considering rectangular tables: the head of the table is positioned at one of the ends of the table, from where the host has visual contact with everyone—invigilating all guests—but also a position from where he spatially communicates his authority. However, the power seat is less clear with

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Setting the Table for Diplomacy", (U.S. Department of State – Office of Protocol, June 7, 2012), http://www.foodpolitics.com/wp-content/uploads/Diplomatic-Culinary-Partnership-Initiative-One-Pager.pdf.

[82] The term power seat is often also used in business jargon. Some authors explain the importance of this seat in negotiating and making oneself heard during meetings and for making managerial decisions. Vicki Donlan, "Women Must Have a Seat at the Table", *The Huffington Post*,

square or circular tables, and the seating of guests is assumed to be more egalitarian. Consequently, the table becomes, according to Flammang, a "symbol of conversational, and by extension, civil and political equality" even though the discourses around it maintain and promote boundaries between the owner, i.e. the host, and the guest.[83]



58. CME Group, financial gallery plan for *Open Outcry*.

Open Outcry participants were seated in what was conceived—ideally—as a non-hierarchical table and arranged in a semicircle, a configuration allowing the best conditions for interaction and conversation by avoiding participants being influenced or directed by a single subject. The name of the installation certainly communicates openness, inclusion, and even hospitality, but at the same time, it intends to mimic the dynamic of communication among brokers in the CME pit, a space where not everyone is allowed to enter or participate. The design of the table for *Open Outcry* simulated the hexagonal shape of the pit to endorse a dynamic of discussion where participants exchanged points of view rather than stocks or commodities; however, the conversations were about the impact of stock and commodity exchange markets in the production, trade, and consumption of food. The seating arrangement also included a speaker podium

October 12, 2013, sec. The Blog, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/vicki-donlan/women-must-have-a-seat-at-the-table_b_4414114.html.

[83] Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization*, 88.

facing the modular table and the guests. Even if this had no seat, it functioned as a *power seat* because: 1) it was higher in comparison to the modular tables and chairs; 2) Carroll presented the dishes and the ingredients to the guests from this place; and 3) from this same place, Carroll directed the conversation towards the topics she thought relevant. It is noteworthy that she did this while standing up, thus giving her a more central position and reminding those in front of her that she was in fact the head of the table.

The seating arrangement in *Open Outcry* further emphasises that laws of hospitality influence the outcome of the encounter between the host and the guest. They appear as directive lines that the guest needs to accommodate, thus showing that Carroll's gathering is "not neutral, but directive".[84] Carroll uses the table as a piece of furniture which refers to the narrative of hospitality as a means of gathering and taking care of guests. Moreover, the installation also shows the complexities of the table as an object that disguises hostile practices: Carroll sets the table, but table manners and etiquette function as a "prerequisite for commensality" in this directed performative dinner so that conviviality can emerge.[85] In this sense, the table, its design, and the setting of the installation reinforced the aporia of hospitality: subjects sitting at this table found themselves bound to the rules that structured, ordered and defined their behaviour, conversations and practices in that specific moment. Even if Carroll's intentions, the dining table, the service, the menu, and other accessory elements of this meal reflected, proved, and demonstrated the host's willingness to be hospitable, the notion of openness only actually remains in the title of the installation, reminding us that the guests were selected and allowed to enter a space which is not open to the public, the CME, in order to discuss topics directed by Carroll, who acted as a restrictive host from the podium.

[84] Ahmed, "ORIENTATIONS", 555.
[85] Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization*, 88.

3.3 Sonja Alhäuser: Eating a *Flying Feast*

Eating and hospitality are chief ingredients of my works.
Not only my performances, but also my drawings
are fundamentally convivial invitations.

—Sonja Alhäuser, 2012

After sitting down at the table, host and guests are ready to put into practice the act of commensality. This is, to say, food becomes the means that brings people together. In the words of Susanne Kerner and Cynthia Chou, "commensality is the essence of food, and commensal acts are essential for the integration of a society".[86] Thinking about commensality is to reflect on how the acts of sharing, giving, and hospitality interweave.[87] Commensality extends beyond the physicality of ingesting edibles and the satisfaction of nutritional needs; it also comprises social and political elements that arise during moments of co-presence where sharing is at the heart of the commensal act.[88] Furthermore, moments of commensality are determined by the edibles that are eaten, the way they are eaten, and the space where they are eaten—as I have discussed so far; consequently, in this case, it is necessary to clarify that the commensal act is not confined to a designated space like the dining room, nor to a specific object such as the table.

This last section explores Sonja Alhäuser's edible feast in light of the notion of commensality and the "togetherness that arises out of eating" in a space different from the home or the dining room.[89] Her installation refers to hospitality industry practices, especially to catering, but which greatly differ as her practice is not driven by economic means. On the contrary, Alhäuser creates hospitable feast-like artworks to generate specific, temporal and ephemeral

[86] Susanne Kerner, Cynthia Chou, and Morten Warmind, *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 1.
[87] Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces"; Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, ed. James Strachey, Reprint, Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (Norton, 1950); Martin Jones, *Feast: Why Humans Share Food* (OUP Oxford, 2008); David M. Kaplan, *The Philosophy of Food*, California Studies in Food and Culture Series (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
[88] Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces", 2.
[89] Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization*, 88.

social relationships between the commensals who are often strangers to each other. Her installations and performances are planned, designed, and cooked by the artist with the intention to share the food with the public; however, this takes place in a public space, inside a museum. The *Flying Feast* (2012) was a collaborative performance created by Alhäuser and fine art students from the University of Chicago, which was presented at the opening night of the exhibition "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art" at the Smart Museum of Art. Characterised as a participatory artistic practice, this performance highlights the act of commensality, of sharing food, as moments of hospitality where the public—guests—do not need to sit at the table to partake in the commensal act.

The performance was set up, as Alhäuser's other artworks, as a feast that resembled a cocktail party. Food was served on trays, each of them containing canapés and a margarine sculpture that represented or alluded to the main ingredient of the canapés. For example, for the goat cheese canapés, Alhäuser included a sculpture of a goat standing on top of a mountain; for seafood, she presented Neptune's figure—the Roman god of the seas—to represent the large variety of fish and shellfish, while also conveying the idea of abundance, which is a characteristic of her feasts. The trays with canapés and sculptures were carried by the students, who were dressed up in shiny costumes and wigs, around the museum lobby, as if they "floated" in this space, thus giving sense to the name of the performance.[90]

The *Flying Feast* did not remain stable like a conventional buffet table. As Alhäuser explains, the intention to move the food trays responded to the idea of moving the sculptures, dislocating them from the conceptualisation as fixed objects where the public moves around them; in this case, it was the other way around. Moreover, the *Flying Feast* draws forth the "flying buffet", a common practice in catering events where canapés or finger food are served on trays and

[90] However, Alhäuser explained in an interview that the "tray bearers" more than acted as servers; they had the responsibility to carry the sculptural images "with solemnity and dignity through the audience". Max Koss, Sonja Alhäuser at FEAST, Printed in Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art, 2012.

moved around guests to avoid queues at the food table.[91] Alhäuser reframes this practice by making both sculptures and food part of a cocktail-style performance where food is displayed as artistic practice, floating towards guests who would have a double appreciation of the artwork: a relational aesthetic experience, but also being able to nibble on these artistic canapés without needing to walk towards the food table.





59, 60. Sonja Alhäuser. *Flying Feast*, 2012

Alongside the margarine sculptures and canapés, Alhäuser included watercolour drawings, each of them depicting the main ingredient, and also signed by the artist. These drawings were inserted in the base of the margarine sculpture or in the chicken and green pepper skewers, and the fruit and marzipan ones. They

[91] Dussman Service, "Flying Buffet", *Dussman Service Catering Glossary* (Germany: Dussman

served as pictorial food labels that informed guests of the ingredients used, in a similar fashion to the drawing plan/recipe that Alhäuser created for this performance, and where she explained through pictographic representations every step and detail involved in the recipe and the performance. These labels were also presented as *prêt-à-porter* works of art that guests were able to take home after the feast. This action emphasised that the canapés served during *Flying Feast* were not everyday food; further, it was not a catering service nor a commensality, as is often expected. Overall, the food labels might have led guests to question if these elements are the "original" artwork, if they serve as mere decorations, or if the canapés, the signed drawing, and the performance of students serving meals was in fact the performance.[92]



61. Sonja Alhäuser. *Flying Feast*, 2012
Recipe drawing





62, 63. Sonja Alhäuser. Canapé drawings for *6 Bankette ohne Anlass*, 2006/2007
Images courtesy of Sonja Alhäuser.

Group), accessed February 4, 2015, http://www.catering-glossary.com/f/flying-buffet/.

[92] In other feasts served by Alhäuser, she has used the food label to trigger the same question among the public, also allowing the audience to take them away as souvenirs. Alhäuser, interview; Smith, *Feast*, 100.

Flying Feast is one of Alhäuser's few banquets not presented on large rectangular tables, which emphasises the fact that commensality does not need a table. The intentional erasure of the table results in a temporary effacement of hierarchy between those who are sharing the meal; this particular mode of commensality enabled undirected interaction between guests by endorsing conviviality among them, thus emphasising commensality as hospitality.

Flying Feast is a performance where strangers—artists, museum staff including the curator, and the public—gather and take part in a "ritual commensality" where food, as Susan Pollock explains, helps to establish and reinforce social relations among those who are external to a social group or "external others".[93] Ritual commensality, continues Pollock, often takes shape as feasts in open and public spaces that enable the host to accommodate a bigger group of guests, in this case in the lobby of the Smart Museum of Art.

By offering a feast, Alhäuser puts into practice a strategy that addresses moments of everyday commensality through a temporal moment of ritual commensality, and where hospitality is the key conceptual drive. Alhäuser's performance resembles Daniel Spoerri's feasts in the sixties, Gordon Matta-Clark's restaurant dinners in the seventies, and Rikrit Tiravanija's relational pop-up homemade food in the nineties. In these cases, artists assumed roles as hosts where serving food and eating together was a strategy to create a temporary relationship with the public, activities to which they can easily relate. At the same time, their actions intended to disrupt set rules and activities of a museum or gallery by practising inside them.[94] Alhäuser's performances and installations, like Matta-Clark's or Tiravanija's, require the participation of the public; however, she acts as a host who prepares and "sets up" the table, paying attention to the dynamics of interaction where audience participation is necessary to complete the artwork. They participate merely by attending the event but also as guests.

[93] Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces", 4, 9.
[94] Smith, *Feast*, 152–60.

In Alhäuser's actions, the rules of museums and galleries are disrupted, allowing people to touch, smell, taste, and digest the work. The *Flying Feast* is a commensal-communal act, where offering of meals for a large audience requires a collaborative workforce, investing time, labour, and materials in the food preparation. Alhäuser used strategies, modes of interaction, and presentation of food similar to a cocktail party and transformed it into an event opposed to a common catering event that displaces the familiar or the expected. This is a meal that has its own rituals, manners, etiquette, and other "performative elements" like floating trays and the students dressed up in sparkling clothes that "direct and mark the celebration or event" while also reinforcing social relations.[95] To some extent, Alhäuser's *Flying Feast* resembles Victor Turner's notion of *communitas*, a spontaneous collective experience that arises when a group of people cross the threshold and together "enter liminal time and space" and experience a mode of social interaction opposed in its temporality and structure to that of the everyday.[96]

Furthermore, a *communitas* occurs spontaneously, without legislation and subordination to familiar relationships; it seeks to create a "transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being", finding that the experience is "something profoundly communal and shared".[97] The same happens in Alhäuser's feasts, where a peculiar *communitas* emerges and subverts the artwork in a similar way to carnivals, festivals and celebrations, where participants are sometimes complete strangers to each other, but also because they share food in a place that is not "home". They enter the museum to encounter Alhäuser's work; however, not all of them will show the same interest or participate in the same way. To some extent they, the *communitas*, know that what they are doing does not follow the behaviour they are expected to perform

[95] Pollock, "Towards an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces", 6–7.
[96] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, 1995th ed., Foundations of Human Behavior (United States of America and United Kingdom: Transaction Publishers, 1969), 138.
[97] Turner further explains that a *communitas* is not the same as community. *Communitas* is a process where no one is marginalised, because everyone is on the margin. It is a transitory period of transformation which enables group members to return to their way of living in dramatically new ways. So *communitas* is not simply social interaction; it is not simply belonging to a group. Implied in *communitas* is a social and soulful connection. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*.

while in the museum. It is possible to conceive different approaches among participants: some devour the work; others talk to each other or to students participating in the performance; others observe Alhäuser's drawings; and others are just arriving. It is a *communitas* in constant movement, as the work itself. Participants experience the work in different ways, mixing sensory, aesthetic, communal and performative experiences which make this kind of artistic approach a playful gathering, an intriguing moment of commensality.[98]



64. Sonja Alhäuser. *Flying Feast*, 2012

In Alhäuser's *Flying Feast* the viewer can approach others and eat art without guilt; the canapés and the *prêt-à-porter* drawings are given for this same reason. Alhäuser offers them without any expectations: they are created to please the guest, in similarity to what the host would do *at-home*. But this act of hospitality commensality disintegrates when the event finishes, and so does the *communitas*. What remains is the watercolour drawings and the memory of this experience in everyone who took part in eating art. The same can be said of Prvacki's and Carroll's performances. The three artists welcome the public with food, and they propose commensality and hospitality as notions that interweave unnoticeably; however, none of the three artists really shared food with the public, as they were only setting the arena so that others could perform the commensal act in a space different to their thresholds. The Smart Museum of

[98] Mariana Meneses Romero, "Arte, Alimentos Y Experiencia Sensorial: Las Obras Comestibles de Sonja Alhäuser" (Master Art History, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2010),

Art in Chicago was, in this sense, open to others, enabling hospitality to emerge as the exhibition “Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art” intended originally, even if within these actions hospitality’s conditionality is rarely unnoticed.

http://132.248.9.195/ptb2010/junio/0658467/Index.html.

Chapter 4

Embodied hospitality: Eating the m(other)

Following on the idea of commensality portrayed as a gesture of hospitality, in this chapter I further explore the relationship of eating with the notion of hospitality, thinking of it beyond the traditional gathering of host and guest at the table. I propose that if one considers that we are constantly "eating the other", as Derrida would argue, then it is necessary to think the ways in which one in fact eats or takes the other in(side) the body. In other words, I explore eating as an act that comprises the physical and routine act of ingesting food but also, as Kelly Oliver emphasises, an ethico-political and psychological assimilation of the other by means of the "metonymical interiorisation of symbols, language or social codes".[1] Furthermore, thinking Derrida's assertion of eating the other comprises questioning if: Our bodies are food for the other? And if so, *who eats us*? Or, how do we feed an(other) with our body? These inquiries expose multiple points of view, but one in particular refers to the literal and metonymical eating of the body, including body parts and fluids, as an act of cannibalism.

The "cannibalistic" eating of the other is present in visual culture.[2] One of the most iconic examples is the American science-fiction film *Soylent Green* (1973).[3]

[1] Kelly Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics: Derrida's Homeopathic Purity", *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* XV (2007): 43.

[2] Cannibalism and anthropophagy have been addressed by artists; however, most of the time, eating a human body is depicted as a metaphorical device to refer to some other issue. Take for example the work of Mexican artist César Martínez who, since the 1990s, has presented different *PerforMANcenas* (PerforMANdinners). These performances invite the public to participate in a metaphorical ritual of cannibalism of human-scale *sculptocooked* bodies made out of gelatine or chocolate, often representing Mexico's social body. The artist shapes the human body out of edibles rather than taking on the corporeality of the *body as food*. Artist Catherine Bell has a similar approach in her project "Baby Drop". This involved baking a cake in the shape of a newborn baby every 28 days, following the standard menstrual cycle. The baked product was shared with others as a ritual of commensality. The artist, however, was inspired by the cases of abandoned—or dumped—babies that appeared regularly in the press, so she began to bake and dump these cake babies in places such as public toilets, or inside boxes near hospitals, or in the street. César Martínez, "Comeos Los Unos a Los Otros" (César Martínez), accessed January 10, 2014, http://martinezsilva.com/articulos/FisurasTextoPRINT.pdf; Mariana Meneses Romero, "Eating Latin America: César Martínez 'sculptocooked' bodies", *Street Signs* 2015, no. The Latin America Edition (11-13), http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/2015_Issue.pdf; Catherine E. Bell, "Cooking up Crimes and Maternal Misdemeanours. From Food Ritual to Transgressive Performances", *Double Dialogues* Winter 2011, no. 15, accessed January 2, 2016,

This film shows an apocalyptic scenario in which the pollution and destruction of the environment have greatly affected the food chain, leading to the extinction of non-humans. Humans then have no option but to consume processed food (high-protein wafers) made with plankton. The scarcity of this organism, however, forces them to eat another source of protein: human bodies. Although to this day human bodies are not (yet) being transformed into processed food, this narrative is becoming more relevant as the environmental crisis and the scarcity of food is no longer restricted to science fiction.

Bearing in mind the latter, in this chapter I focus on the idea of eating the body of the other, in specific that of the mother, both human and non-human. Particularly, I analyse two contemporary artistic practices that address and/or portray "eating the other" in relationship to the maternal body. My intention follows the necessity of paying special attention to the idea "one *must* eat well" as an ethical imperative—that of infinite hospitality.[4] This gesture requires thinking about eating by focusing on our ethical obligation to analyse and practise the best way in which we eat the other, to be "constantly vigilant in one's hospitality to the other, even the very other to whom one eats".[5] In this case I focus on the female body and addresses the imperative need to discuss the ethical implications of maternal corporeal hospitality. I re-address hospitality with the maternal, considering feminist critiques of both Levinas and Derrida in order to avoid, following Drucilla Cornell, "merg[ing …] ideas [of the maternal] to cultural conventions … and into the unconscious" that contribute to the oppression, violence, and obliteration of women and their bodies.[6] I propose that hospitality constitutes an open door for the possibility to reposition women's bodies and include "corporeal experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal body" into Levinasian and Derridean frameworks of hospitality.[7] In this case,

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http://www.doubledialogues.com/article/cooking-up-crimes-and-maternal-misdemeanours-from-food-ritual-to-transgressive-performances/.

[3] Richard Fleischer, *Soylent Green*, DVD, Sci-Fi (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), 1973).

[4] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", 115.

[5] Ibid., 44–45.

[6] Drucilla Cornell, "Civil Disobedience and Deconstruction", in *Feminist Interpretations of Jacques Derrida*, ed. Nancy Holland, Re-Reading the Canon Series (United States of America: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 152.

[7] Lucy Bailey, "GENDER SHOWS: First-Time Mothers and Embodied Selves", *Gender & Society* 15, no. 1 (February 2001): 110.

however, I emphasise the relevance of eating well linked to the maternal body bearing in mind that the body of our mothers allowed us to have our very first meal, but also because we continue to eat food products derived from the bodies of non-human mothers and from which the food system profits.

The chapter is divided in two sections. The first focuses on Miriam Simun's installation *The Lady Cheese Shop* (2011). The artist, in similarity to contemporary practices of chefs and mothers who create dairy-related products like cheese or ice cream, used breast milk to create different cheeses and which were presented to the public in a series of tasting sessions.[8] In this case I explore Simun's artwork from two different perspectives as it conveys multiple significations of hospitality and in relationship to the food system and the maternal; but most importantly, because this installation portrays the possibility of eating the body of an(other) human—if considering that the fluids produced by a person are part of its corporeality. Firstly, I suggest that *The Lady Cheese Shop* helps to reframe maternal bodily fluids (breast milk) under the lens of the notion of *corporeal hospitality*,[9] *embodied hospitality*,[10] and *embodied commensality*,[11] whilst highlighting how maternal-corporeal hospitality lingers constantly with the notion of hostility. My analysis comprises contemporary feminist frameworks that focus on the materiality of the body as a means to reframe the maternal body in continual relationships with others to consider eating the body of the other as a gesture of hospitality. I suggest that weaning has not prevented us from eating the maternal body[12], i.e.: women's bodies have

[8] Richard Adams, "Breast Milk Cheese on the Menu in New York", *The Guardian*, March 9, 2010, Online edition, sec. Food & drink, http://www.theguardian.com/world/richard-adams-blog/2010/mar/09/breast-milk-cheese-new-york; The Telegraph, "Breast Milk Ice Cream Banned from London Shop", *The Telegraph*, January 3, 2011, Online edition, sec. How about that?, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/howaboutthat/8356099/Breast-milk-ice-cream-banned-from-London-shop.html; Khushbu Shah, "Oh Great, Breast Milk Ice Cream Is Back", *Eater*, April 24, 2015, http://www.eater.com/2015/4/24/8491303/breast-milk-ice-cream-london-the-lickators-royal-baby.

[9] Penelope Deutscher, "Conditionalities, Exclusions, Oclusions," in *Rewriting Difference: Luce Irigaray and "the Greeks,"* ed. Elena Tzelepis and Athanasiou Athanasiou, SUNY Series in Gender Theory (State University of New York Press, 2012), 259.

[10] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*.

[11] Chee-Beng, "Commensality and the Organization of Social Relations".

[12] Maia Boswell-Penc, *Tainted Milk: Breastmilk, Feminisms, and the Politics of Environmental Degradation* (State University of New York Press, 2012); Pam Carter, *Feminism, Breasts and Breast Feeding* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995); Cindy A. Stearns, "Breastfeeding and the Good Maternal Body," *Gender & Society* 13, no. 3 (June 1, 1999): 308–25; Penny Van Esterik, "The Politics of Breastfeeding: An Advocacy Update," in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole

been—and still are—constantly eaten, regurgitated, and devalued within patriarchal and phallogocentric logic, including the maternal body and its fluids such as breast milk. In this case, eating the maternal body shows, in agreement with Aristarkhova, that as ravenous eaters we can envision the possibilities of hospitable relationships with others, rather than following the narratives that assume maternal hospitality as something natural.[13] Maternal hospitality, in this sense, comprises welcoming the other, thinking of another "coming inside the body" beyond pregnancy.[14] In this case, suggesting that the ingestion of the other foresees an act of hospitality that can take place by and through maternal corporeal fluids. I, however, discuss the different reactions experienced by members of the public when eating maternal secretions, such as rejection, disgust, aversion and/or pleasure on finding out that the cheese was made with human milk. Secondly, I analyse *The Lady Cheese Shop* in relationship to food production and consumption within the food system by pointing to feminist, ecological and ethical concerns. I emphasise, in particular, how this artwork addresses contemporary problematics, including labour politics and gender in the hospitality industry. *The Lady Cheese Shop* reveals the complexities of the notion of hospitality as it recreates dynamics inscribed in fine dining experiences—tasting sessions—which have grown exponentially as part of the hospitality industry and gourmet culinary practices. Simun emphasises these practices whilst addressing to ecological concerns in terms of sustainability and animal welfare: The use of human breast milk to produce cheese serves to question the logic of locally-sourced food products in urban landscapes, for example.

In the second section of this chapter I explore hospitality and eating the other in light of Jennifer Rubell's installation *Incubation* (2011). Eating the other is explored here in close relationship with hospitality in order to question who hosts what or whom, and the space (or in this case the medium) where it takes

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Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 2008), 467–81; Myrel Chernick and Jennie Klein, eds., *The M-Word: Real Mothers in Contemporary Art* (Bradford, ON: Demeter Press, 2011).

[13] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 3.

[14] Frances Gray, "Original Habitation: Pregnant Flesh as Absolute Hospitality," in *Coming to Life Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering*, ed. Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline R. Lundquist (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 82.

place. In specific, I focus my analysis on the idea of *incubating the other*, and borrow Aristarkhova's ideas about ectogenesis and the technological devices that are used, considering that the name of this artwork alludes to incubation as a gestational process which mimics the functions of the maternal body in similarity to a nursery ward. However, in this case, the notion of incubation is a means to refer to the fermentation of yogurt, using non-human milk to host the microbial other. My aim is to highlight the, sometimes forgotten or taken-for-granted, idea that food products are also made by corporeal fluids that are transformed by living microorganisms. Yet, even if we are visually unaware of the presence of microbial other(s), eating well and hospitality requires us to acknowledge them, meaning they become vital in the food chain.

Overall, the chapter aims reinserting the materiality of the body and its biological processes to Derrida's notion of eating well by exploring eating as biological and physical acts that *give place* to hospitable relationships with others taking place between the encounter of bodies, but also through one's own body. This approach to hospitality builds on Derrida's and Levinas's theoretical framework and on the ideas of feminist scholars, in particular Irina Aristarkhova, Rosalyn Diprose, and Myra Hird, who highlight the relevance of the materiality of the body, its fluids and physiological processes in order to dislocate it from the Cartesian dualism between mind and body.[15]

[15] Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook mention, for example, that feminists framed the term "corporeal feminism" to explore the binary embodiment/disembodiment. They argue that "for as long as the mind/body problem is negotiated via metaphors of consumption, ingestion and incorporation, feminist theory will be constrained by a particular bodily practice being accepted in advance as an explanation for the body in general". Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook, "The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and the Politics of (Dis)Embodiment", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (January 1998): 52.

4.1 Eating the m(other), eating human cheese

The Lady Cheese Shop (est. 2011)

Eating human cheese, as troubling as it seems, is possible to some extent. But what does eating human cheese imply? What sort of reactions does this trigger? But most importantly, how does this relate to the ethics of hospitality?

The Lady Cheese Shop is part of Simun's *Human Cheese* project that questioned the production of food and its commodification by reimagining and creating food products made with/by the human body.[16] She provoked the indigestion of the public by taking on the role as cheesemonger, offering them cheeses that contained human milk. The installation was staged in the Michael Mut Gallery in New York City, which was transformed into a pop-up shop for four days. Members of the public were hosted and offered the possibility to participate in one of the cheese-tasting sessions. The only instruction for the public, as the press release suggested, was to be open to food practices and "follow [their] gut" to decide if they wanted to taste human-dairy products.[17]



65. Miriam Simun. *The Lady Cheese Shop* window display, 2011

[16] Miriam Simun, "Human Cheese", in *The Multispecies Salon*, ed. Eben Kirksey (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2014), 133.
[17] Miriam Simun, "The Human Cheese Project at Michael Mut Gallery", Artist Webpage, *Miriam Simun*, (2011), http://www.miriamsimun.com/the-lady-cheese-shop/.

Simun aimed to have locally sourced ingredients, following practices and trends of consuming organic and sustainable food, which explains why two of the cheeses were made from "locally sourced" (donated) breast milk from two women living in New York (Chelsea and Midtown).[18] The third sample was "imported" breast milk (bought on the internet) from a woman living in the US state of Wisconsin which ironically enough is known for producing good-quality cheeses.[19] The idea for using locally sourced food is further emphasised by Simun in the title of the following photograph:

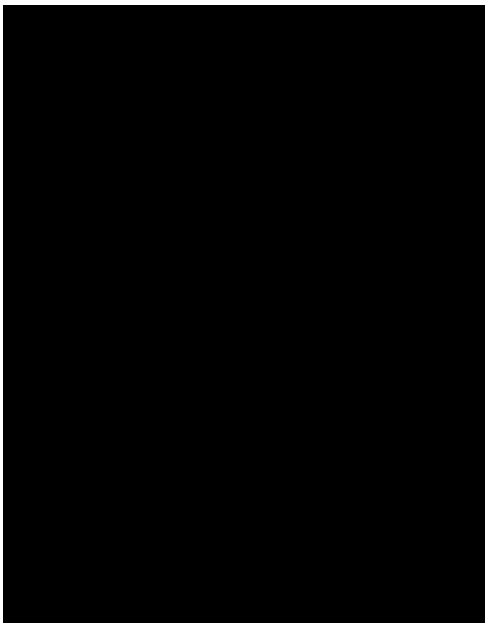


66. Miriam Simun. *Fresh human cheese in front of its urban pasture*, 2011

Accessing breast milk involves certain barriers. Simun mentions she thought of various possibilities to acquire breast milk, including: finding women willing to share their milk, asking friends who were breastfeeding, or through web platforms where women sell, donate, and buy breast milk. She chose to buy milk, and was also able to get a donor. However, Simun explains that finding the milk was not the only challenge; she also had to arrange the transportation of the paid-for samples, which were delivered by express courier, while the donated

[18] *Miriam Simun Presents at the 2013 Creative Capital Artist Retreat*, Vimeo, 2013, https://vimeo.com/76450755.
[19] Simun, "Human Cheese"; Danielle Gould, "Miriam Simun On Human Cheese, Biotechnology, & Sustainable Food", *Food Tech Connect*, January 11, 2011, http://www.foodtechconnect.com/2011/01/11/miriam-simun-talks-about-human-cheese-biotechnology-sustainable-food-systems/.

one was given to her in person. More importantly, and as oddly as this may sound, as a hygienic requirement, milk—the "most natural food"— needs to be tested in order to prove it is free from pathogens that could increase the risk of infection or disease for consumers.[20] The samples purchased by Simun had to be confirmed as a safe food product for *The Lady Cheese Shop* customers.[21] The focus on safety is further emphasised during the cheese-making process as cheese are often made with pasteurised milk.[22]



67. Miriam Simun. *Sourcing Human Milk: Blood Test*, 2011

Obtaining the milk, however, required a minimum knowledge of the characteristics and specific manipulation of the milk to produce cheese, including heating, tempering, stirring, or draining. Breast milk cheese is no different, though the particular physicochemical composition of this milk cannot be assumed to react the same as non-human milks. One of the main reasons why "[p]ure human cheese is, for now, not biochemically possible" is because breast milk contains a small amount of *casein* compared to the milk of other female mammals.[23] This protein is responsible for the curdling or *coagulation* of the milk, an essential characteristic for producing cheese.[24] Consequently, Simun had no

[20] Simun, "Human Cheese".
[21] Regulations also include testing for sexually transmitted diseases.
[22] Heather Paxton, "Post-Pasteurian Cultures: The Microbiopolitics of Raw-Milk Cheese in the United States", *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (February 2008): 15–47.
[23] Simun, "Human Cheese", 138.
[24] Fox et al., *Fundamentals of Cheese Science*.

choice but to add another source of casein to achieve a firm consistency: goat's milk. Simun then followed the same steps for producing other kinds of cheeses: 1) pasteurising the breast milk (if desired); 2) mixing it with the goat's milk; 3) adding salt; 4) incorporating a coagulant agent, such as *rennet*[25] (although in this case, she chose to use a "living coagulant", a vegetarian option using zygote fungus (*Mucor miehei*); 5) stirring until the milk starts curdling; 6) leaving the mix to rest until thickened; 7) stirring again to break the solids; 8) scooping the curd into a colander lined with cloth and allowing the whey to drain; and 9) leaving the cheese to drain until the liquid comes out milky, an indication that the cheese is ready for consumption.[26]

The human and non-human cheeses produced by Simun were presented in the Michael Mut Gallery, following similar protocols to those in fine dining establishments and by cheesemongers. The artist joined forces with chef Sarah Hymanson, who created amuse-bouche samples of the cheeses, paired with wines and other foods "inspired by the cultural and microbial terroir of each cheese".[27] It is worth noting that the serving of small portions of various cheeses, often made with different milks, is common practice within the hospitality industry, especially in European-influenced fine dining establishments. Furthermore, each of the cheeses had a label that explained the origin of the cheese, and described its organoleptic characteristics. It is important to note that Simun performed as a waitress, walking among the public and offering them the *amuse-bouche*. *The Lady Cheese Shop* therefore served as a strategy that enables Simun to play with food practices to question the ethical implications of food production and its consumption. Most importantly, it also enabled Simun to address the commodification of female bodies, both human and non-human. The tasting sessions aimed to trigger reactions of disgust, interest or indifference when presenting the eaters/public with breast milk products. Simun's installation, furthermore, addressed feminist problems concerning women and their bodies, questions that have been—and still are—

[25] Rennet (calf's gastric acid) is the coagulant agent that is added to the milk in order to curdle it. Ibid.
[26] Simun, "Human Cheese", 141–42.
[27] Miriam Simun, *The Lady Cheese Shop: Human Breast Milk Cheese on Display*, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRxiGg2kLjQ.

discussed by feminist art historians but also by a number of scholars in other fields of study.[28]

The maternal body and hospitality

The female (human) body has been overly represented and addressed within philosophical and artistic fields. The maternal, however, is fertile ground from which to examine the ethics of hospitality. Feminist theorists such as Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, Kelly Oliver, Iris Marion Young, and Michelle Boulous Walker have extensively discussed how the figure of the mother, and the feminine, have been used to exclude women from public life and from the Western philosophical canon.[29] Lundquist and LaChance, in particular, explain that philosophers and feminists have assumed different positions regarding pregnancy and maternity. First-wave feminists dismissed pregnancy and maternity because they are considered conditions which prevented women's social and economic participation, for example where Simone De Beauvoir posits women as the "victim of the species" because of their reproductive capacity. She endorsed avoiding motherhood in order to counteract the patriarchal logic.[30]

The second feminist position, on the contrary, takes into account the relationship between mother and child; however, pregnancy and maternity are used as metaphors instead of being acknowledged as part of women's experience.[31] For example, French feminist theorist Julia Kristeva, in opposition to De Beauvoir, aimed for a positive revalorisation of maternity. In "Stabat

[28] Susan Bordo, *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003); Griselda Pollock, "Mother Trouble: The Maternal-Feminine in Phallic and Feminist Theory in Relation to Bracha Ettinger's Elaboration of Matrixial Ethics/Aesthetics", *Studies in the Maternal* 1, no. 1 (2009): 31; Rosemary Betterton, *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists, and the Body*, Visual Studies – Women's Studies (Routledge, 1996).
[29] Kelly Oliver, *Knock Me Up, Knock Me Down: Images of Pregnancy in Hollywood Films* (Columbia University Press, 2012), 20–55.
[30] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Reprinted 1956 (Great Britain: Lowe and Brydone, 1949), 49.
[31] Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline R Lundquist, eds., *Coming to Life Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 3–5.

Mater", Kristeva suggests motherhood and pregnancy is a process of "becoming" for both mother and foetus.[32]

Feminists later proposed an embodied approach. As the work of Iris Marion Young shows, maternity is considered a bodily experience which needs to be explored "as lived and felt in the flesh" rather than continuing to frame the maternal body merely as a metaphor, in which the materiality of a woman's body continues to be erased or disguised.[33] Rosemary Betterton also argues for the need to embrace an "embodied perspective"—a term borrowed from Moira Gatens —when "describing the work of certain women artists from the late nineteenth century to the present, whose work engages with female embodiment".[34]

Motherhood and breastfeeding are topics to which Simun's artwork refers. Her installation *The Lady Cheese Shop* follows an embodied feminist approach to uncover the maternal body from the imposed veiling that prevails to this day.[35] This artwork aims to release women's bodies from the exacerbated sexualised gaze used in visual media, and to reflect upon the taboo towards the naked maternal body and its oozing fluids. Simun's practice avoids romanticising or diminishing women by dislocating them from the logic that posits the bearing of a child and nurturing as a natural process or responsibility and/or duty of women.

Her artwork follows the practice of women artists from the 1960s and 1970s that represented, presented or portrayed the female body with clear reference to feminist theories of embodiment.[36] Mary Kelley's *Post-Partum Document*

[32] Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater", in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Columbia University Press, 1986), 160–86; Kelly Oliver, "Julia Kristeva's Maternal Passions", *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 1, no. 1 (December 31, 2010), http://jffp.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/jffp/article/view/172.
[33] Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*, Feminist Philosophy Series (USA: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17–19.
[34] Moira Gatens, "Bodies, Power and Difference", in *Destabilising Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates*, ed. M. Barrett and S. Phillips (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 134; Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*, 18.
[35] Michelle Boulous Walker, *Philosophy and the Maternal Body: Reading Silence* (London and New York: Taylor & Francis, 2002), 3–7.
[36] Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*; Dekel, *Gendered: Art and Feminist Theory*.

(1973–79) is probably one of the most representative artworks for feminist and women artists dealing with motherhood. Kelley's piece counteracted the visual and cultural conventions by bringing the pregnant female body to the fore, as well as taking into account the experiences of mothers.[37] *The Lady Cheese Shop*, in this sense, continues to position the maternal body at the centre of the stage without any cover up. The female body, specifically that of the mother, is emphasised by Simun as an active body, as one with *agency*; thus, without their participation, the artist would not have been able to create cheese and offer it to others.[38]

The maternal body continues to be problematic, especially when it is discussed in relation to hospitality. This is because when the maternal is discussed in the philosophical discourses of hospitality, these often allude to women and their bodies in association to their capacity of hosting an(other) human—as in the case of pregnancy.[39] Woman is, according to Levinas, "the condition for recollection, the interiority of the home, and *inhabitation*", a phrase that illustrates how women and the feminine are used as tropes in philosophical discourses.[40] For Levinas, women are vital to the welcome of the other, and he suggests they are the ultimate precondition of hospitality; in fact, he mentions the feminine and the maternal as enabling the encounter of alterities.[41] However, the inhabitation that Levinas suggests is troubling as he suggests that woman is a space in which the other is allocated and feels at home. This would be assumed as such, if we consider the patriarchal sociocultural assumptions about the maternal, and which consider the pregnant body as the home where the self hosts the other. Levinas refers to pregnancy as part of hospitality, alluding constantly to

[37] Andrea Liss, *Feminist Art and the Maternal* (United States of America: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 30.
[38] I am referring to agency considering that this artwork is a social act which has an impact on others, despite the structural constraints it encountered within the social and cultural structures. Maja Mikula, *Key Concepts in Cultural Studies*, Palgrave Key Concepts (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 4.
[39] Gray argues about pregnancy in connection to Derrida's idea of absolute hospitality, saying that pregnant flesh is "original hospitality [which] precedes and models the political and social function or process of absolute hospitality […] hospitality of intersubjective oneness, and simultaneously, twoness". Gray, "Original Habitation", 82–83.
[40] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 155. [my emphasis]
[41] Donna Brody, "Levinas's Maternal Method from 'Time and the Other' Through Otherwise Than Being: No Woman's Land?", in *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Tina

maternity and the feminine by using the words habitation, expectancy, or allocation. However, as Derrida notes, Levinas's notion of feminine hospitality only addresses women in a pre-ethical position, considering the use of figurative language for the maternal.[42] Furthermore, Levinas's ideas emphasise the need for a space—the home—which, as Derrida argues in *Of Hospitality*, is primordial to narratives of hospitality.

Feminist philosophers and theorists such as Irina Aristarkhova, Judith Still, Donna Brody and Luce Irigaray share Derrida's critique, emphasising the need to reinterpret maternal hospitality as a means to counteract phallogocentric and patriarchal logic.[43] Aristarkhova, for example, mentions that habitation in Levinas is a "reminder of the self's relation to its own corporeality".[44] However, she emphasises the use of vocabulary related to the maternal as an endorsement to obliterate the materiality of the maternal body and/or its relegation to figurative linguistic strategies.[45] Judith Still insists on hospitality with erotic and maternal qualities, even if these are "displaced onto the figural".[46] For her, the female body is "uniquely hospitable, [because its] erotic, reproductive and nourishing specificity [is] experienced by all 'guests,' [even if they are a] source of fantasy and of acts inspired by it."[47] Levinas's welcoming of the other, hospitality, is framed in phallocentric and patriarchal logic where the female and the maternal body remain disguised and subsumed, as Donna Brody suggests. She examines the notion of the feminine and the trope of the mother in Levinas's works, and mentions that

> the female capacity for child-bearing is poached, colonized, and substituted from her to him where it figures as a kind of [...] reproduction of the other-in-the-same. In other words, she may be read as redetermined according to the most eminent meaning—or she may be

Chanter, Re-Reading the Canon Series (United States of America: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 53–78.
[42] Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*.
[43] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*; Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*.
[44] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 33.
[45] Irina Aristarkhova, "Hospitality and the Maternal", *Hypatia* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 172.
[46] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 129.
[47] Ibid.

> read as altogether obliterated, exiled even from the significance of maternity.[48]

Women are relegated from hospitality, even if phallocentric and patriarchal logic frames the maternal and the feminine as characteristics inherent to females. Luce Irigaray's critique of Levinas's idea of the feminine and hospitality agrees with Derrida in saying that women are portrayed only as the medium which gives place for the ethical encounter between man and the other, but women are not considered to be part of an ethical relationship.[49] Under this logic, women are posited as the ultimate other, rather than a subject with agency. Simun's artwork therefore acts as an active reversal of the maternal hospitality framed as a corporeal space for others.

Taking inspiration from practices in the hospitality industry, Simun manages to relate women and the maternal with hospitality beyond the mere performance as waitress. She presents—in a more *hospitable* manner—a foodstuff that disrupts the logic of maternal hospitality and of the maternal body because it is eaten by an(other) that is not a newborn or infant. Her piece is adamant that the maternal body is not just a philosophical trope by which women fall into oblivion; rather, it is also the active participation of women and their corporealities that reframe the understanding of what maternal hospitality implies. *The Lady Cheese Shop* therefore enables a re-evaluation, integration, and reframing of the maternal into hospitality discourse, following the ideas proposed by Still, Diprose, Aristarkhova, and Hird. Maternal hospitality is explored, hand-in-hand with Simun's artwork, beyond the Levinasian metaphorisation of women, maternity, and the feminine. It also goes beyond the assumption of maternity is something natural or given for granted, and beyond the mere assumption of women as the "material ground of hospitality", as

[48] Brody, "Levinas's Maternal Method from 'Time and the Other' Through Otherwise Than Being: No Woman's Land?", 74.
[49] Luce Irigaray, "The Fecundity of the Caress. A Reading of Levinas, Totality and Infinity, 'Phenomenology of Eros'", in *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Tina Chanter, Re-Reading the Canon (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 109; Claire Elise Katz, "Reinhabiting the House of Ruth. Exceeding the Limits of the Feminine in Levinas", in *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Tina Chanter, Re-Reading the Canon (United States of America: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 155.

hospitality narratives portray.[50] Following Diprose, this artwork highlights women as subjects who engage in ethical relationships with/to the other; at the same time, it proposes thinking of hospitality as more than only "giv[ing] time so that others have time for consciousness, labour and hospitality".[51]

Irina Aristarkhova follows the concerns of feminist theorists of reducing the mother to a "a sacrificial receptacle" for the other.[52] She proposes a radical approach to maternal hospitality that challenges the metaphorisation of the mother, and counteracts the matricidal foundational gesture in cultural, philosophical, and scientific discourses.

Aristarkhova aims to reposition the mother by examining the Levinasian and Derridean notions of hospitality *vis-à-vis* feminist critiques of Irigaray and Emanuela Bianchi, and proposes the maternal as an "*act of hospitality*".[53] Her work focuses on the interplay of the "maternal, materiality and matrixial" to reconnect the concept of the matrix to the maternal as a means to argue against any notion of hospitality of the maternal body and mothering as natural.[54] Aristarkhova's theoretical endeavour addresses actual mothers by analysing "the agential (and not taken-for-granted) character of hospitality as mothering and mothering as hospitality".[55] She does so by closely examining three concepts related to hospitality and the notion of generation of space: the matrix, chora, and the Greek term *hupedoche*.

The *matrix*, argues Aristarkhova, is often associated with the mother in multiple discourses which include—or reject—the maternal body, the womb, and pregnancy, particularly because the matrix is understood as the "original place/space of generation and becoming".[56] She further warns of the potential risks of the discursive and theoretical formulations of the matrix which merely focus on the etymological origin of the matrix as a ground zero, as that which

[50] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 122.
[51] Rosalyn Diprose, "Women's Bodies Between National Hospitality and Domestic Biopolitics", *Paragraph* 32, no. 1 (2009): 73.
[52] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 3.
[53] Ibid., 43. [italics in the original]
[54] Ibid., 2.
[55] Ibid., 4.

"materiali[ses] and/or engender[s] space" and thus it erases the mother from "questions of generation and conception".[57]

The term *chora*, like the matrix, is also used in close connection to the maternal body. The term can be traced back to Plato's *Timaeus*, where it entails ideas of genesis and creation, and evokes the maternal body as a receptacle. Aristarkhova explains that "Plato needed a term that would be as invisible and as passive as possible… [to refer to a pre-cosmic space; although by doing so, he] metaphorically conjures the maternal body".[58] The complexity of the term is further discussed in contemporary texts; Derrida, for example, suggests it is the one "who gives place without engendering", although he emphasises the need to dislocate it from the figure of the mother or women.[59] Both Plato and Derrida are adamant in separating *chora* from the female and the maternal. Their aim is to portray it as a neutral term and with no relation to sexual difference; however, the disarticulation from the "race of women", as Aristarkhova explains, constitutes a matricidal gesture in itself.[60] In this sense, feminist critiques of Plato, and of Derrida's interpretation of *chora*, such as those of Irigaray and Bianchi, re-appropriate the term by reintroducing maternal and feminine corporealities.[61] Bianchi follows Irigaray's insistence in counteracting the "economy of metaphor" where women are assumed as a trope, and insists on putting them back into "place".[62] The *chora*/receptacle, according to Bianchi can be acknowledged as

> violent abstraction and expropriation of feminine corporeality, [but if] critically re-approached, [it offers] a fecund and generative philosophical terrain in which a feminist rethinking of corporeality, spatiality, frugality, temporality and life may take place.[63]

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[56] Ibid., 2, 11.
[57] Ibid., 16.
[58] Ibid., 18–19.
[59] Ibid., 20.
[60] Ibid., 20–21.
[61] The *chora* has been discussed and reappropriated by other feminist scholars, like Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva. Ibid., 23.
[62] Luce Irigaray and Carolyn Burke, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Athlone Press, 1993), 38.
[63] Emanuela Bianchi, "Receptacle/ Chora: Figuring the Errant Feminine in Plato's Timaeus," *Hypatia* 21, no. 4 (Fall 2006): 126.

Lastly, Aristarkhova draws her attention to the Greek term of *hupedoche*. Aristarkhova agrees with Bianchi in saying that this term is dismissed, or not sufficiently explored, by Derrida or feminists like Irigaray, Butler, or Kristeva, who instead pay more attention to the problems arising from the Platonic *chora*. *Hupedoche* derives from "a verb that means welcoming into and entertaining in one's house", as well as to "conceive or become pregnant".[64] It is a term which dislocates the notion of hospitality away from the "womb and [the] home, [and insert it in] to an ethic of hospitality that [extends] beyond one's home".[65] The matrix, *chora*, and *hupedoche* are used by Aristarkhova to reconnect the maternal body to hospitality "*in relation to* space and matter rather than *as* space and matter", i.e. in terms of generation, as in "*generating space* for others".[66] Aristarkhova argues that this avoids the matricidal gesture because it re-introduces the embodied experiences of the maternal, and acknowledges them as part of the ethical imperative of giving hospitality.[67]

Creating human cheese: Breast milk and corporeal hospitality

Is it possible to think of the donation of milk as a (inter)corporeal generous act of hospitality? Does the sharing of maternal corporeal fluids help to reframe maternal hospitality as something that is not exclusive to a mother–infant relationship or fundamental to women's identities? *The Lady Cheese Shop* shows a different perspective of maternal hospitality, one that transgresses the logic of women during motherhood as natural receptacles, or with the natural capacity for nursing the other, as per Aristarkhova's "*generation of space"*.[68] The words "human", "breast milk" and "cheese" are key in understanding how the maternal body inserts a continual relation of hospitality through the donation and sharing of maternal fluids and its transformation into a dairy-like product.

The Lady Cheese Shop shows breast milk as a versatile product with the potential to transform into cheese, even if its consumption appears to be inadequate or

[64] Ibid., 130; Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 24.
[65] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 24.
[66] Ibid., 3, 28. [emphasis in the original]
[67] Ibid., 45.
[68] Ibid., 3.

discomforting for some people. The production and consumption of human cheese is presented by Simun to question the normalcy embedded in consuming non-human milk, in comparison to the ambivalent attitudes towards breast milk—of acceptance and rejection. Simun focuses on the extensively explored topics of breastfeeding and breast milk that scholars have repeatedly discussed, particularly feminists, in order to examine the maternal body in close relationship to food practices. Simun therefore follows the continuous efforts of women artists to put breastfeeding centre stage of their practices.[69] Her practice creates the possibility of thinking about breast milk and breastfeeding through the notion of hospitality because, as I suggest, they are presented as space and matter for others.

Human cheese dislocates women's bodies from the notions of allocation and becoming, and portrays it as an act of hospitality, entailing "an active gesture of welcoming, greeting, sheltering, and [...] nourishing" which, in this particular case, takes shape as a continual corporeal relationship of commensality.[70] However, this does not necessarily imply reciprocity or recognition by the participants. It is worth mentioning that feminist accounts have criticised phallocentric and patriarchal assumptions of breastfeeding, such as: 1) the socio-political and cultural implications of assuming breastfeeding is a unique and essential aspect of female sexuality;[71] 2) the sexualisation and objectification of women's bodies, particularly breasts;[72] 3) the psychosocial implications of breastfeeding to the relationship between infant and mother, and the taboos regarding breastmilk;[73] and 4) the medicalisation of breastfeeding, and its impact on infant feeding.[74]

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[69] Natalie Loveless' exhibition "New Maternalisms" reunited female artists whose practices bring attention to the "status of motherhood in contemporary art". Some of the artists exhibiting dealt with breastfeeding and breast milk, for example Jill Miller and her artwork *Milk Truck*, which was a performative strategy to support mothers breastfeeding in public. Masha Godovayana takes on a more private approach with *Hunger*, a thirty-minute video that shows her breastfeeding and her daily life as a working artist-mother. Lovissa Johansson also alludes to breastfeeding and the extenuating labour this represents with her three-hour performance *The Milky Way*. Natalie Loveless, "New Maternalisms Curated by Natalie Loveless" (FADO Performance Art Centre, 2014), http://performanceart.ca/upload/NM_booklet_v4.pdf.

[70] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 45.

[71] Alison Bartlett, *Breastwork: Rethinking Breastfeeding* (Australia: UNSW Press, 2005).

[72] Young, *On Female Body Experience*, 76–96.

[73] Melissa Fabrizio, "Simply The Breast: Disassembling Feminine Fluid Taboos" (Academia.edu, N/A), http://www.academia.edu/3647265/Simply_The_Breast_Disassembling_Feminine_Fluid_Taboos ; Tierney Oberhammer, "Milky Bodies, Off-White Menace: Identity, Milk and Abject Femininity in

Breastfeeding is assumed, in terms of phallogocentric logic, as a natural, effortless and intuitive act of women—and their bodies—to produce milk and feed their children, following the idea of women performing roles as food producers and nourishers, and which is enforced by medical discourses. In these discourses, breastfeeding is argued as a motherly source of food which provides the necessary nutrients and antibodies to nourish and fortify the immune system of newborns and infants.[75] Most importantly, it is viewed positively as it creates a social and emotional bond between mother and child.[76] The issue with these statements, however, is that they place the mother and her body as an entity that assumes the task of feeding newborns and infants as a biological process that is taken for granted. In Lisa Walsh's words, it positions women "as individuals [that] become crushed under the weight of the stereotype of the mother as all-giving, all-suffering, all-accepting martyr" arguments which feminists constantly debate.[77]

The Lady Cheese Shop focuses our attention on mothers and their bodies as active participants in the making of human breast milk cheese. The direct intervention of women helps question if breastfeeding is a unilateral relationship, or if in fact breast milk opens the possibility of offering hospitality to others.[78] The maternal body acts here as space and matter that gives place to *inter-corporeal* ethical relationships. I borrow the term from Rosalyn Diprose's analysis of the notion of *corporeal generosity*, which, as she proposes, advocates

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Recent US Media" (Master, Bowling Green State University, 2010); Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*, 133–59.

[74] Carter, *Feminism, Breasts and Breast Feeding*.

[75] The argument of the "good mother" posits breastfeeding, according to Carter, as something natural and necessary because it reinforces the bond between mother and child. Bartlett explores the medical discourses about breastfeeding and argues that within them prevails a dissociation of the mind and the body, following Cartesian logic. Ibid., 30, 63, 66–69; Bartlett, *Breastwork: Rethinking Breastfeeding*, 41–64.

[76] Vaughan and Scholz note, however, that there is no need to have an embodied relationship between parents and child, such as in the case of adoptive parents, in order to have an emotional bond. Sarah-Vaughan Brakman and Sally J. Scholz, "Adoption, ART, and a Re-Conception of the Maternal Body: Toward Embodied Maternity", *Hypatia* 21, no. 1 (2006): 54–73.

[77] Lisa Walsh, "Between Maternity and Paternity: Figuring Ethical Subjectivity", *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 108.

[78] Myra J. Hird, "The Corporeal Generosity of Maternity", *Body & Society* 13, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 6–7; Genevieve Vaughan, "Othering, Co-Munication, and the Gifts of Language", in *The Enigma of Gift and Sacrifice*, ed. E. Wyschogrod, J. J. Goux, and E. Boynton (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 92.

"ways to foster social relations that *generate* rather than close off sexual, cultural, and stylistic differences".[79] Note, however, that similar to Aristarkhova, Diprose also puts forward the idea of generation, which in the case of breast milk, I suggest, refers to the welcome of others through matter and space. Diprose's notion of *inter-corporeal generosity* opens a way to consider eating the other as a gesture of corporeal hospitality and generosity which is no longer restricted to the feeding of newborns and infants.[80] Breastfeeding, in this sense, dislocates mothers from the assumption that posits them as selfless and sacrificial providers of corporeal substances to satisfy the needs of the growing infant.

Within the literature, breast milk is addressed as the "most natural food in the world" or as "white gold", a term which reflects, to some extent, the amount of energy and labour that feeding another human requires.[81] Producing breast milk is a process influenced by a continual relationship between the inside and outside of the maternal body: hormonal levels before and after childbirth trigger its production, although the amount of milk increases or decreases in relationship to its consumption.[82] Moreover, as Simun and the medical literature mention, the production of breast milk can be stimulated in both females and males: men are not excluded from the possibility of *lactating*,[83] although male lactation is considered by medical discourse as an abnormal and underdeveloped corporeal capacity caused by an imbalance of bodily functions and hormonal levels. [84] It is worth noting that Simun chose not to induce lactation, and opted to purchase breast milk and/or ask for donations via the internet.

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[79] Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*, 15. [my emphasis].
[80] Ibid., 95.
[81] The term "white gold" is usually employed by breastfeeding advocates. Simun, "Human Cheese."
[82] In other words, the stimulation of the nipples induced by the suckling infant produces a continuous production of milk, aided by the hormone oxytocin.
[83] I use the term lactating instead of breastfeeding to refer to the body's biochemical process of producing milk, following Bartlett's argument about the social differences of breastfeeding and lactating, in which the latter engenders language and values of science and medicine. Bartlett, *Breastwork*, 2.
[84] Bartlett explains that the production of breast milk is considered as "a register for sexual difference between men and women"; however, thinking that men have the capacity to lactate and produce milk, as medical literature signals, dislocates the possibility of considering breastfeeding or the production of breast milk as sexual difference. Male lactation is also triggered by stimulating the human chorionic gonadotropin hormone (hCG), as well as by the stimulation of nipples. Nonetheless, this has secondary effects that disrupt a male's hormonal

The cheese-making process was documented, or rather exemplified, in a video that was screened while the pop-up shop was open; the film also included the mother-donor giving her opinion about breastfeeding and the Human Cheese project. She also mentions the reasons that led her to participate, including curiosity, overproduction of milk, and an altruistic desire to volunteer.



68. Miriam Simun. *The Lady Cheese Shop*, 2011
Making human cheese

The decision of the woman donor shows that the giving away of surplus milk is a gift to others, including mothers unable to breastfeed and newborns in need of milk, or in this case as a gift bestowed to Simun. Put another way, this shows how motherhood, as Judith Still proposes, is a "choice to *share* with an other".[85] Giving away the surplus milk to a breast milk bank might not be suitable, as the woman donor explained, because these institutions establish a series of restrictions and regulations that potential donors need to follow if they want their milk to be received, stored, and distributed.[86] These guidelines follow a

balance and can cause feminine sexual characteristics like the enlargement of breasts. Bartlett also notes that men produce milk induced by dietary exposure to phyto-oestrogens. Simun argues that masculine lactation is possible, according to the available research that explores cases of stay-at-home fathers who have successfully breastfed their infants. Simun, "Human Cheese", 138; Bartlett, *Breastwork*, 44–49.

[85] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 128.

[86] The guidelines help to identify if the milk is suitable, and include documented and reported medication use, chronic diseases, travel restrictions, presence of transmittable disease in household, herbal use, positive blood tests (which are reported to the donor and a health care

discourse of power that subsume women's bodies to policies which do not give them full sovereignty over their own bodies, for example by limiting what they can eat. In this sense, the donation of breast milk, I suggest, is a choice which "empowers mothers", following Van Esterik and Glenda Wall, one which can also be considered as a gift to others.[87] It gives women the opportunity to control what to do with the surplus milk, to a certain extent.

The donated milk highlights the maternal as an active act rather than a "passive condition", emphasising that motherhood is—following Irigaray—a state of life in which the female subject has agency over her own body.[88] The decision to bestow corporeal fluids to unknown others is a more generous and hospitable approach of gift-giving matter and space for the other.

Breast milk cheese dislocates the maternal body from the idea of maternal hospitality as the natural bearing of an-other inside the self, or from the idealistic view of the mother as giver and feeder. The donor mother who participated in *The Lady Cheese Shop* gave her corporeal fluids to Simun, but was not forced to do so. Neither Simun nor the public who attended the installation were going to starve if they did not consume the milk (cheese). The donor was not following a "maternal" gesture of feeding the other but performing an act of corporeal maternal hospitality. The surplus milk is no longer useful for her child because his/her requirements are covered. However, giving away the excess benefits her bodily function—a point to which I will return in the following sections—but also benefited as she acted in accordance with an inherent desire to volunteer. In other words, by positioning herself within a logic of gift-giving of maternal fluids, she performed an ethical response to the other.

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provider), and positive bacterial counts after pasteurisation. J. Kim and S. Unger, "Human Milk Banking", *Paediatrics & Child Health* 15, no. 9 (2010): 595–98.

[87] Glenda Wall, "Moral Constructions of Motherhood in Breastfeeding Discourse", *Gender & Society* 15, no. 4 (August 1, 2001): 593.

[88] Still, *Derrida and Hospitality*, 127.

The mouth of the public: Human cheese tasting and hospitality

Simun's artwork addresses maternal hospitality, but it does so by seducing the audience through hospitality practices that are embedded in relationships of exchange. *The Lady Cheese Shop* emphasises the differences between corporeal hospitality and of hospitality that is embedded in a logic of economic exchange; it also highlights the phallocentric assumptions of the role of women in hospitality narratives, as well as in motherhood. In both cases, however, subjects are subsumed to a logic in which they serve and/or feed an(other).

The Lady Cheese Shop mimicked food practices in the hospitality industry, particularly in fine dining. The corporeal fluids that were transformed into cheeses by Simun were served during tasting sessions, a decision that represented a more accessible and "hospitable" approach—rather than offering them white *fluid*, culturally linked to notions of disgust and abjection—which facilitated offering breast milk cheese to the public.

To some extent, the transformation of maternal fluids into solid food aimed to prevent the public's first impression of breast milk being one of disgust and aversion, bearing in mind that the "feminine-maternal" is, as Rosemary Betterton emphasises, "a primary source of abjection in contemporary culture".[89] Thus, in Simun's work, the discomforting fluidity of the maternal body was contained in a more manageable product, appearing palatable and appetising, but most importantly as a food that is socially and culturally accepted: as cheese. This transformation entailed a re-evaluation of the fluidity of the body, of the "mechanics of [maternal] fluids"—following Betterton and Irigaray—that constantly linger between the inside and outside, and which become the source of cultural abjection.[90]

At first sight, the cheeses looked like any other non-human-milk cheese, white and soft in texture, similar to fresh cheeses like ricotta. Offering canapés to the

[89] Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*, 133.

public was an expected gesture of hospitality, as it is common during exhibition openings. The reference to the maternal body was initially hidden from the avid eaters waiting to take a mouthful of cheese during the installation. In other words, cheese constituted a provisory veiling of the unexpected consumption of human maternal fluids. Simun emphasised this edible *trompe l'oeil* by portraying herself as cheesemonger and hostess/server/waitress, as shown in the photograph below.



69. Miriam Simun. *The Lady Cheese Shop*, 2011
The artist serving cheese made from breastmilk of three different women.

Simun appears dressed with a short-sleeved, black chef's jacket and holding an assortment of cheeses. This mimicking of a woman working in the hospitality industry emphasised the expected role of women in hospitality narratives, where they are seen only as the medium rather than active participants in hospitality, as I discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, this highlights issues related to labour and gender politics in the hospitality industry: women are depicted, again, as servers for others; but at the same time, obliterated so that food becomes the central focus of the action and even if the bodies of women produced the milk which made it possible to serve these cheeses to the

[90] Irigaray and Burke, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 203; Betterton, *An Intimate Distance*, 159; Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

public/guests. The figure of the woman is doubly negated. First because the waitress functions as an accessory of the action, only serving others. Second, because the materiality of women's bodies are disguised and covered up. This is to say that although the milk is first transformed into a culturally accepted food (cheese), its provenance is hidden from the public who recognises it is human milk until after reading the labels stating their names and a brief description that included the ingredients, but particularly emphasising that the milks were from human and non-human species.

In this sense, it is worth noting that the cheeses were named in relationship to their provenance and organoleptic characteristics. They were, thereafter, carefully paired with ingredients selected by chef Sarah Hymanson to emphasise and highlight the influence of the dietary habits of the milk donors in the taste of the cheeses. The aim was to feature the *terroir*[91] of the cheeses, as sommeliers and chefs in fine dining venues do. Writer Bonnie Hulkower attended one of the cheese-tasting sessions and described the three varieties according to their characteristics. She mentioned "Sweet Airy Equity" as a cheese with a similar texture to ricotta made from the milk of a mother with a preference for sweets; she inferred that the chef opted to pair it with an orange spice cake in order to intensify the taste and diet of the donor's milk. "City Funk" was labelled as a blue cheese, although the name probably referred to the diet of the donor: a consumer of beef and high amounts of alcohol.[92] Finally, Hulkower mentioned the labelling of the "Wisconsin Bang" as a "mozzarella-style" cheese "made from 'two wonderful milks' a goat and a woman from Wisconsin who eats a mostly

[91] *Terroir* is defined as the "complete natural environment in which a particular wine is produced, including factors such as the soil, topography, and climate". Although, the terroir and the AOC (*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*) are not exclusive to wines, but are also applied to cheeses, agave (tequila and mezcal), maple syrup, among other things. Oxford Dictionaries, "Terroir," *Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford University Press), accessed February 21, 2016, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/terroir; Institut National de LÓrigine et de la Qualité, "Terroir et Apellation D'origine", *Institut National de L'Origine et de La Qualité*, February 21, 2016, http://www.inao.gouv.fr/Les-formations-de-l-institut-national-de-l-origine-et-de-la-qualite-INAO/Terroir-et-appellation-d-origine.

[92] I suggest here that the cheese to which she refers matches some of the statements made by the mother donor shown in the video, who describes her diet in a similar fashion and also emphasises her preference for consuming gorgonzola, a blue cheese. *Miriam Simun Presents at the 2013 Creative Capital Artist Retreat*.

organic diet."[93] These labels reinforced and simulated cheese-tasting practices and/or those performed in cheese shops. They had a vital function in giving visitors the information they needed to uncover these maternal cheeses from their initial veiling. Most importantly, though, the descriptions re-in-corporated the maternal body and human breast milk as the central focus of the exhibition, whilst provoking mixed reactions linked to the taboos related to the maternal and female body. Like Hulkower, art critic Nicole Caruth describes the moment when they discovered that the cheeses contained breast milk, highlighting the flavours, textures, and emotions triggered by such a foodstuff:

> It was only while reading the description of "Wisconsin Bang," [...] did it dawn on me that the "organic diet" being described was that of an actual female human and not the artist anthropomorphizing the goat. I gulped when I realized what I was actually eating. For a moment, I felt a bit queasy. I had not tasted breast milk since I was three. I must have liked it then. As I took another bite of cheese, I thought about the flavor. It was creamy, perhaps a bit more watery than other mozzarella, but if no one had mentioned it, I would not have noticed a difference.[94]

Caruth's reaction was somewhat different, showing a higher degree of disgust in comparison to Hulkower:

> "Midtown Smoke," the only cheese that was left when I arrived, was described as being "made from the milk of a young Chinese mother living in midtown Manhattan, and a goat hailing from Northern Vermont..." As soon as the curd touched my tongue and its smoky sweet flavor hit my taste buds, I nearly puked.[95]

Allowing the public to taste and eat these cheeses before revealing that it included one of the "most natural foods in the world" was an effective strategy to question the normalcy embedded in culturally accepted food practices. The mouth of the public was convinced by a visual *trompe l'oeil* to open up and take in, following Simms, the "body of a (m)other [who] gives [her]self", although in

[93] Bonnie Hulkower, "Would You Eat Human Cheese? Artist Serves Breast Milk Cheese In East Village Gallery," *Tree Hugger*, January 5, 2011, http://www.treehugger.com/green-food/would-you-eat-human-cheese-artist-serves-breast-milk-cheese-in-east-village-gallery.html.
[94] Ibid.
[95] It is worth noting that Caruth mentions a type of cheese completely different from those tasted by Hulkower, but she still refers to the donor living in Midtown, New York. Nicole J. Caruth, "Out of the Mouths of Babes," Art 21 Magazine, *Gastro-Vision*, (May 13, 2011), http://blog.art21.org/2011/05/13/gastro-vision-out-of-the-mouths-of-babes/#.VovGFfFAc7B.

this case no longer as a liquid medium but coagulated alongside the milk of (an)other mother, a non-human female.[96]

Simun intended to trigger abjection and disgust in the public as these notions help to raise awareness of the commodification of non-humans and their milk, and to question the ethics behind contemporary food practices and trends, where sustainability is often the main issue. For example, Simun explained in an interview with Caruth that human cheese served to question the consumption of local products, and to emphasise that human cheese and breast milk could push the notion of *eating well* further down the food chain:

> If you're really going to try to eat organic, natural and local, [...] there is nothing more local or natural than human cheese. New York has 8 million people and not one cow, so the mammals in your midst are human.[97]

Her statement, however, raised numerous criticisms, including the possible consequences of thinking of breast milk as a product that if it is massively consumed, could lead to the commodification of those who produce it. This would further objectify women's bodies and insert them into a logic of economic exchange, similar to what non-humans experience. I suggest that to think of breast milk within this logic, it would be necessary to assume that it is no longer considered an abject food, and that its consumption by adults is socially accepted and no longer a taboo.

Breast milk: Between the borders of hospitality and hostipitality

The maternal body and its fluids are ambivalent in terms of acceptance and rejection. On the one hand, breast milk is considered a pure and natural food, and its consumption is endorsed by medical discourses and advocates of breastfeeding.[98] On the other hand, even if feminists, food scholars, and ecofeminists acknowledge the benefits for mothers and newborns in terms of nutrition and its positive psychological and social impact, they also address the

[96] Eva-Maria Simms, "Milk and Flesh: A Phenomenological Reflection on Infancy and Coexistence", *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 32, no. 1 (March 1, 2001): 30.
[97] Caruth, "Out of the Mouths of Babes"; Simun, "Human Cheese".

problems experienced by mothers when breastfeeding, and mainly when it is done in public.[99] Women have to deal with the constant scrutiny and judging of the male gaze and the patriarchal logic that only accepts seeing the uncovered sexualised breast. The maternal one, on the contrary, cannot be "flashed" out.[100] Public breastfeeding is regulated differently between countries and cultures, some of which do not accept publicly unless it is performed discreetly.[101] If this logic is disturbed, it gives place to discriminatory practices, social judgements, rejection, and isolation of breastfeeding mothers by subjects who feel uneasy watching the exposed breast, often when the nipple is uncovered.[102]

The video presented during Simun's installation shows one of the donors pumping—or *expressing*—her milk, although unlike how she does it at home, she performs it while standing up.[103] Her chest is partly naked, only covered by a nursing bra, a garment characterised for having detachable cups that uncover the breast when needed, thus allowing the baby to eat. The woman "undresses" to express her milk while the viewer hears her voice describing the experience of breastfeeding as an "accomplishment". She further explains this is the direct result of her corporeality in producing milk to feed her child, which results in healthy growth.[104] Her statements might not be as shocking to the public as her image showing the simultaneous pumping of exposed breasts and the close resemblance to farming, specifically the milk industry. The zoom-in shots in the video bring the viewer close to the nipple, which is being pumped by a machine designed specifically to mimic the suckling of an infant. The milk slowly leaks into a container and is transformed into cheese in the following sequence.

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[98] Stearns, "Breastfeeding and the Good Maternal Body", 309.
[99] Greta Gaard, "Toward a Feminist Postcolonial Milk Studies", *American Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (2013): 595–618; Carter, *Feminism, Breasts and Breast Feeding*; Bartlett, *Breastwork*.
[100] The term "flashing breasts" refers to an inappropriate gesture of breastfeeding; this is when nudity and sexuality are on display. Bartlett, *Breastwork*, 33, 317.
[101] It is worth noting that Simun's artwork took place in New York and perhaps other cities/countries would have been less willing to host such an event.
[102] Mark Tran, "Claridge's Hotel Criticised after Telling Breastfeeding Woman to Cover up", *The Guardian*, December 2, 2014, Online edition, sec. Lyfestyle, https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/dec/02/claridges-hotel-breastfeeding-woman-cover-up.
[103] The term expressing milk refers "to milk that has been pressed, squeezed, or sucked out from a woman", this can be done by hand or by machine. Jill Lepore, "Baby Food", *The New Yorker*, January 19, 2009, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/01/19/baby-food.

The scene is awkward to some extent. Simun chose to turn the intimate and domestic act of pumping milk into a scene that evokes a minimalistic but rather medicalised environment with a high degree of hygiene and cleanliness. The only three things in the scene are a metallic table, a hospital-grade milk pump, and the woman/donor. The sequence cuts after the milk is pumped and Simun then appears, presenting the steps in the transformation of milk into cheese. The sequence showing this process, however, evokes two different spaces: a domestic kitchen and a scientific laboratory. The latter is emphasised by Simun's dress code and how she performs; she wears casual clothes and a kitchen apron, but she uses lab equipment such as flasks, test tubes, rubber gloves, and goggles for "cooking" utensils. Furthermore, Simun's body language displays a scientific attitude, conveying, to some degree, an empirical approach in showing the viewers each step at a time.

In this video, the maternal breast is not covered by a t-shirt or blanket, nor is the woman forced to go to a separate room to express her milk. The breast is shown in its entirety, allowing the viewer to observe where milk comes from. Simun presents an image that defies patriarchal logic by uncovering the breast but also by signalling that breasts are not sexualised organs. The public is forced to focus their attention on the oft-dismissed experience of expressing milk, a practice which plays a key role in the embodied experience of breastfeeding, all while eating one of the cheese *amuse-bouches*.

The Lady Cheese Shop made evident the taboo embedded in public breastfeeding and the consumption of breast milk by adults. At the same time, it addresses to cultural boundaries of the edible. Simun, for example, triggers disgust by showing a lactating woman expressing her milk, not only because it shows breasts distanced from the assumptions of them as sexual organs, but also because this practice uses the technologies used for "milking" non-human females. By doing this, the artist intended to create awareness of the implications of "eating well", highlighting that even locally sourced foods are not immune to ethical debate.

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[104] *Miriam Simun Presents at the 2013 Creative Capital Artist Retreat*.

The attention of the public was directed to the consumption, objectification, and commodification of human and non-human bodies and their corporeal fluids. Breast milk and human cheese are located within the carno-phallogocentric logic. Similarly to non-human females, the maternal-human-lactating body can be subjected to industrialised production and mass consumption that de-humanises and further objectifies women's bodies; however, for this to happen, it would be necessary to overcome the reasoning that posits the "lactating breast [and] breast milk [...] as disgusting".[105]

The discomfort comes from the ambivalence of milk: on the one hand, it is a corporeal fluid considered abject because it reminds us of the corporeal proximity to the (m)other, as with other female fluids such as menstrual blood, even if through this fluid, the mother introduced us to our first relationship of commensality. On the other hand, milk makes us realise our bond and relationship to other animals. Producing milk and breastfeeding are characteristics shared with non-humans, specifically with female mammals. Tuvel and Oliver mention that women often describe their experience during breastfeeding and/or expressing milk as uncanny, referring to how they sometimes feel like cows.[106] The comparison to non-humans should not be undermined as it emphasises the closeness of breastfeeding to milk farming, causes of discomfort for those who attended Simun's cheese tasting. This "cow-like" feeling leads to assuming women who lactate are another provider of "feminized protein". This term, borrowed from Carol J. Adams, refers to the "exploitation of the reproductive processes of female animals"[107], in this case, milk from cows, although it also applies to eggs and meat from female chickens and hens. As a result, women are subjects subsumed to the same logic that

[105] Tuvel, "Exposing the Breast: The Animal and the Abject in American Attitudes Toward Breastfeeding", in *Coming to Life Philosophies of Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Mothering*, eds. Sarah LaChance Adams and Caroline R Lundquist (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 269.
[106] Ibid. Kelly Oliver also notes that milk threatens "autonomy and rationality insofar as it recalls our animality" but also because it is a matter produced inside the body and expelled "under the care of the mother". Kelly Oliver, "Nourishing the Speaking Subject: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Abominable Food and Women," in *Cooking, Eating, Thinking: Transformative Philosophies of Food*, ed. Deane W. Curtin and Lisa M. Heldke, Midland Books (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1992), 28.
[107] Carol J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (New York: Continuum, 1990), 21.

intends to legitimate the exploitation, objectification, and commodification of non-human females and their bodies to satiate our hunger for their maternal milk and/or their flesh. Although it is worth noting that non-human milk is more accepted for human consumption; drinking or eating cow's milk is not considered as disgusting as consuming human breast milk. This suggests that, indeed, the milk from our species is the one which causes us disgust, especially if we consume milk that is not produced by our own mothers.[108]

The human cheese served during Simun's performance and the cow-like feeling referred to by breastfeeding women further explain the doubts and uncertainty regarding the production and commodification of breast milk which sparked thoughts among the public, as they envisioned the possibility of "farming" lactating women for the benefit of the carno-phallogocentric subject. Similar to other female animals, women are susceptible—once again—to being "oppressed by their femaleness [and subjected to becoming] surrogate wetnurses" because their milk supply is seen as an adventurous and innovative "sustainable" food trend.[109] Breast milk pumps are designed and constantly developed to help mothers to gather milk so they can store it and use it whenever they need, especially when they return to work, despite the fact that they resemble the milking machines used in cows. This option gives them the possibility to continue feeding their children with their own milk, rather than using formulas. Milk pumps have a direct impact on the induction and production of milk considering that this is related to its consumption. At the same time, the pumps can help to prevent some of the negative effects of *engorgement*[110] and

[108] Food critic Robert Sietsema referred to Simun's *Human Cheese* project, stating the reasons why he considered human cheese disgusting. Robert Sietsema, "Five Reasons Why Manufacturing Human Breast Milk Cheese Is Disgusting," *Village Voice*, February 27, 2011, http://www.villagevoice.com/restaurants/five-reasons-why-manufacturing-human-breast-milk-cheese-is-disgusting-6516530.

[109] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 21; Gould, "Miriam Simun On Human Cheese, Biotechnology, & Sustainable Food". Simun mentioned that in several interviews, she was often asked if she had considered making a business from human cheese, to which she responded it could be a possibility. However, I suggest that rather than thinking of performing in such manner, Simun's answer to this question and her practice aim to refocus the attention towards questioning what constitutes sustainable food, and how the human body is located within this discourse, beyond being merely an entity that ingests and consumes another.

[110] The term to refer to the "coming of milk" and when breasts feel full, firm, and tender. Barbara Wilson-Clay, "Relieving and Treating Engorged Breasts", *Medela Breastfeedingus*, accessed February 22, 2016, http://www.medelabreastfeedingus.com/tips-and-solutions/47/relieving-and-treating-engorged-breasts.

overproduction of milk, such as painful nipples, difficulties in having the baby latch onto the breast, inflammation of breasts, fever, and infections.[111] The role played by these machines suggests that corporeal maternal hospitality lingers between hospitality and hostility, but also between artisanal and industrial practices of milking. Breast milk is space and matter for the other that benefits from it, and at the same can be the cause of pain, discomfort, and infection to the producer of it, the mother.

Overall, *The Lady Cheese Shop* is an artistic practice that shows how corporeal hospitality can be performed as a collaborative venture between individuals, in this case between the public, the artist, and the mothers who gave their milk. It is a relationship, however, that cannot be merely viewed as an exchange or gifting of food: it becomes more complex by the time the bodies of human and non-humans come into play. The production of these hybrid human and non-human milk cheeses encompasses another level of hospitality, one which further emphasises the (maternal) body and its fluids as space and matter for others that are not only infants or individuals who partake in Simun's performance. In this sense, in the following section I discuss how the food we are able to eat is first transformed by the microbial other, in particular, maternal fluids. My aim is to highlight the importance of acknowledging the fact that food products—and the food system—are a result of the *cohabitation between species*.[112]

[111] Lepore, "Baby Food."
[112] Simun, "Human Cheese," 135.

4.2 Incubation: Hospitality as eating an(other) culture.

The production of dairy products such as cheese and yogurt is often taken for granted. However, the notions of hospitality and *eating well*, I argue, help to refocus the attention to the multiple relationships between organisms taking place within the food system. Cheese or yogurt are not merely products which come from a pot or in vacuum-sealed packages, their production requires the input of a living organism which is not necessarily human. Therefore, in this section I focus on Jennifer Rubell's installation *Incubation* (2011) to discuss how most of the food we are able to eat is first transformed by the microbial other—in particular, maternal fluids. This artwork gives special attention to the fermentation of milk as a process that requires the input, collaboration and between species and technologies to produce yogurt. I argue that in this case cow's milk (non-human milk) become space and matter that hosts and nurtures an(other): microorganisms that feed upon these fluids.

For this I analyse the creative act of producing yogurt following Aristarkhova's ideas about the maternal in relationship to hospitality and the notions of *genetrix* and *nutrix*. In this sense, the notion of incubation becomes the central focus of this section considering that it entails both the generation and nursing of the other by addressing the maternal, specifically milk. I explore, moreover, the use and naming of ectogenetic practices in Rubell's installation with particular focus on the subjects and machines that take part in the process. This follows Aristarkhova's discussion of ectogenetic practices and ARTs *(assisted reproductive technology)* which disconnect the (maternal) body from gestation; however, Rubell presents them in her installation with the opposite intention, in this case to reinsert and address the maternal and feminine body in its capacity of generating and hosting (an)other.

Rubell's artistic practice—as well as that of Simun—convey the creation and sustenance of life through hospitable space and matter in which generation takes place as a symbiotic collaboration between species: human, non-human, and microbial. Hospitality, I suggest, helps the unveiling of these relationships and the interaction between host and guests. Human breast milk (in Simun's

performance) and cow's milk (in Rubell's installation) are therefore posited as maternal fluids that enable a continual giving of hospitality through a relationship of commensality that is no longer constrained to take place between humans and the animal other, but one which also includes bacterial and fungal organisms that transform—or in this case, ferment—female maternal fluids (milk) into cheese or yogurt. Lastly, this section aims to show how the same narratives of disembodied nursing or ARTs intersect with our food system, whether endorsing hospitality in the sense that they facilitate the growth and development of beneficial microorganisms, or convey idea af hostility in regards to noxious microorganisms or pathogens.

The Breakfast Project

For the last thirteen years, Jennifer Rubell has presented the *Breakfast Project*, a series of free participatory meals hosted in the Rubell Family Collection which run parallel to the inaugural events of the Art Basel Miami Beach Fair. In 2011, Rubell presented *Incubation*, a performance that was presented/served during breakfast hours, as the name of the series suggests, specifically between nine in the morning and noon. The artwork was thought of as an exploration of the creative act in terms of food, life, and art, and as Rubell explained, was a "process of waiting and receiving" compared to the "feminine side of creation" of pregnancy.[113] Rubell constructed a temporary room with drywalls painted white inside and outside, as if somehow the artist wanted to persuade the public to think of it as another white cube space. On its own, this architectural device can be read as the artist's gesture to recognise her work as art, especially because it was presented during Art Basel and inside the installations of her family's art collection.[114] Nevertheless, Rubell's use of the white cube strategy, I suggest, addresses the expectancy and reception as a white room that safeguards its contents, hosting the art-*work* which will be shown to the public. Rubell's choice

[113] Claire Breukel, "Jennifer Rubell Talks Art, Food and Social Occasion", *Hyperallergic. Sensitive to Art & Its Discontents*, November 24, 2011, http://hyperallergic.com/41355/jennifer-rubell-talks-art-food-social-occasion/; Jennifer Rubell, "Jennifer Rubell", *Jennifer Rubell*, 2011, http://jenniferrubell.com/index.php?sec=projects&details=48.

[114] In the words of Elena Filipovic, the "art world's white cube circumscribes an attitude toward art, a mode of presentation, and an aura that confers a halo of inevitability, of fate, on whatever

of white can be appraised in two ways: firstly it alludes to the art world's white cube; secondly, the psychology of this colour, the multiple meanings, uses, and allusions refer to the link between creation, hospitality, and the maternal, in light of medical technologies and practices. The white cube, although smaller in size, appears as a nursing hospital ward. Through a large rectangular window, the public was able to see the interior of this room functioning as an incubation chamber, similar to those on nursing wards; however, this one was designed to incubate bacterial cultures rather than hosting and nursing newborn babies.



70. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Incubation chamber

One of the first things the public could see near the window were yogurt makers aligned on top of a table, which contained transparent jars filled with milk inoculated with bacterial cultures in the process of transforming into yogurt. These yogurt makers, it is worth noting, are specifically sold for making homemade yogurt and facilitate the creation of a stable environment for growing live active lactic cultures.[115] This process requires a stable temperature during a determined period (between six and eight hours) so that the reproduction of microbial cultures in the milk can take place. The yogurt makers

is displayed inside it. Elena Filipovic, "The Global White Cube", *OnCurating.org*, no. 22: Politics of Display (April 2014): 45.

in the incubation chamber were shown performing the active fermentation of milk into yogurt. Behind the table top and the yogurt makers were two large industrial refrigerators, each of them containing transparent jars with the freshly made yogurt and covered with lids. These yogurt pots were ready to be handed to the public for consumption by one of the two female nurses who took care of their fermentation; the nurses constantly transferred the pots from the yogurt makers to the refrigerators where the yogurts were preserved under controlled temperatures to prevent decay and spoilage.



71. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Nurse inside the incubation chamber

The artwork, furthermore, facilitated a dynamic in which visitors could partake in a communal meal by preparing their own breakfast: yogurt with honey. For that, they had to approach the incubation chamber, then *wait* for one of the two women-nurses to "deliver" them a yogurt pot through the slot located beneath the window, *receiving* the product as if from a vending machine. Participants were then free to open the pot and eat the yogurt, or if they wished, they could sweeten it with honey. This last part of the breakfast preparation resulted in a more *hands-on* approach as the honey was not included. Instead, the honey flowed continuously from the ceiling, falling directly over a white Plexiglas pedestal. As bees to honey, some participants were attracted—or perhaps

[115] Common packages of yogurt cultures contain live lactic cultures of *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, *Streptococcus thermophilus*, and *Lactobacillus acidophilus.* Sandor Ellix Katz, *Wild Fermentation: The Flavor, Nutrition, and Craft of Live-Culture Foods* (USA: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008), 75.

directed by staff members—to stop at the white pedestal to collect the honey from the Plexiglas surface using a spoon, or if preferred they could try to catch the honey directly in their yogurt pot. This messy task resulted in getting hands and wrists covered with the sticky and sweet liquid, and even if the honey was intended to flow directly onto the pedestal, it was at times disrupted by the wind. In this sense, it is possible to say that the creation of life, food, and art began inside the white cube; the artist used the participation of *others* for her performance, including bacterial cultures and humans who enjoyed eating them.



72. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Receiving the yogurt pot



73. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Pedestal with honey dripping

Who nurses the other?

Rubell's performance leads us to question who or what assumes the responsibility of caring for the growing other and how or why the mother is often related to this task. To answer these questions, it is necessary to consider Aristarkhova's arguments about maternal/matrixial hospitality in terms of *generation*, without merely assuming the mother as container or receptacle for the other. Aristarkhova, instead, highlights the need to reconsider what "the mother makes and does" as a means to envision generation and nursing as constitutive elements of the *matrix*, both of which allow the hospitable gesture to take place.[116] Aristarkhova further argues that the matrix can take the role as 1) *genetrix*, which is the capacity of generation; or 2) *nutrix*, which refers to the capacity for nursing, although she notes that nutrix also involves the notion of generation.[117]

The performances of Simun and Rubell, *vis-à-vis* Aristarkhova's propositions, emphasise the notions of generation and nursing by making both of them the driving force which gives sense to the maternal (human and non-human) bodies as entities that create space and matter for the other. Generation and nursing are notions that aid the understanding of how lacto-maternal fluids are related to giving hospitality; at the same time, they become dislocated from the original trace of the matrixial/maternal which usually confines nutrix/nursing to the relationship between mother and child. Both performances are creative acts, but they frame the body within an ecological and cohabitational notion of hospitality, considering that the lacto-maternal fluids are a hosting medium for microbial agents that will ultimately transform milk into yogurt.

Incubation alludes to maternal hospitality as a creative act that makes evident the notions of generation and nursing, and both characteristics run in parallel in matrixial/maternal hospitality, as Aristarkhova explains. This becomes evident by the time Rubell decides to stage nursing practices that engender two different approaches, neither of which require the presence and active participation of

[116] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 27, 170.
[117] Ibid., 27 [italics in the original].

the artist. Firstly, Rubell opted to present nursing as a medical practice performed by a subject working in the healthcare industry—the *nurse*—and whose role is often framed in close relationship to the maternal or defined with maternal characteristics. The second approach to nursing responds to an "ectogenetic desire" which, as Aristarkhova mentions, refers to the creation and support of life outside the (maternal) body by using artificial means such as machines, or "another [human or non-human] bodily environment", for example, milk.[118]

Rubell's performance emphasises nursing as a notion that embraces both approaches, highlighting that the nursing subject and the nursing machine do not oppose each other but instead complement each other.[119] Moreover, the white room that served as an incubation chamber alluded to nursing as a medical practice as it resembled a nursing ward or Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). It was a closed space that suggested a medical environment, emphasised by the monochromatic predominance of the colour white for the walls, the table top, the machines, the milk and yogurt, and the garment used by the nurses that, by coincidence, matched the dress code used by workers in the healthcare industry: white tunics. Additionally, the use of transparency, for example in the window glass, the lid covers, and the refrigerator doors, suggested cleanliness and hospital-standard hygiene as well as pasteurisation. Ironically, even if the incubation chamber was portrayed as a sterile area, the actions that were performed inside it contrasted radically, as I will discuss in the subsequent paragraphs.

[118] Ibid., 88–89.
[119] Ibid., 119.



74. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Inside the incubation chamber

In *Incubation*, nursing is suggested as labour performed by women, although it is a profession performed equally by men, and which intends to take care of newborns but also patients and other vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, in this installation, nursing is not targeted directly to any of these groups, not even to a human. What is clear, however, is that the two nurses inside the incubation chamber were in charge of the following tasks: 1) constantly invigilating 32 incubating machines—or yogurt makers—that fermented milk into yogurt; 2) handling the yogurt pots with extreme care, including filling them with cultured milk, and avoiding any cross-contamination by pathogens; and 3) delivering these newly~~born~~ created yogurt pots to the public.

Women performing as nurses are probably not a coincidence, especially considering that Rubell wanted to portray a "feminine" side of creation; however, this is problematic as it emphasised the *nursing subject(s)* with a specific gender. At the same time, this idea suggests nursing as a maternal characteristic, an assumption that should not be taken for granted. The association of nursing to a specific gender can be traced back to the origins of the word nurse, which derives from the contraction of *nourice* (Old French); from *nutricia*, the feminine of *nutricius*, meaning a person that nourishes (late Latin); and from *nutrix*, *nutric*,

meaning nurse. A nurse is defined closely to the feminine, as the Oxford dictionary shows:

> *1. a*: a woman who suckles an infant not her own: *wet nurse.*
> *b*: a woman who takes care of a young child: *dry nurse.*
> *2*: one that looks after, fosters, or advises.
> *3*: a person who cares for the sick or infirm; *specifically*: a licensed healthcare professional who practises independently or is supervised by a physician, surgeon, or dentist and who is skilled in promoting and maintaining health — compare licensed practical nurse, registered nurse.
> *4: a*: a worker form of a social insect (as an ant or a bee) that cares for the young
> *b*: a female mammal used to suckle the young of another[120]

The above definitions reinforce the sociocultural precepts of a nurse as a female subject, a woman; thus, even if the term conveys a hospitable approach that entails the care of the other, it is still framed within phallocentric and patriarchal logic. Moreover, as Aristarkhova explains, nursing is not only linked to female subjects but also to mothers, considered as subjects with an innate self-sacrificial devotion for the other, specifically for her children and which develops right after childbirth. The mother is expected to fulfil the nursing/nourishing necessities of those who cannot manage by themselves. Marie-Françoise Collière—one of the most important scholars in nursing—also explains that throughout the history of nursing, this profession has been constantly linked to the feminine and close to the maternal, resulting in the mystification of the nurse as a woman because she has the apparent knowledge of taking care of others:

> It's her, the NURSE, character magnified or belittled, sublimated or despised, mythical figure of the eternal feminine, both coveted and banished, which remains—more often than we imagine—as the referent of the healthcare practice with which it has long been assimilated, to the point of legally defining nursing from 1922 to 1978, by the definition of the nurse.[121]

[120] Oxford Dictionaries, "Nurse", *Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, March 2016), http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/nurse.
[121] C'est elle, l'INFIRMIÈRE, personnage magnifié ou rabaissé, sublimé ou mépris, figure mythique de l'Éternel féminin, à la fois convoitée et bannie, qui demeure encore plus souvent qu'on l'imagine le référent de la pratique soignante avec laquelle elle a été longtemps assimilée, au point d'avoir défini juridiquement la profession infirmière, de 1922 à 1978, par la *définition de l'infirmière*. Marie-Françoise Collière, *Soigner… Le Premier Art de La Vie*, 2001st ed. (Paris: Masson, 1996), 92 [my own translation].

Collière argues that the characterisation of women as nurses has sociocultural issues, especially because it is no longer a profession restricted to a specific gender. A nurse can also be a male subject; however, the terminology (at least in English) still emphasises the gender problem. The terms male-nurse and *murse* exemplify the latter, as they are used to signal the gender of the nursing subject as male, but also as a means to dislocate the term from its archetypal link with the feminine.[122]

But what would have happened if Rubell decided to include both male and female nurses in the performance? The problem with depicting only female nurses is that Rubell emphasised and reinforced women in this culturally assigned role. Her intention to depict creation as feminine meant Rubell underlined the idealised assumption of the *nutrix* being women, and at the same time highlighted the relationship between motherhood and nursing which most commonly suggests, as Aristarkhova notes, women as the most capable or suitable subjects for nursing.[123] This final point is reinforced by the presence, use, and consumption of a highly symbolic fluid-food such as milk, although it was fermented. Unsurprisingly, the link between milk and nursing brings to the fore the figure of the *wet nurse*, who is often seen as a mother who gives her breast milk to a subject different from her own child. The image of wet nursing has been used to refer to charity, depicted as a woman who comforts, cares, and nurtures a stranger by generously allowing him/her to suckle from her breast. No suckling was involved in *Incubation* or *The Lady Cheese Shop*; however, in both artistic practices, nursing appears to be bound to the female subject and its ability to perform as a caring and nurturing mother.[124] The notion of wet nursing should not be disregarded from any possible analysis; however, it would be mistaken to assume that the women who provided the milk, or handled it, acted following a maternal impulse which supposed the care and nurturing of an(other).

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[122] The use of the term *murse* has both advocates and opponents. The former argue that the term would be useful to give male nurses a specific term that would signal their "gender and role"; the latter consider the term to be derogatory and do not see the point of using it. Louise Daniels, "Are You a 'murse', a 'male Nurse' or Simply a 'nurse'?", The Nursing Times, *Student Nurse Blog*, (April 18, 2013), http://www.nursingtimes.net/student-nt/are-you-a-murse-a-male-nurse-or-simply-a-nurse/5057606.fullarticle.

[123] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 109.

In *Incubation*, the nurses played a key role even though they did not provide the milk; nursing was not performed in terms of wet nursing. On the contrary, what this installation highlighted was that the term *nutrix*-nursing and the activities linked to this action are not performed, exclusively, by subjects and for subjects. *Incubation* suggests that nursing involves various actions that aim for the continuous generation and care of an entity in order to achieve its growth, development, or recovery. In this case, nurses assisted the process of incubation—or production—of yogurt even though that they did not ferment the milk directly. They were responsible for monitoring the supply of yogurt by 1) systematically pouring milk into new empty pots; 2) placing the pots inside the yogurt incubators to create new batches of yogurt; 3) verifying the temperature of the machines; and 4) giving these newly created, and somewhat *expected*, yogurt pot samples to the members of the public every time they approached the window. I intentionally use *expected* because the term emphasises the function of the white chamber as a nursing or maternity ward, but also because the project was planned as breakfast sessions and therefore inferred that those attending the performance expected to be served food of some kind.

Incubation: Disembodied nursing and artificial wombs

The triad of milk, nurse, and incubation machine emphasised the interplay of different subjects, machines, and non-human corporeal fluids that gave sense to the nursing subject–machine binomial, which would suggest, as Aristarkhova notes, a "juxtaposition of the figure of the nurse to that of mothers, doctors [or medical staff], and machines".[125] At the same time, the triad points towards a notion of disembodied nursing and generation, specifically ectogenesis, to which I will now turn my attention.

Nutrix as the generation and nursing of the other does not end with the actions performed by the nursing subject. Rubell proposes a disembodied approach to nutrix/nursing by relating it to incubation, a term which needs the nursing

[124] Young, *On Female Body Experience*, 88.

subject to care for the other. This can help us, for example, to question the role of the incubator to milk, to yogurt, and to hospitality. How and why are the yogurt makers considered devices able to nurse? Rubell's installation insists on the role played by technology mimicking the maternal, signalling two elements which point towards the notions of disembodied nursing/generation and of hospitality: firstly, the medium that generated or created the yogurt, the milk; and secondly, the nursing machine where the fermentation or incubation—and hosting—of bacterial cultures took place, the yogurt makers. Both medium and machine worked in parallel in nursing and hosting of the other, an action which enabled Rubell to address the "feminine side of creation" without making evident the organ and space often alluded to within that conceptualisation: the maternal womb.

The artist addressed *ectogenesis*[126] as the sum of actions that seek the generation of life outside the maternal body using devices such as *artificial wombs* and *artificial placentas*, but also of ARTs like in vitro fertilisation (IVF). Ectogenesis simulates functions of the human maternal body with a specific goal in mind: to technologically recreate the maternal environment and bodily functions to generate/create life, and to enable the complete and healthy development of this newly created organism without the need for a mother, as in the case of cloning. Ectogenesis supposes, in Aristarkhova's words, the "mother as machine".[127] This technological simulation of the mother is considered one of the most exciting and innovative fields of study within embryology and genetics, but also within food studies and is covered extensively in the literature in these fields.[128] Artificial wombs and placentas, furthermore, have sparked both positive and negative critiques from feminist scholars, especially in relation to the ethics of reproduction and the role of women.

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[125] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 114.
[126] British scientist J. B. S. Haldane coined the term in 1924 to refer to the possibility of pregnancy taking place inside artificial wombs. Christine Rosen, "Why Not Artificial Wombs?", *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society* Fall 2003, no. 3 (2003): 67–77; Irina Aristarkhova, "Ectogenesis and Mother as Machine", *Body & Society* 11, no. 3 (September 1, 2005): 43–59.
[127] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 87.
[128] Allison Carruth, "Culturing Food: Bioart and In Vitro Meat", *Parallax* 19, no. 1 (February 2013): 88–100; K.M. Mensvoort and Hendrick-Jan Grievink, *The in Vitro Meat Cook Book* (Netherlands: BIS Publishers, 2014).

Proponents argue that if ectogenesis is achieved, it can relieve women from their reproductive function, allowing them to develop professionally, but also contesting that women who are unable to get pregnant, or who suffer from miscarriages, can benefit from this reproductive assistance. Opponents suggest, however, that although ectogenesis might help a woman to become a mother, ARTs continue to underline the fact that women's bodies are controlled by patriarchal structures which dictate what women are expected to do with their bodies. In other words, it means that the conception, gestation, and birth will become subjected to commodification and regulations.[129]

Incubators are conceived as "artificial wombs" which replicate some of the characteristics of the maternal body environment. The inspiration for their creation, as well as their purpose, however, alludes to reproductive characteristics of non-humans, specifically to nursing and caring practices performed by oviparous species.[130] The first model of the incubator, created in 1880 by French obstetrician Etienne Stephane Tarnier, imitated the principle of the chicken incubator. It is worth noting that embryology studies on ectogenesis, art, and food production—as Rubell's performance—continue to emphasise the principle of oviparity as a way to address human viviparity, first by using linguistic references, such as addressing ovums as eggs, or second by referring to and simulating the characteristics of oviparity, like in this case of the incubator.[131]

This "ectogenetic desire" is an attempt which ultimately responds to the survival and exponential growth of one's own kind and challenges the idea of letting

[129] It is worth noting that there is a wealth of literature dealing with the different ethical and legal debates sparked by ectogenetic practices related to parenthood, personhood, and the human–animal distinction, as Aristarkhova also notes, but which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 87–89, 108, 115; Elspeth Probyn, *Carnal Appetites*; Catherine Mills, *Futures of Reproduction: Bioethics and Biopolitics*, International Library of Ethics (Springer, 2011); Peter Singer and Deane Wells, *The Reproduction Revolution: New Ways of Making Babies*, Studies in Bioethics (Oxford University Press, 1984); Susan Merrill Squier, *Babies in Bottles: Twentieth-Century Visions of Reproductive Technology* (Rutgers University Press, 1994); Deborah Lupton, "'Precious Cargo': Foetal Subjects, Risk and Reproductive Citizenship", *Critical Public Health* 22, no. 3 (September 2012): 329–40.

[130] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 98–103.

[131] The name chosen by Tarnier, *couveuse*, which in French means incubator, derives from the figure and role played by a brooding hen. For the discussion of oviparity and poultry in

(something/or someone) grow. ARTs are therefore suggested as powerful technological means which reinforce human's desire to play an active role as creators by obtaining full control in the generation of life—that is *creating* and/or *recreating* other life forms.[132]

However, as Aristarkhova and Christina Rosen note, there is a growing desire to achieve full ectogenesis by creating machines that are able to successfully carry a disembodied pregnancy to full term, to exchange corporeal matter, but, most importantly, without being nurse-dependent. Compared to what incubators can achieve at the moment, future "mother-machines" are expected to provide nutrients and oxygen, and also get rid of waste (faecal excretions or other by-products) that is no longer beneficial, tasks which currently continue to be performed by nurses.[133] In other words, the "mother-machines" will be able to create, stimulate, and grow individuals not only by mimicking the matrixial/maternal, but also by giving place to the nutrix, as in generating and nursing the other.

In *Incubation*, the white cube, as the name suggests, recreated an "incubator environment" that resembled maternal or nursing wards—and which eventually functioned as one.[134] The notion of the *nutrix* was brought to the fore through the different actions that took place inside it, and despite the fact the artist never referred to it. *Incubation* called attention to the "maternal–foetal interface" while removing the figure of the mother. The maternal womb falls into oblivion; despite that, within the performance, the simulation of what the mother does prevails: giving space and matter for the developmental process of the other. To some extent, this explains the reason for presenting female nurses, a gesture

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relationship to women, see Susan Merrill Squier, *Poultry Science, Chicken Culture: A Partial Alphabet* (Rutgers University Press, 2011).

[132] The notion and poetics of extinction suggest, as explained by Cary Wolfe, that it is necessary to bear in mind that the world we inhabit is different for every subject, and that there is no bridge that unites all species; however, this does not exempt us from an ethical responsibility. The notion of de-extinction explains this intention to master control over the matrixial/maternal as a means to generate others we can only understand through their remains, such as dinosaurs, frozen-preserved mammoths, or other extinct species. Cary Wolfe, "The Poetics of Extinction" (Professor Stuart Hall Building, Goldsmiths University of London, 2015).

[133] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 118–19.

[134] Ibid., 115.

that can be read as an intention to emphasise the "feminine side of creation", as Rubell explained—although only as participants of the nursing process.

The white room illustrated a disembodied approach to generation/creation and nursing of life, but in particular, the incubation chamber addressed the interaction between "mother-machine(s)" and the nursing subjects (nurses). However, in this case, newborn incubators were replaced by yogurt makers which helped grow non-human organisms.



75. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Yogurt makers

It is worth noting that the ideas of incubation and ectogenesis have been widely addressed in science-fiction narratives to portray the "future" possibilities for hosting and creating another human without the need for the mother figure, or even a womb, and to which Rubell's *Incubation* holds a close relationship, even if her intention does not include creating human life. For example, there is an uncanny resemblance to the way in which cloning chambers and incubators are portrayed in sequences of films such as *Star Wars: Episode II – Attack of the Clones* (2002) and *Jurassic Park* (1993). [135] Both of these films, as well as Rubell's *Incubation*, show incubation chambers as spaces that are predominantly white,

[135] Kelly Oliver has written about cloning and ARTs, exploring the way in which Hollywood's film industry has addressed them, and the complexities in the sociocultural imaginary. She discusses the stigma associated with children conceived through the use of ARTs, as well as how "cloning

as if the use of this colour helped emphasise the disembodied creation of life as an action characterised as being performed under extreme hygienic conditions, or following the standards of controlled environments, like in a laboratory. This monochromatic scenario represents a pure and clean depiction of creation, following Western symbolism and cultural meanings related to the colour white; this depiction opposes the generation or creation that requires the encounter of bodies, especially the mother.[136] It is as if the creators (the Kamino cloners in *Star Wars*, scientists in *Jurassic Park*, or Rubell in *Incubation*) aimed to purify the creative process from the mother, denying the replication of organisms from the matrixial/maternal, and insisting on an improved process of disembodied reproduction. Although human life was not created or cloned in Rubell's *Incubation*, the yogurt jars were identical. One after the other, they were filled with *cultured* milk and placed inside the yogurt makers. In this sense, the creation of yogurt took place within a space that could comply with food safety production standards: clean, ordered, managed by staff wearing uniforms, and implying production of yogurt within the logic of the supply chain. In other words, the transformation and cultivation of microbial species is commodified as an everyday process, even if the yogurt pots were not for sale.

Furthermore, *Incubation* follows science-fiction narratives that depict nursing machines in charge of replicating a different species. Continuing with the example of the clone soldiers in *Star Wars*, this film shows the incubation chamber only through a glass window. Inside it, circular platforms are inserted with individual incubation machines on the top and the periphery. The individual incubators, however, are portrayed differently to medical incubators. Rather than "empty" transparent cases, they take the shape of transparent capsules or cylinders filled with a growing medium—a bath of nutrients which ensures the clone's growth and development. The yogurt makers are constructed and portrayed in a similar fashion, although inside them, individual and transparent

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engenders fantasies of womanless births and the commoditization of human life". Oliver, *Knock Me Up, Knock Me Down*, 152.

[136] White is associated with a new beginning; within Christian and Catholic traditions, it is associated with creation and resurrection, as well as purity. Mario De Bortoli and Jesús Maroto, "Colours Across Cultures: Translating Colours in Interactive Marketing Communications," in *European Languages and the Implementation of Communication and Information Technologies* (Elicit, University of Paisley, 2001), http://globalpropaganda.com/articles/TranslatingColours.pdf.

yogurt pots *incubated* lactic bacteria. Both science-fiction narratives and Rubell's artwork share a depiction of a disembodied notion of the *nutrix* in which machines perform as "artificial wombs" filled with a growing medium that is especially designed, or cultured in the case of milk, to *create* a suitable incubating environment. With this in mind, Rubell's performance and the above-mentioned films show that the incubation process implies setting boundaries between: 1) those who donate, give, or provide the nourishing fluid or matter; 2) those who observe and await the growing products; and finally 3) the nursing subjects and machines. In Rubell's work, the separation of these three entities is reinforced by the fact that the white incubation chamber was closed almost in its entirety, except for the small slot from where yogurt pots were delivered. At the same time, it was only the transparency of the window that allowed the public to witness the interior of the incubation chamber while limiting any direct contact or physical interaction. The nursing machines and nursing subjects were separated from the outside world, but also from the public who expect them to come out, hence giving an alienating feeling to the creation and nursing of other.

Lacto-maternal fluids as hospitality and food for the microbial other

I'll explain the connection between wine and beer,
And sourdough and yogurt and miso and kraut,
What they have in common is what it's all about.
Oh the microorganisms,
Oh the microorganisms . . .

—Sandor E. Katz, *Wild Fermentation.*

Incubation draws attention to fermentation. The white incubating chamber is proposed as a space in which the generation and nursing of the other takes place as fermentation of milk, a process which gives special attention to elements such as temperature, humidity, and oxygen that make possible the creation of an artificial environment. At the same time, Rubell's performance uses fermentation and the yogurt makers as a strategy to mimic ectogenetic practices and devices: incubators. These machines needed a fluid that would act as a nourishing bath to host the growing other; milk served this purpose and made possible the fermentation and serving of freshly made yogurt. However,

the *creation* of yogurt was not a task performed by Rubell. The performance of nurses side by side the yogurt makers, or *nursing machines*, enabled the fermentation of milk by *giving place* to the—unnoticeable—growth and development of an(other): microbial cultures and communities. Unable to be seen by the naked eye, these microbes were cared for, nursed, and hosted inside an enclosed space that provided them with a suitable environment. Their presence was only made evident, and to some extent palatable, by the time milk was transformed into yogurt.

Fermentation is the result of chemical reactions caused by living bacteria, yeasts, and fungi during their process of "eating and digesting".[137] Interest in this process is widely addressed in various publications, including anthropology, food studies, microbiology, and the humanities, due to its major impact on everyday life. This interest is also reflected in the work of artists who address fermentation as a strategy to refer to issues concerning food politics, as well as environmental and social problems, like inclusion/exclusion, eradication, and competition between individuals of a single species or communities. In 2015, artist Daniel Salomon, for example, conducted a workshop on the politics of fermentation during the second edition of the "Food Politics" Programme at the Delfina Foundation (London), where he explained fermentation as a process that serves as "an allegory of human societies" and which reflects "our relationship to other species and the environment".[138] Interdisciplinary artistic practices between microbiologists and artists, furthermore, present projects that intend to focus the public's attention on the importance of the microbial realm in human life, and to exhibit how the food chain is ultimately defined by a symbiosis process in which, as Louis Pasteur suggests, "microbes will have the last

[137] Fermentation is understood as "an anaerobic process converting sugars, such as glucose, to other compounds like alcohol, while producing energy for the microorganism or cell. Bacteria and yeast are microorganisms with the enzymatic capacity for fermentation, specifically, lactic acid fermentation in the former and ethanol fermentation in the latter." Katz, *Wild Fermentation*, 164; Stephanie Chilton, Jeremy Burton, and Gregor Reid, "Inclusion of Fermented Foods in Food Guides around the World", *Nutrients* 7, no. 1 (January 8, 2015): 390–404.
[138] Jacqueshoen, "How about Some Politics with That Sauerkraut?", *London Multimedia News*, May 11, 2015, https://londonmultimedianews.com/2015/05/11/how-about-some-politics-with-that-sauerkraut/.

word".[139] This is the case of Christina Agapakis who in collaboration with Sissel Tolaas created a series of cheeses using bacterial cultures from a range of participants, including Michael Pollan, to study the relationship between cheese smells and microbial communities.[140] Rubell's *Incubation* follows the same interests as the latter, and uses fermentation to explore the notions of the creation of life and food.

Fermentation, furthermore, requires giving close attention to the food chain as a series of symbiotic relationships between humans and other organisms, one in which microbes have a key role in the production of food.[141] Their input makes possible the transformation of a large number of ingredients that are consumed by humans on an everyday basis, including yogurt and cheese. It is worth noting, however, that each cultural group processes and consumes specific fermented products according to the availability of ingredients and the strains in their environments; however, even if the processes—or recipes—of each particular fermented product differ, they all have in common fermentation as the main process which enables transformation of the carbohydrates or protein, giving place to new edible products.[142] Fermentation not only transforms a raw ingredient into an other, but it also allows the preservation of food for a longer period of time, a practice that has been done since ancient times, especially because it has proven to be an effective way to counteract the shortage of food supply.[143] The history of entire civilisations and cultures would not be the same

[139] Louis Pasteur, *Mémoire Sur La Fermentation Appelée Lactique* (France: Mallet-Bachelier, 1858); Madeleine Parker Grant, *Microbiology and Human Progress*, 2009th ed. (Rinehart, 1953), 59; Katz, *Wild Fermentation*, 19.

[140] Christina Agapakis and Sissel Tolaas created cheeses using cultures from human bodies (armpits, hands, feet, noses) which were inoculated into pasteurised milk. The aim was explore bacterial interactions. Christina Agapakis, "Biological Design Principles for Synthetic Biology" (PhD. Genetics, Harvard University, 2011), 142; Christina Agapakis, "Selfmade", *Christina Agapakis*, accessed January 5, 2015, http://agapakis.com/cheese.html.

[141] Michael Pollan, *Cooked*; Katz, *Wild Fermentation*.

[142] Jyoti Tamang, "Diversity of Fermented Foods", in *Fermented Foods and Beverages of the World*, ed. Jyoti Tamang and Kasipathy Kailasapathy (CRC Press, 2010), 41–84; Jyoti Tamang, Koichi Watanabe, and Wilhelm H. Holzapfel, "Review: Diversity of Microorganisms in Global Fermented Foods and Beverages", *Frontiers in Microbiology* 7 (March 24, 2016), http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fmicb.2016.00377.

[143] Scientific literature, for example, suggests that fermentation has been performed since the Neolithic period and was discovered by accident. There is often the reference to the story of mead (an alcoholic beverage made out of honey and water) as the first accidental encounter with fermentation, supported by archaeological data attesting residual samples of mead in pottery vessels dating from 6500 to 7000 BC. Katz, *Wild Fermentation*, 2; Luisa Alba-Lois and Claudia Segal-Kischinevsky, "Yeast Fermentation and the Making of Beer and Wine", *Nature Education* 3,

without fermentation, particularly if we consider that grains and breads (in most of their different varieties) are often the staple foods and/or foundational ingredients of many cultures. Therefore, fermentation, as insignificant and unattended as it may seem, constitutes a breakthrough in human life, because without fermentation and microbes, we (humans) would not be able to eat and digest the complex molecules of some food products, a topic to which I will return to in the following sections of this chapter.



76. Jennifer Rubell. *Incubation*, 2011
Yogurt makers

Consequently, *Incubation* emphasised relationships between two or more species, including the microbial, the human, and the non-human (cow). Yogurt is the perfect example of *symbiotic growth* between species, as Ray and Bhunia explain in *Fundamental Food Microbiology*. This means that one species transforms through metabolic processes certain chemical compounds of the ingredient in question—in the case of yogurt, milk proteins—and which the second microbial species requires for "proper growth, but cannot produce itself"; in return, the second species "produces a nutrient that stimulates the first one to grow better".[144] The fermentation of yogurt, referred to as *lactic acid fermentation*, comprises the transformation of sugar (lactose) molecules by two

no. 9 (2010): 17; Patrick E. McGovern et al., "Fermented Beverages of Pre- and Proto-Historic China", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 101, no. 51 (December 21, 2004): 17593–98.

species of bacteria—*Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*—which use this carbohydrate as cellular energy and release lactic acid that changes the pH of milk. As a consequence, it becomes thicker, causing it to curdle and giving it an acidic taste that characterises yogurt.[145] *Incubation*, in this sense, relies on the image and practice of fermenting milk as a way to emphasise how both microorganisms need one another in order to produce a desirable product.

The relationship between humans and microbes gives sense to the notion of hospitality as a symbiotic relationship where one benefits from the action of the other. In other words, the human hosts the other, but also one species eats the other(s). Rather than a parasitic relationship where one takes advantage of the other, the yogurt created in this performance shows symbiosis as a collaborative relationship beyond the microbial realm. In *Incubation*, lactic bacteria producing yogurt were nursed inside the yogurt makers; they were "cultivated" or "inoculated" with the intention to ferment lacto-maternal fluids from a non-human and to transform it into yogurt. Milk was introduced to the chamber by the human other, either Rubell or the nurses, but in doing so, they kept away bacterial species and other microorganisms. Consider, for example, that the milk was ready to host only bacteria which is deemed beneficial in comparison to *pathogens* that could pose a threat to the creation of yogurt or be harmful for human life. Therefore, *Incubation* ensured the creation of a proper environment for producing yogurt. The white chamber delimited the space in which the nursing subject and the machine interacted, and at the same time it appeared as the space where *safe* fermentation or food production took place. The actions performed within *Incubation* bear close resemblance to the guidelines proposed by the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system, which recognises critical points which need to be followed to ensure safe food production.[146] In this sense, the role of the nurses becomes clearer, since they were inside the chamber to constantly invigilate the fermentation process, the

[144] Ray and Bhunia explain symbiosis as "helping one another". Bibek Ray and Arun Bhunia, *Fundamental Food Microbiology*, 5th. (United States of America: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 90.
[145] Katz, *Wild Fermentation*.
[146] Food Standards Agency, "HACCP," *Food Standards Agency*, accessed April 26, 2016, http://www.food.gov.uk/business-industry/food-hygiene/haccp.

temperature of the yogurt makers, refrigerating the samples that were ready for consumption, and its delivery to members of the public, activities that the nursing machine/incubator could not accomplish on its own. With this in mind, it is possible to think of the white chamber as a space that opened up, welcomed and hosted the microbial and human other while simultaneously excluding other species.

This dichotomy of exclusion and inclusion of organisms highlights two different positions regarding microbes and their presence in fermented food products, both of which are directly related to their consumption by humans. I am referring, first of all, to Louis Pasteur's contributions to the understanding of fermentation. Since the publication of *Memoire sur la fermentation appelée lactique* (1857), fermentation and the attention to microbes has influenced the development of biological sciences and the entire field of microbiology.[147] Furthermore, this text has been of great interest for the food industry as it enabled controlled *cultivation* and exponential growth of beneficial bacteria in order to boost the production and sale of fermented food and drinks. *Pasteurisation* is a process that eliminates noxious microorganisms while also diminishing the active role of those deemed beneficial, hence making the manipulation of microorganisms manageable. As Katz explains, this has led to "a sort of colonial outlook toward microorganisms" where "they, like other elements of nature and other human cultures, must be dominated and exploited".[148] Pasteur's ideas entail an approach to microbes that considers them as either potential allies or agents that can pose a threat to human health, hence the need to create barriers and protective measures against them. The process of *pasteurisation*, in this sense, recognises the benefits that can be obtained from microbes, as fermentation shows; at the same time, the Pasteurian approach aims to tame and control the microbial realm in order to prevent damage to food production, consumption and human health. Pasteurisation requires careful

[147] Pasteur, *Mémoire Sur La Fermentation Appelée Lactique*.
[148] Katz, *Wild Fermentation*, 19.

attention to time and temperature as it directly affects the microbial environment and its organic composition.[149]

Since its development, Pasteurisation has aimed to make the food industry efficient by avoiding the spoilage of food and also preventing potential threats to consumers' health. This explains why pasteurisation is one of the most common measures of control and standardised processes for food hygiene, according to the HACCP system. Pasteurisation, furthermore, ensures milk is a blank canvas in which only beneficial strains of microorganisms—healthy bacteria—are inoculated (cultured), as yogurt or cheese production exemplifies, thus emphasising the idea of exclusion.

The interest in fermented products has supposed a change in people's perception of microbes. Rather than following a Pasteurian fear of microbes, driven by the desires of pharmaceutical and food industries to make our habitat and dietary habits free from pathogens, post-Pasteurian scholars and activists—like Sandor Katz and Heather Paxton—propose reconsidering our relationship with the microbial world. They emphasise multi-species relationships, acknowledging the "potentialities of collaborative human and microbial cultural practices".[150] Post-Pasteurian microbiopolitics, in this sense, oppose the "medicalisation of food and eating" endorsed by Pasteurianism, and instead aim for recognition of the positive impact of microbes in the food chain, an ethos that emphasises that microbes are both necessary and "tasty", for example in the case of artisanal cheese production or other dairy products.[151] In other words, this approach seeks the preservation of live microbial cultures in food products by invigilating the growth process of those deemed beneficial. Moreover, rather than neglecting the possible threat to human health posited by pathogenous microorganisms, post-Pasteurians emphasise that when done in a careful manner, fermented products like cheese or yogurt do not require killing or

[149] Pasteurising milk in its most simple way—v*at pasteurisation*—requires heating the milk but not beyond 100°C for thirty minutes, and then cooling it down. Ray and Bhunia, *Fundamental Food Microbiology*, 17.
[150] Paxton, "Post-Pasteurian Cultures", 17.
[151] Paxton notes that the notion of taste refers to the fact that post-Pasteurians state that microbes are not invisible organisms "lurking" in food products (like cheese, the main food

eradicating the microbial other. Their creation, instead, is a matter of knowing the artisanal step-by-step process and the changes suffered by food in each stage of the fermentation.[152]

Furthermore, the terms *probiotics*[153] and *prebiotics*[154] sheds light on the symbiotic relationships between humans and microorganisms, and how the food industry profits from controlled production of fermented products—probiotics—emphasising the positive impact on human health,[155] as reflected in advertisement campaigns from the food industry. This is, at the same time, increasingly promoted by medical research that highlights the benefits of fermented food, as well as the globalisation of culinary traditions, thereafter, leading to a change in dietary preferences and patterns of food consumption.[156]

Rubell's *Incubation*, in this sense, pays attention to both Pasteurian and post-Pasteurian approaches to fermentation. On the one hand, her performance proposes yogurt fermentation as food production taking place inside a space controlled by strict hygiene conditions, almost to a medicalised degree or at least portrayed in such a way by using the term "incubation" in the title of the performance. The incubation chamber resembled a nursery ward, allocating medical staff (nurses) in charge of invigilating the entire process. Rubell created

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product she focuses on in her article) but that these microorganisms *are* the food product (cheese, yogurt, etc.), see Ibid., 18, 32.

[152] Ibid., 19.

[153] A probiotic is explained as food or a food supplement which is beneficial for human health particularly because of the live bacteria or yeasts, and how these contribute to a healthy ecology of the gut. See FAO/WHO, "Evaluation of Health and Nutritional Properties of Probiotics in Food Including Powder Milk with Live Lactic Acid Bacteria", Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation (Cordoba, Argentina: FAO/WHO, October 2001); Bryon Petschow et al., "Probiotics, Prebiotics, and the Host Microbiome: The Science of Translation: Probiotics, Prebiotics, and the Host Microbiome", *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1306, no. 1 (December 2013): 1–17; Ji Youn Yoo and Sung Soo Kim, "Probiotics and Prebiotics: Present Status and Future Perspectives on Metabolic Disorders", *Nutrients* 8, no. 3 (2016): 173.

[154] It is understood that non-digestible food ingredients, like fibre, promote the growth of beneficial microorganisms in the intestines, and which help to improve the digestive function. Maya Pineiro et al., "FAO Technical Meeting on Prebiotics", *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology* 42 (September 2008): S156–59; Petschow et al., "Probiotics, Prebiotics, and the Host Microbiome".

[155] Katz, *Wild Fermentation*, 22–26.

[156] Contois discusses the advertisement and marketing strategy for Activia, highlighting that a multinational in the food industry is able to take control over microorganisms (in this case *Bifidobacterium animalis* DN-173 010), which is then trademarked under the name *Bifidus regularis* for exclusive use in Danone's Activia. Emily Contois, "Toned Tummies and Bloated Bellies: Activia Yogurt and Gendered Digestion", *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures* 5, no. 1 (2014), http://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1024279ar.

an artificial hosting environment in which lactic bacteria, also referred to as "good bacteria", grew and developed while restricting the growth of noxious microorganisms. The latter becomes more obvious considering that milk is a product deemed a "potential biohazard", and thus she had to ensure she was not serving unsafe dairy products to the public.[157] It is almost certain that Rubell did not use raw unpasteurised milk to create yogurt, even if there is no specific mention from the artist regarding this; the artist would not jeopardise the premises of her family's art collection by dismissing the strict control measures of the Food and Drugs Administration (FDA). In other words, this artificial environment was created for the inoculation and fermentation of good bacteria while strictly controlling the milk against pathogens (listeria). The notion of hygiene and isolation from external sources of contamination that the Pasteurian framework supposes was reinforced by the time the incubation chamber in *Incubation* was presented as white, well organised, and a space separated from the *outside*, limiting the contact with others who could pose a risk.

On the other hand, *Incubation* shows the fermentation of yogurt within the post-Pasteurian framework as a more ethical symbiotic relationship which benefits all species, produced in a more artisanal way. The artisanal element is apparent because even though the performance portrays an image of food chain production, the yogurt was created as part of the *do-it-yourself* movement, which emphasised the active role of bacteria within this process. It showed, following Paxton, that "microbes and humans [are] companion species".[158] In addition, *Incubation* shows how fermentation and incubation are two processes that have a close relationship in light of a framework of hospitality. There is an uncanny similarity between fermentation and incubation in the sense that both convey the idea of hosting an(other) by allowing its growth and development. Both notions interweave by using similar vocabulary, actions, and approaches that refer to transformation, whether that is food or an organism. Rubell's yogurt makers, for example, facilitated the development of microbial cultures using milk

[157] Linda Bren, "Got Milk? Make Sure It's Pasteurized", *FDA Consumer* 35, no. 8 (October 2004): 29; Paxton, "Post-Pasteurian Cultures", 16.
[158] Paxton, "Post-Pasteurian Cultures", 19; Simun, "Human Cheese".

as a fluid that nurtured the bacteria. But it was also a fluid that evoked the figure of amniotic fluid, which gives space and matter for the other.

Ultimately, *Incubation* portrays the success of incubation/fermentation, in similarity to maternal or nursing wards, dependent on an ecosystem of individuals that take on different roles in nursing the other. Although Rubell's artwork addresses hosting of the microbial other, it emphasises the feminist approach to the notion of an embodied maternity, which suggests that the "physical relations of lived-body" are as important as "the biological and genetic ones".[159] The nursing of others was not performed by an individual, but as part of a communal act between nurses and machines. Furthermore, this artistic practice encourages thoughts about hospitality working closely to an "ecological notion of the self" where the body exercises actively; it does not simply need to defend itself, but rather "negotiate [and] build alliances" with others.[160] *Incubation* points to the fact that eating include relationships to others, even with those to whom we cannot see, talk, hear, or touch. To carefully think of these processes, I suggest, conveys an ecological and embodied idea of hospitality, as I will discuss in the following chapter.

[159] Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix*, 70.
[160] Ibid., 72.

Chapter 5

Inside out: Hospitality in the gut

In this last chapter I further explore the idea of "eating the other". My approach readdresses eating as the metaphorical incorporation and assimilation of the other, as well as the biological processes of *digestion* and *elimination*. I argue that in both cases the notions of eating well and hospitality function as "primordial terms" to explore the "ethical imperative" at place when ingesting others, viewed from feminist and ecological frameworks.[1] The main aim of this chapter is to emphasise that the food system and the food chain are closely intertwined.

Drawing forth Sonja Alhäuser's drawing *Gegen Schwermut*[2] that I first presented in this thesis, I argue that the food that we cultivate, collect, cook, eat and share with others inevitably continues its passage through the digestive system and ends up being expelled and, in most cases, reincorporated to the environment. Furthermore, considering that the other enters the body through the oral cavity, hospitality—I suggest—needs to be explored throughout the entire body, and especially in relationship to the digestive system, however, questioning if that who we are ingesting is being incorporated in the best ethical way. Eating is, in this sense, explored as a process that embraces a continual giving of hospitality inside and outside the body. For this, I focus on the analysis of contemporary artistic practices that address and/or portray ingesting and digesting the other.

Firstly, I refer to Bompas and Parr's food-related project *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* (2014), a performance-like event that aimed to unveil, allegedly for the first time, the inner side of a female celebrity chef by projecting live images of the gastrointestinal tract after swallowing a *PillCam*.[3] The focus of this project is the digestive system, however, my intention is to highlight the metaphorical incorporation and objectification of the other, in specific, the female body.

[1] Gabriele Schwab, "Derrida, the Parched Woman, and the Son of Man", *Discourse*, "Who?" or "What?" -Jacques Derrida, 30, no. 1/2 (Spring 2008): 227.
[2] *Cfr.* P. 8
[3] The *Pillcam* is used as a minimally invasive tool to perform endoscopies without sedating the patient. It consists of a miniaturised camera, which is contained in an easy-to-swallow and disposable capsule. The camera transmits the video of the entire digestive tract to detect

Bompas and Parr's practice remind us of eating and the assimilation of the other as constant actions taking place through all the orifices of the body: the mouth, the ears but also the eyes.[4] These make possible the encounter with the other, both literally and metaphorically speaking. The mouth serves, in particular and according to Gabriele Schwab, as an "instrument of sociality, hospitality, and an ethics of friendship in the service of the work of life", following Derrida's psychoanalytic reflections on incorporation and orality.[5] The mouth, indeed, connects us internally to the external world while acting as a border by which the subject allows or denies the entrance of the other; similarly to a host, the mouth can act as a potential giver of hospitality who is willing to allocate the other or rather excluding and exercising hostile reactions. My analysis of *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, however, emphasises the use of technological medical devices and procedures that in this case result in the objectification of the body of a woman. In similarity to nineteenth century practices that presented live women—often hypnotised—to a male medical audience to explore and gain knowledge about conditions like hysteria, the *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* makes the female body the central focus and presents a scientific view of the inner body and in specific of the gut. This artistic practice intends to present live images of the gut, however, at the same time highlights gender issues that emphasise eating not only a physical process but one that includes the metaphorical appropriation and ingestion of others in multiple ways; but in specific, how this can convey hostile and violent actions as those related to the the male gaze.[6]

Eating and incorporation, however, is only the initial step of a more complex process, that of digestion, which allows us to benefit from nutrients and expel

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anomalies and assess the health of the patient. Given Imaging Ltd., "PillCam Capsule Endoscopy", Given Imaging, *PillCamcolon*, (2013 2001), http://pillcamcolon.com/about/what-is-it.

[4] Oliver, "Tropho-Ethics", 43.

[5] Schwab, "Derrida, the Parched Woman, and the Son of Man", 227.

[6] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, Penguin Modern Classics (Penguin Books Limited, 2008); Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, Language, Discourse, Society (Macmillan, 1989); Bell Hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Taylor & Francis, 2014); Bell Hooks, "Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance", in *Eating Culture*, ed. Ron Scapp and Brian Seitz (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1998); Susan Bordo, *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003); Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight : Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*, 10th anniversary ed. (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2003).

noxious substances or waste. In the second part of this chapter, therefore, I discuss hospitality inside the body, and where the body is "thought *as a body*" that performs processes which closely relate to others.[7]

In specific, I explore the notion of *embodied hospitality*, focusing on the journey of edibles through the digestive system. The section focuses on Anna Dumitriu's *Don't try this at home* (2015) that highlights the relevance and interaction of gastrointestinal microbes in the human digestive process. Particularly, she explores microbial–human interactions when used as medical treatments to counteract pathogenic conditions, in specific faecal transplants. Dumitriu's practice, I argue, becomes a powerful strategy that helps questioning the process of digestion, as well as considering all the intervening actors. Her practice proves useful to consider that what (or who) is taken in, eaten, is also digested. The other does not just enter the body, but follows a passage through the entire body where it suffers a multitude of transformations. In this case I suggest that digestion—understood as the following stage after eating,—entails also the encounter between alterities.

Consequently, I propose hospitality and "eating the other" as ethical relationships that constantly take place inside the subject, and who despite his/her unawareness engages with others up to a microbiopolitical level. This is, to include microorganisms at the "centre of accounts of food politics", and to include hospitality in eating practices beyond "global–local trajectories and into the body, into the gastrointestinal".[8] Additionally, I argue eating alongside microbes as a key host-guest relationship within the food chain and the food system. My intention is to emphasise that the relationships between the host and guest also take place inside the body; hospitality extends beyond commensality, and comprises an ecological notion of the body, considering that the ethical imperative to which Derrida refers, that of *eating well*, also comes into play during the bacterial and the human encounter. With Dumitriu's project in mind, the gut is discussed as a site of hospitality following the notion of

[7] Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook, "The Haunted Flesh: Corporeal Feminism and the Politics of (Dis)Embodiment," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (January 1998): 57. [emphasis in the original]

corporeal generosity as proposed by Rosalyn Diprose, and in close relationship to Myra Hird's idea of *symbiotic generosity*, as developed in *The Origins of Sociable Life*, a text which focuses on microbial ethics and its associations with the human.[9] This includes, after all, considering that faecal excretions and the bacteria living inside them are reincorporated to the environment. Thereafter, reinforcing that the notions of hospitality, hostility and *hostipitality* permeate the different stages and processes involved in the food system, signalling food practices as a complex compendium of host-guest dynamics that develops from the moment we gather food and until this is expelled and reincorporated to the landfill. Furthermore, emphasising that within the cyclical process of the food system and the food chain, multiple levels of gender and labour inequalities are constantly at play.

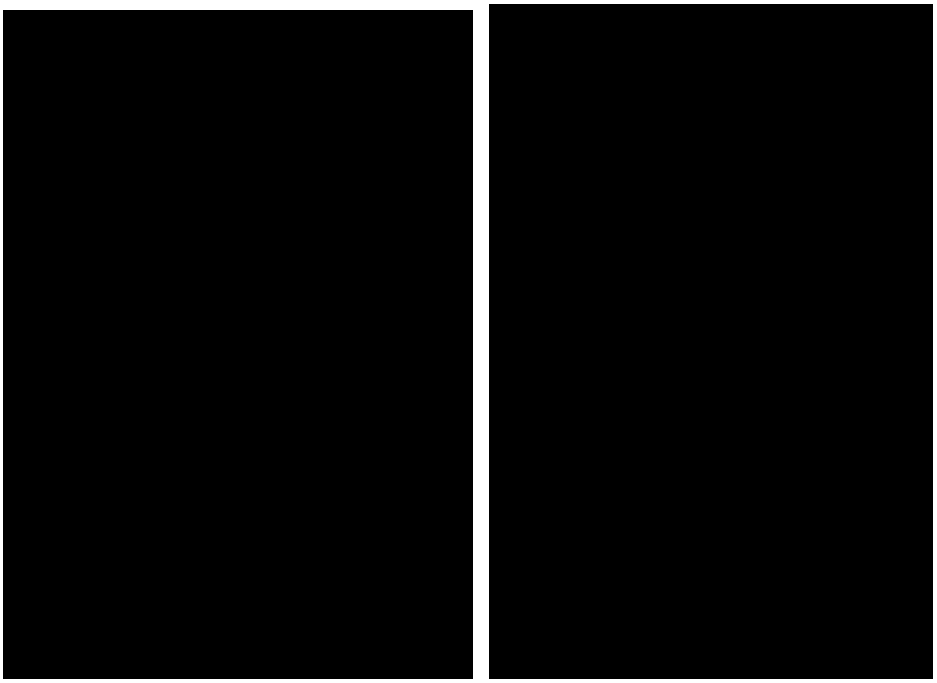
Bompas and Parr: A visual Journey to the Centre of the Gut

In March 2014, food designers, researchers, and experimental food artists Sam Bompas and Harry Parr created and performed the *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, a performance-like event that unveiled, allegedly "for the first time", the inner side of food writer and pop-up chef Gizzi Erskine by projecting live images of her gastrointestinal tract after swallowing a PillCam. The event was part of King's College, London's "Feed your Mind" festival of food and ideas and was staged in one of the auditoriums at Guy's Hospital in London. Upon arrival, we were received with an event-themed welcome cocktail, an action that could lead us think of Bompas and Parr intention to frame their performance as a gesture of hospitality for their guest. However, as I will explain, this initial hospitable intention later transformed into a hostile performance where we, the audience, were led to participate in eating the other in a violent manner by metaphorically feasting on the other's corporeality.

"Master Gaster" was an alcoholic cocktail specially designed for the occasion, and was a mix of gin, maraschino liqueur, and lemon juice served in a glass—or

[8] Paxton, "Post-Pasteurian Cultures", 18.
[9] Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*; Myra J. Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life: Evolution after Science Studies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

medicine bottle—with a straw dipped in dehydrated *pepto bismol*[10] that mimicked a plastic transfer pipette. The cocktail alluded to the flavour characteristic of pepto bismol—cherry—but also referred to the purpose of this medicine: to counteract the acidity and heartburn feeling produced by certain food and drinks, such as the cocktail's lemon juice and gin. At the same time, I suggest, this cocktail intended to prevent the indigestion and discomfort once the public entered the amphitheatre, watching live images of the interior of a human body, which objectified the female subject who volunteered for the performance. In this sense, the "Master Gaster" cocktail functioned as an advise and warning about what awaited inside the auditorium.



77. Bompas and Parr. *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014
Cocktail menu and "Master Gaster" as it was presented in the lobby before the screening of capsule endoscopy.

Once inside the amphitheatre, on the right-hand side, the band Dom James and his Alvine Argonauts—dressed in lab coats—performed live music, a "freeform jazz and peristaltic bass" that lasted the entire event.[11] It functioned as the live soundtrack of the event, resembling a contemporary version of the film *Fantastic*

[10] Otherwise known as *Bismuth subsalicylate*, this is an antacid medication used to treat temporary discomforts of the stomach and gastrointestinal tract, such as diarrhoea, indigestion, heartburn and nausea.
[11] Liv Sidall, "Miscellaneous: Bompas and Parr Take Photos INSIDE the Stomach of Celebrity Chef, Gizzi Erskine," *It's Nice That*, March 13, 2014, http://www.itsnicethat.com/articles/miscellaneous-bompas-and-parr.

Voyage (1966), where some doctors are miniaturised in order to enter the body of a patient, travel through his body's interior, and repair the brain damage. In *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, however, no audience members were miniaturised, nor did we have direct contact with the body of the "patient"—otherwise healthy volunteer, Gizzi Erskine; instead, we remained safely seated in the auditorium and only observed two hours of the gastrointestinal journey made the PillCam. It is worth mentioning that this is not the first time artists or designers have showed an interest in the digestive process. Tim Delvoye's *Cloaca* (2000) was an eight-year research project working in liaison with gastroenterologists and engineers in order to replicate the human digestive system; a machine was fed twice daily, and the food was processed along transparent tubes mimicking the gut and intestines, until faecal excretions were expelled.[12] In *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, the digestive process was not represented or mimicked, but performed live in front of an avid audience, curious to see the interior of the body of a renowned chef and food writer.



78. Bompas and Parr. *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014.

Once the public was seated inside the auditorium, Bompas and Parr descended the amphitheatre stairs with microphones in hand, waving to the crowd that cheered at them, almost as if they were showbiz stars. Once on the stage, they

[12] Megan Fizell, "Cloaca," *FEAST Journal* 2, no. Digestion (2013): 9–10.

proceeded to present the people involved in making *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*: gastroenterologist Dr Simon Anderson, staff member from Guy's Hospital; Dean-Martin Borrow, the technician manipulating the software to record every single frame captured by the miniature pill; the band that played during the performance; and Stuart Blyth from Synmed, an expert on the PillCam and who provided an insight into the equipment.[13] The music reached a crescendo as soon as Gizzi Erskine's name was announced, directing the spotlight on her as she joined the panel at the front of the stage. The scene resembled a talk show, one in which Bompas and Parr would moderate between the audience and the medical staff performing the live capsule endoscopy procedure. On the one hand, Dr Anderson was in charge of explaining the complexities of the digestive tract and how the capsule endoscopy helps with the diagnosis of diseases, highlighting the gut as a site that hosts others, in this case parasites like gut worms. Mr Borrow added comments on the latter, but also described the passage of the PillCam to the audience so they would know what they were watching while the images were transmitted from the PillCam and shown on the screen.

When Erskine was prepared and set up, she was presented with the PillCam, a camera the size of a vitamin pill that she swallowed. Almost immediately, the images were transmitted from the camera and projected onto the screen, first of all showing the interior of Erskine's mouth, and her teeth, tongue and saliva. After juggling the pill around the mouth—for the visual pleasure of the public—the pill was swallowed without being chewed. It descended following the usual digestive pathway: the oesophagus, the large connective tube-like organ connecting the interior of the mouth with the first part of the stomach, and the cardia, where the contents of the oesophagus empty into the stomach. As explained by Dr Anderson, the images that were portrayed during the event would only focus on this part of the stomach, considering that the passage and transformation of food in the stomach can take up to three to four hours, then passing to the small intestine and colon, where food will continue to transform for another 30–40 hours until faecal matter is expelled. By the time the pill was

[13] Sidall, "Miscellaneous".

in the stomach, the panel of experts began to explain usual complications of the procedure, as well as the diseases that can be diagnosed using this type of technology.

Journey to the Centre of the Gut shows, in this sense, the long tradition of medical practices and discourses where patients are presented to a group of (male) professionals in order to discuss, explore and understand diseases, including psychological disorders. Specifically, the interior of the female body and eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia have shaped a number of discourses that suggest repressive and regulatory discourses of subjectivity, and which have been criticised by feminist scholars like Bray and Colebrook, Elizabeth Wilson, and Myra J. Hird.[14] Take for example, the image by Abel Lurat showing Jean-Martin Charcot demonstrating hysteria in a hypnotised female patient at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. It is worth highlighting, however, that in the case of *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, even if there is no clear link between the female volunteer and eating disorders.

The *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* bears close resemblance to Lurat's illustration, emphasising how the female body is displayed in front of an audience to present medical practices and advances diagnostic technologies, in this case, furthermore, emphasising the contemporary fascination with discussing, exploring, and making visible—in real time—the interior of the human body, especially the gut, as well as the process of digestion. The stomach—also called the *second brain* due to the presence of brain cells as well as the rest of the gastrointestinal tract—is on display and takes on a new dimension by the time medical technologies like the PillCam come into play.[15] Nevertheless, in both cases, Lurat's image and Bompas and Parr performance, show how the subject that is put on display becomes subjected to be "belied, distorted, and imagined by a masculine representational logic".[16] This is to say, *Journey to the*

[14] Bray and Colebrook, "The Haunted Flesh"; Elizabeth Ann Wilson, *Psychosomatic: Feminism and the Neurological Body* (Duke University Press, 2004); Elizabeth Ann Wilson, "Gut Feminism", *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 15, no. 3 (66-94): Fall 2004; Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life*.
[15] Wilson, "Gut Feminism".
[16] Bray and Colebrook, "The Haunted Flesh", 35.

Centre of the Gut continues to exercise the phallocentric schema that objectifies the body of a woman.



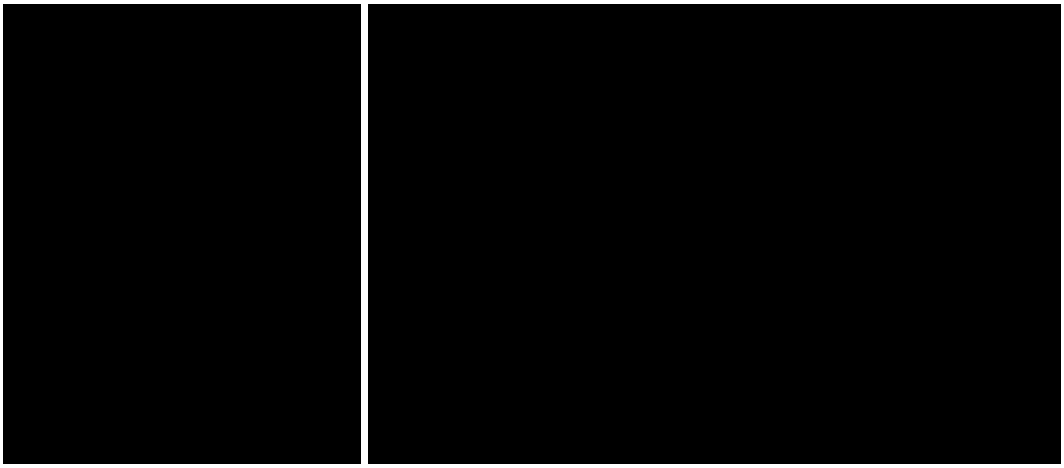
79. Abel Lurat. *Jean-Martin Charcot demonstrating hysteria in a hypnotised patient at the Salpêtrière*, 1888, after P.A.A. Brouillet, 1887.



80. Bompas and Parr. *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014.
Dr Anderson's presentation of the digestive system

Moreover, the PillCam's endoscopy images taken during Bompas and Parr's performance were used to "re-illustrate" Victorian book *Memoirs of a Stomach* by

Sydney Whitting.[17] Thus to some extent, emphasising nineteenth century practices and discourses about the body, although in this case, illustrated using accurate images of the interior of the body.



81. Bompas and Parr's *Memoirs of a Stomach* with images of the *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014.

The intention of *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* to reveal the interior of a body, specifically that of a female subject, suggests at the same time narratives that refers us back to the notion of eating the other. Live images of the inside of the stomach of a woman were the central focus, but in this case, the subject who volunteered for this action was not randomly selected. As Bompas and Parr explain, they first wanted to have a celebrity chef like Nigella Lawson—who did not respond to the invitation—on "display" and instead asked Gizzi Erskine to participate. According to Sam Bompas, this was "the first time that anyone has been able to enjoy this unique perspective of a celebrated foodist—the view from inside their most sensitive organ—the belly."[18] Bompas's statement, however, shows more than an experimental approach to food practices, questioning if it is relevant to have the gut of a food celebrity on display, or how different the organs would be compared to any other person. These images can be considered, to certain extent, as *gastroporn* that no longer show only food, but also display the bodies and organs of those who eat.

[17] Sam Bompas and Harry Parr, "Memoirs of a Stomach - Published by Bompas & Parr Editions, October 2014", *Bompas & Parr*, October 2014, http://bompasandparr.com/projects/view/memoirs-of-a-stomach/.
[18] Sidall, "Miscellaneous".

After Erskine swallowed the PillCam and this floated inside her stomach, the images showed the same creases of stomach lining over and over. To prevent visual boredom—and in similarity to talk shows and other live television shows—Bompas and Parr asked Erskine to *ingest* food so that all viewers could actually see the digestive process. It is worth noting, however, that this was merely *inserting* objects inside the stomach to be seen on camera, rather than witnessing digestion, because as I previously mentioned, it takes up to four hours to transform in the stomach. Aiming to show the public a live view of edibles inside the stomach, Erskine was fed gummy bears; two or three gummy bears of assorted colours entered the gut, and gradually each of them was captured on camera.



82. Bompas and Parr. *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014.
Gizzi Erskine walking up and down the stairs

Furthermore, and to make these images more interesting by moving the gummy bears around the stomach, Erskine was asked to walk up and down the stairs several times to stimulate the peristaltic movements of her stomach and therefore capture the gummy bears moving. Erskine was also asked to perform other actions before this one, for example, at the beginning when she introduced the PillCam in her mouth, she was asked to move the tongue, or to salivate, so the public could see the viscosity of the oral cavity.

Moreover, it appeared that the scenes of gummy bears floating in the stomach were not enough for those directing the action; it was as if they wanted to see the gut as a voracious machine destroying food as soon as it comes into contact with the gastric acid—composed of hydrochloric acid, potassium chloride, and sodium chloride. For this, they wanted Erskine to eat another type of food. A pizza was ordered live and delivered to the stage, with the pizza deliverer handing the pizza directly to Erskine.



83. Bompas and Parr. *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, 2014.
Gizzi Erskine being delivered a pizza while a gummy bear inside her stomach is live-screened

While eating pizza, however, Erskine was not the only one eating: the public participated too by eating the images of Erskine's gut. The public feasted on the live-streamed images of her body, showing that just as one incorporates the other corporeally, this incorporation and assimilation also takes place on a metaphorical level. This action, moreover, requires considering that if Bompas or Parr have chosen to "volunteer" to ingest the PillCam and show their inner organs, the issue of the male gaze and the commodification of subjects would not be as emphasised as it was in this case. Bear in mind that Bompas or Parr first though of this project after experimenting with selfie pictures of the interior of their mouths while eating, however, the decision to explore images "beyond

regular gastro-photography" draw their interest towards photographic technologies use for medical purposes.[19]

The distancing of Bompas or Parr from being the centre of the attention and rather choosing a female celebrity to be displayed only reinforced the male gaze dynamic over women's bodies. Furthermore, it embedded Erskine's body in a cycle of objectification, fragmentation and consumption, as proposed by Carol J. Adams in *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. As I will explain, during this performance which began by offering hospitable gestures to the public, it suddenly became a hostile action towards women. In *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*, Erskine's body became objectified as if she was an accessory to the PillCam, and not the other way around. The phase of objectification, according to Adams, allows the oppressor, or in this case the viewer, to consider the "being as an object".[20] In this case, for example, the public focused more on the images shown on the screen, and the gummy bear, and even though Erskine moved around the stage to give the public satisfactory views of the gut performing peristaltic movements, Erskine herself was not in focus. This process of objectification, explains Adams, is followed by the "dismemberment or fragmentation of the body", which explains why all the attention was focused on the circular images depicted on the screen, and where the stomach remained the only portion of the body that had the public's interest and attention.[21]

Furthermore, the phase of consumption to which Adams refers, can also be explained here in terms of "eating the other" through the visual imagery depicted during the *Journey to the Centre of the Gut*. Consumption *"only exists* [here] *through what* it represents": the "consumption of the referent [women, and specifically Erskine's body] reiterating its annihilation as a subject".[22] In other words, a woman was being constantly gazed and objectified under the excuse to present medical knowledge, emphasising how the body of this female chef was subjected to the penetration of an object—the PillCam—but also by the gaze of

[19] Bompas mentioned that the project came to mind as an exploration of food photography and instantaneous sharing of images as is the case with Instagram. Ibid.
[20] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 73.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

the audience. Put it more simply, the public feasted on the other's body while at the same time they intended to identify their own corporeality with the live projected images of Erskine's gut. They ate the other in a hostile way, even if they were probably not aware. Even if Bompas and Parr intended to examine digestion and eating as a live action performed in public, the analysis of this action requires, once again, reconsidering feminist critiques that denounce the voracity of phallocentric discourses and canons about gender, thus only in this way the everyday act of eating and the metaphorical ingesting the other can be thoroughly discussed within the ethics of *eating well*.

Overall, a *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* shows the importance of identifying, always, who or what we are eating through the orifices of our own body, reminding us that we do not just eat for nutritional purposes, as Dr Anderson's presentation reinforced. In other words, eating also requires identifying as a "metonymical act of interiorising symbols, language, and social codes".[23] As per Adams, this food-based action suggests that "we all consume visual images of women all the time", not only of their physical exteriority but also of their inside.[24] The public not only feasted visually on Erskine's image but also on her internal organs and processes. The female body was—again—voraciously eaten and objectified for educational and recreational purposes.

The gut: Between corporeal hospitality and hostipitality

Although *Journey to the Centre of the Gut* emphasised the objectification of the body and eating as the appropriation of the other, it is worth mentioning that Dr Anderson's presentation highlighted the stomach as a site where symbiotic relationships take place. Digestion is, I argue, a complex process of corporeal hospitality, understood as the moment when the body is shared with others or allocates the other. The gut becomes a place for others: plants, animals, and other species that are ingested and incorporated as food. For this, it is worth considering that the notion of hospitality is used by medical discourses when referring to the stomach and intestines as organs that in fact become home and

[23] Derrida and Nancy, "Eating Well or the Calculation of the Subject", 43.

habitat for other species, including bacteria and parasites living inside our own bodies, and sometimes without us noticing it.

In this sense, the openness of the notion of hospitality requires thinking upon an embodied approach to hospitality in order to question what or whom we ingest and digest. Or more precisely, to consider who helps us digest, to get nourished, and ultimately, to survive. The invisibility of the process of digestion, the assimilation of what (who) we eat, and the unawareness of the multiple internal corporeal relationships with others need to be brought back as a central focus of hospitality and eating practices within an ecological-feminist framework. With this I mean that it is therefore important to consider eating and digestion beyond an anthropocentric point of view, and to acknowledge it as a series of host-guest relationships between multiple species inside and outside the self.

The new approaches to microbiology, for example, posit the human body as a complex repository or environment as we "share our body with around 1,000,000,000,000,000 microbes. They outnumber our own cells 10:1" which makes us "human-microbe hybrids".[25] The view of microbes only as noxious has changed since Pasteur's foundational ideas of microbiology, as previously referred in the last chapter when discussing fermentation. More recent discourses posit the microbial other as part of collaborative practices, where the "interaction of the gut microbiome with gut parasites, viruses, yeasts, and fungi" are key in human health.[26] I propose that under this perspective the gut can be suggested as a place where matter and space are offered—or given—to others, a space in which the notion of absolute hospitality and conditional hospitality interweave, regardless of the fact that medical discourses have addressed to microbial agents using the terms of hospitality, hostility and the relationship host-guest to understand the interactions taking place within the digestive system, i.e.: the term parasites or the unwanted guest is often used to refer to microorganisms that do not benefit the human species or cause certain harm;

[24] Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 73.
[25] Wellcome Trust, *Invisible You. The Human Microbiome* (United Kingdom: Wellcome Trust, 2015), 17.
[26] James M. Kinross, Ara W. Darzi, and Jeremy K. Nicholson, "Gut Microbiome-Host Interactions in Health and Disease," *Genome Medicine* 3, no. 14 (2011): 5.

the opposite happens with those organisms that bring any sort of help, such as probiotics, for example.

These relationships, however, can take place in two different ways: firstly, they present beneficial interrelationships both for humans and non-human species, like the bacteria living in the gut which help us to digest our the food; and secondly, they are parasitic relationships where the guest takes control of the space in which it is allocated, making sense of the term *hostipitality*, as suggested by Derrida. He explains that the same etymological origin of the word hospitality contains its own contradiction, giving place to the unwanted guest, the parasite.[27] Gut worms and harmful bacteria enter the body via food, and stay in this space. This is to say, the body—and the ingested food—is shared with parasites which influence corporeal transformations of the self that involves affecting and being affected by and through others; this is despite the fact, as Diprose notes, that the idea of the ownership of the human body "belongs to a particular self to which it is attached".[28]

When eating food, the body welcomes these living others via the mouth, an action which lingers close to the notion of absolute hospitality in the sense that the mouth does not ask for identification of those who enter uninvited. Once in the gut, microbial communities and parasites cohabit until the unwanted guest gradually takes control over this organic threshold. Hospitality and hostility are , in this sense, notions that further develop in the gut, a site where *inter-corporeal generosity*, following Diprose, suggests that the self is open to others. However, this is not a relationship "based on an ideal of mutual exchange between equals", thus only one party benefits from the other.[29] Put in simply, when we eat the bacteria living in our gut are benefited from the food that we ingest. However, when a foreign and uninvited guest (microorganism) enters the body, or the gut more precisely, the microbial other is considered as an unwanted presence that profits from the body and substances that the we ingest, thereafter affecting the

[27] Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality", 3.
[28] Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity*, 46.
[29] Ibid., 95.

host (us and our gut microbiome) and creating an imbalance in the gastrointestinal environment.

Contemporary artistic practices address this, and become a powerful means to encourage thought about the process of digestion and all the intervening actors, including the host-guest relationships taking place within the gut. Bearing in mind the latter, in this last section I refer to digestion as corporeal hospitality, emphasising the organic and microbiological relationships with others.

Anna Dumitriu: The microbial other as symbiont companion

> *My encounter with bacteria must somehow recognise that*
> *bacteria* do *precede my relating with them.*
> *It must also somehow recognise that*
> *"I" am bacteria, that bacteria are us.*
>
> —Myra J. Hird. *The Origins of Sociable Life.*

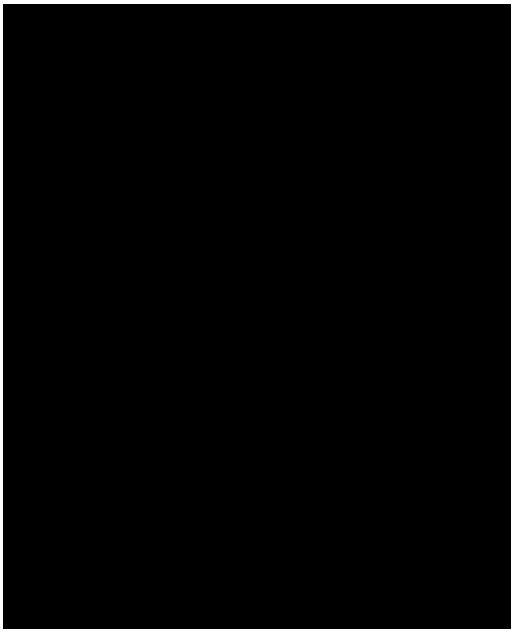
Don't try this at home (2015) created by British artist Anna Dumitriu and focuses on the process of digestion and gut *microbiome*-host interactions[30] in health treatments. This artwork, contrary to that of Bompas and Parr, makes visible the process of digestion on a microbiological level rather than only making visible the body and organs of a subject. On the contrary, this artwork, developed in an "art lab"—a "laboratory space … which opens up to art production [and in which] hybrid work practices and environments emerge"[31]—brings to the fore the inhabitants of the gut and the importance of bacterial gut and faecal cultures, highlighting the recently approved practice of faecal transplants as a treatment to counteract *Clostridium difficile* infections. In this sense, I discuss this artwork as it refers to hospitality and hostility in close relationship to the notion of eating the other. I propose, in this case that faecal matter transplants illustrate

[30] The term refers to the "totality of microorganisms and their collective genetic material present in or on the human body or in another environment". Wellcome Trust, *Invisible You. The Human Microbiome*.
[31] Lindsay Kelley, *Bioart Kitchen. Art, Feminism & Technoscience* (United Kingdom: I. B. Tauris, 2016), 3.

corporeal hospitality in which host and guest relationships take place. Moreover, this artwork serves to argue that the food we digest is also expelled by the body, carrying with it bacterial cultures that are reincorporated to the environment; thus highlighting how food practices and the food system are a series of collaborative host-guest relationships that need our attention in order to be able to consider that we are in fact *eating well*, as Derrida would suggest.

Don't try this at home was developed as an artistic and scientific practice, commissioned as part of the Eden Project and displayed as part of the permanent exhibition "Invisible You. The Human Microbiome" in the United Kingdom. The artist took part in a lab-based residency at the Healthcare Associated Infection Research Group at University of Leeds, in collaboration with Caroline Chilton and Jane Freeman, where she developed a sculptural installation that explores the complexities of faecal microbiota transplants.[32] This procedure has been recently approved by the National Health Services in the United Kingdom and included as an approved treatment by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). This treatment, according to the NICE guidelines, are only advised for patients suffering with recurrent *Clostridium difficile* infections that have not responded to previous courses of antibiotics.[33] The procedure involves taking samples of stool donated by healthy subjects, sometimes family members of the patient, which are then screened for pathogens, viruses and parasites. The faeces are diluted with water, or another liquid such as milk or yogurt, and then strained to remove large particles. The created faecal suspension is introduced to the patient via nasogastric tube, nasoduodenal tube, rectal enema or via colonoscopy.[34]

[32] Anna Dumitriu, "Bioart and Bacteria - The Artwork of Anna Dumitriu", *Bioart and Bacteria - The Artwork of Anna Dumitriu*, n.d.
[33] National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, "Faecal Microbiota Transplant for Recurrent Clostridium Difficile Infection (IPG485)" (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, March 2014), http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ipg485/resources.
[34] Ibid., 2.



84. Anna Dumitriu. *Don't try this at home*, 2015
Prepared faecal transplant sample

Dumitriu's practice addresses faecal transplants as part of treatment courses but specifically related to cases where individuals take on a *do-it-yourself* approach without testing the faecal samples, putting themselves at risk of further infections caused by other bacterial strains or viruses or parasites, hence the name of the sculptural piece. The artwork consists of textiles stained and patterned with sterilised gut bacteria inside an anatomical glass containing a faecal suspension as used in the transplants and presented inside a carved wooden box that mimics the view from the microscope of the bacterial cultures.



85. Anna Dumitriu. *Don't try this at home*, 2015
Textile impregnated with gut bacteria and a prepared faecal transplant

Her artwork posits a different perspective to "eating the other": in this case, it entangles the incorporation of the microbial other taken from somebody else's faecal excretion. This practice and the artwork highlight the importance of healthy bacteria and its function in the gut, emphasising the ecological notion of the body in which relationships of hospitality linger to become relationships of hostility between humans and microbes, as is the case of *Clostridium difficile*.

To understand Dumitriu's artwork, it is necessary to bear in mind the interactions between microbial communities in the gut and the process of symbiosis, a process which entails the "living together of two or more differently named organisms for most of the life of at least one of the partners".[35] As noted before, the intestines carry a complex environment of different species of microbes that help humans to digest and transform the food they eat. This relates to Hird's ideas about symbiotic generosity, explaining that symbiotic relationships are constantly embedded in a continuous gifting that gives place to a "transformative process" between subjects, but also takes place "within and between bodies (between microorganisms, bacteria, viruses, and so on)".[36] Bear in mind, for example, that gastrointestinal bacterial communities serve as a barrier for foreign microbial agents that enter the gut, protecting us from their harmful effects.

Nevertheless, at times, the *gut microbiome*[37] becomes disrupted and invaded by strains of noxious bacteria which take over the gut, causing an imbalance of the bacterial communities and their functions, affecting the health of the host: humans. Functions that have a direct impact on digestion are disrupted so the nutrients cannot be assimilated or incorporated effectively. Our gut provides a suitable environment for microbes that produce a range of "carbohydrate-degrading enzymes" that we as humans cannot produce. In other words, we "leave [...] digestion to our microbial partners".[38] This process of symbiosis is key

[35] Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life*, 58.
[36] Ibid., 89.
[37] Understood as a "vast collection of symbiotic organisms living in the human gastrointestinal system and their collective interactive genomes". Kinross, Darzi, and Nicholson, "Gut Microbiome-Host Interactions in Health and Disease."
[38] Wellcome Trust, *Invisible You. The Human Microbiome*, 30.

to our own survival, hence the relevance of thinking of the *gut as home* for others, but also of digestion as a process of corporeal hospitality and generosity.

Bearing in mind Dumitriu's *Don't try this at home*, it should be noted that faecal transplants intend to restore the individual's microbiota, a practice that, to some extent, aims to regain "sovereignty" of the gut, a place crucial for both human and microbial species. Furthermore, this emphasises how discourses of power prevail in medical discourses, as the notion of hospitality is insistently used to address the relationship to others in terms of host and guest, or host and parasite. *Don't try this at home* draws attention to how "global and local trajectories" of food practices, following Flammang, impact on and take place inside our own bodies.[39] One needs the other constantly, as faecal transplants emphasise. This medical treatment pushes the ethical responsibility to and for others to the limit as it extends our understanding for a radical unconditional hospitality towards the non-human other—the "other" friend and ally.

Finally, *Don't try this at home* emphasises how the food chain and hospitality are linked the entire time if we consider that the excretion of faeces—the result of our digestive process—continues to be a hospitable space for others. Faecal matter remains useful, as a hospitable medium that nourishes and enables the growth of bacteria outside our bodies, signalling that the relationship of hospitality does not end by the time food is shared, eaten, and digested with others. As Myra Hird suggests, it requires us to think of eating in terms of microbial ethics, which is "an ethics of eating well with bacteria", where the bacteria are "the first (and last) link in the food chain".[40] In other words, faecal matter remains a fertile ground that *feeds* others, i.e. the microbes that are later reintroduced to the landfill, and matter becomes part of the nutritious soil where plants grow, those that we and non-human others feed upon. This means that "we share (and intimately depend upon) the same microbial ecosystem as everything that we eat";[41] however, it is worth remembering that our bodies, as Alhäuser's neo-barroque vanitas *Gegen Schwermut* portrays, are also

[39] Flammang, *The Taste for Civilization*.
[40] Hird, *The Origins of Sociable Life*, 142.
[41] Ibid.

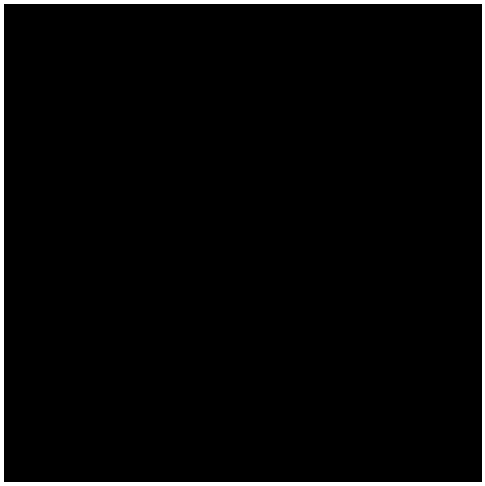
reintroduced to the environment by the time our decaying bodies are disintegrated by bacteria once dead, becoming in this sense, food for others.



86. Anna Dumitriu. *Don't try this at home*, 2015
The finished artwork, an installation view



87. Sonja Alhäuser. *Gegen Schwermut*, 2002
Detail showing the digestive process in the gut and the intestines, as well as the decay of the body



88. Sonja Alhäuser. *Gegen Schwermut*, 2002
Detail showing faecal matter being reincorporated to the landfill

Conclusions

Food has never been more advertised, commercialised or studied than in the 21st century. The growing interest in this topic covers numerous issues, including the process of cooking, but most importantly, the gesture of hospitality when sharing and eating food with others. Overall, my analysis is an attempt to link deconstructive philosophical debates of hospitality, food studies, art, and gender theory to explore artistic practices that shed light on the complexities of hospitality, especially in relation to the host–guest relationship. This responds to the burgeoning interest of the link between art and food, considering that new experimental art groups and artists are constantly appearing around the world, making it clear that the interest in food has greatly permeated the artistic realm. Moreover, the relationship between food and art has caught the attention of curators, academics and researchers who have approached this subject of study from different perspectives. Food is no longer considered as simply a culinary subject, but also a concern of the fields of art history and visual cultures. In this sense, this study makes a contribution to the developing field of food-based art practices and feminist art by inserting the notion of hospitality into the analysis of contemporary artworks that engage with the *food system*.

I analysed food practices through hospitality in order to better understand the actions and subjects involved in the entire food system; that is, to question who, or what, gives hospitality to another and the conditions in which this exchange is produced. The notion of hospitality, I contend, highlights the numerous relationships with others in which eating—understood as the ingestion and assimilation of food—is an action that is only possible because of the input of subjects, non-human species, objects, and practices that take place before, during and after we put food into our mouths.

I used the notion of hospitality to raise awareness of the fact that food practices constitute a network of collaborations between human and non-human species, acknowledging that eating is never performed all by one's self. In this sense, and following Derrida's notion of *eating well*, I have sought to make visible the relationships with others throughout the food system. I have emphasised that if

food is greatly linked to the idea of giving hospitality, then it is crucial to think of it as an ethical relationship to the other; one which needs to be thoroughly explored within the different stages and processes involved before, during, and after eating. In other words, to discuss the complexities of food practices and of hospitality, emphasising our food's journey from the farm or the garden; placing the food at the table; ingesting it; and then following the food's passage from the mouth to the gut, expelling it so it can finally go back to the environment.

Moreover, this thesis shows that artists are increasingly concerned about the food system, food politics and food practices. My analysis centres on food-based artistic practices of female artists created in the last 15 years. Their artworks help to elucidate the ways in which the hospitable gesture takes place. The choice of food-based practices reflects my own interest but also mirrors the growing enthusiasm of visual culture for food-related customs. A feast for the eyes is constantly displayed as a means to satisfy our appetite and gluttony; at the same time, it reminds us of the implications embedded in eating. The artistic practices of Gauthier, Ríos, Alhäuser, Rubell, Prvacki, Carroll, Simun, Dimitriu, and the duo of Bompas and Parr, are proposed as collective gatherings that address cooking, eating, sharing or growing food. They have in common the characteristic of being participatory artistic practices that encourage the public to engage in the development and consumption of the artworks. This collaborative approach, furthermore, suggests that food is close to the notion of hospitality. Nonetheless, I do not focus on eating the work of art, but on the complexities and problems that these artworks address, specifically, hospitality and its relationship with the food system. Furthermore, even if some of the practices are categorised and discussed as part of *relational aesthetics*, in most cases, the artists do not clearly mention the notion of hospitality.

At the same time, these artistic practices highlight the anthropocentric and phallocentric logic that suppose exclusions of individuals and species in each of the stages of the food system, and bearing in mind that hospitality is inextricably linked to its opposite: to hostility, or violence. In this sense, I have centred my attention on the conditions in which hospitality takes place, paying attention to the relationships between host and guest. In particular, my analysis is focused on

gender-based exclusions, where they relate to the hospitality industry, agricultural practices, the domestic kitchen, or even in relationship to the maternal body. My analysis is engaged with the paradox of hospitality, highlighting that this notion is never stable, rather it lingers between possibility and impossibility, and how this reflects on food practices.

The artworks chosen, however, suppose the exclusion of others, showing that my intention to give a hospitable gesture depends on conditions and choices of the host. There are notable omissions, nonetheless, I decided to give place to those artists who I consider have not been fully addressed somewhere else. Furthermore, in the broader area, this analysis aims to contribute to debates about the ethics of the other and food practices which, at the same time, permeate a wider network of relationships in the food chain.

In chapter 1, the notion of hospitality helped to re-evaluate food-gathering practices, bearing in mind the labour of the subjects who constantly invigilate the growth of vegetable and animal species that are later consumed. I proposed that agricultural practices need to be discussed within an ecological framework in which both human and non-human species cohabit, i.e. to consider that within agricultural spaces vegetable and animal species take part in temporal relationships with each other. In particular, I examined Gauthier's urban agricultural artistic practices, Ríos's edible garden, Alhäuser's foraging edible experience, and Rubell's metaphorical hunting installation, as all four deal with the relationship between humans and nature in terms of the gathering of food. Moreover, I explored how artistic practices address the killing and eating of non-humans, and highlighted the *carno-phallogocentric* logic that Derrida mentions, in terms of violence and domination of non-human animals, and how these are eaten, incorporated and assimilated.

Chapter 2 explored the relationship between hospitality, cooking, and the kitchen. I centred my attention on artists that displace the kitchen from domesticity into the realm of art exhibitions taking place inside museums and galleries. I discussed cooking as a gendered practice that endorses relationships of power, showing that domestic cooking responds to phallocentric and patriarchal discourses that emphasise women as underestimated subjects whose

labour is not fully recognised, and is instead disguised as hospitality. I highlighted that the kitchen should not be solely considered as a space where women are empowered, thus this only reproduces the same logic of power, giving place to exclusionary practices, submission, and violence that women rehearse towards others, in terms of gender, class, race, and culinary knowledge. In particular, I analysed the artworks of Alhäuser and Rubell, and the culinary practice of chef Ferran Adrià, in terms of culinary language and culinary nostalgia. I analysed that apart from language, migrants share food practices, including recipes, as cultural markers that allow them to be constantly "in touch" with their homeland.

In chapter 3, I explored three artistic practices presented as part of the exhibition "Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art" at the Smart Museum of Art in Chicago in 2012, an exhibition which focused on portraying and questioning the idea of hospitality as depicted, presented, or enacted by contemporary artists. The artworks used food and drink to convey the idea of hospitality, linked to commensality. I argued that a closer examination of these artistic practices disrupts a fixed logic which only posits generosity, hosting, and commensality as playing an essential role in community formation; on the contrary, these artworks also reveal the exclusions and violence exercised while eating with others, shedding light on the aporia of hospitality, as explained by Derrida. I highlighted the moment of the welcome by means of giving and receiving food. Furthermore, I discussed that hospitality is always conditioned to the sovereignty of the host and to a logic of exchange, as the guest is expected to reciprocate the gesture of hospitality. The welcome establishes the roles and limits assigned to a stranger who is later recognised as a guest. He or she is granted the right of hospitality and allowed to enter the threshold only after the host confirms there are no hostile intentions that could possibly harm him/her. In specific, I discussed the embedded conditional logic of table manners and ritual with which the guest must comply once sitting at the table and eating food provided by the host.

In chapter 4, I focused my attention on the fact that hospitality continues even after food is digested, arguing for a continual process of hospitality taking place inside our bodies, understood as embodied or *corporeal hospitality*. This idea was

explored within three different approaches. The first one focused on eating a cheese made with breast milk. I explored the ambivalence of assumptions in regard to the maternal body in terms of hospitality and hostility, that is, the acceptance or rejection when "eating" this maternal fluid. The second approach focused on hospitality and eating the other in relationship to the notion of incubation, focusing on the fermentation of yogurt using non-human milk. I discussed fermented food products as hospitable space and matter which enable the cohabitation and collaboration of multiple species, even if one of them *eats the other* unnoticeably. Finally, I explored the notion of hospitality as an intricate embodied relationship, with the microbial other hosted by our bodies. I centred my attention on what, or who, we ingest and digest in fact helps us to accomplish the digestive process, and nourish ourselves: the microbes in the gut. In this sense, I proposed the human body in terms of an ecological notion of hospitality, considering that the ethical imperative to which Derrida refers also comes into play during the bacterial and the human encounter, and even after digesting food.

The artworks I have discussed can be considered as microstructures of relational hospitality where the private is opened to allow the guest to enter. The intention is to propose hospitality as a notion which develops within a constant cycle of relationships to, and with, others along the food system. I contend that, acknowledging the relevance of the notion of hospitality as ethics contributes to performing a more careful and responsible way of eating. That is to say, that we need to be constantly aware of eating as a practice that must entail, following Derrida, a critical thinking of the fact that all along the food system, we are constantly eating others. I contend that within this logic, it is possible to envision the hospitable gesture as an act of *eating well* that begins to germinate by recognising the processes, social relationships and (unequal) dynamics of power embedded within the food system, such as those taking place between the industry and local producers; and between women workers in the agricultural sphere and those who consume their effort and labour—the result of patriarchal and phallogocentric logic that tends to diminish women's work.

Considering the contemporary panorama of food production, including the scarcity of resources such as land and water; the use of genetically modified crops; and the growing number of endangered crops, seeds, vegetable and animal species, it is necessary to reconsider ethical and responsible ways in which we gather our food. This should include being aware of locally grown produce, learning the seasonality of the crops, the way they are grown, and the multiple uses we can make of them in order avoid unnecessary waste. Moreover, it is necessary to reject the socioeconomic rationale of agricultural practices being considered less important, and to denounce and counterbalance the logic that supposes lower wages and poor working conditions of agricultural workers. The artistic practices I have presented endorse an understanding of how food is grown and gathered, activities which seem distant to the life of inhabitants of large urban areas. It is about time to recognise the labour involved on a daily basis by farmers—and women specifically—in agriculture; without their effort, there would be no food at our table. Rather than thinking of food gathering as an activity that is done by others who we do not see or know, it is necessary to understand it as a communal affair, as ephemeral moments of hospitality that include gestures of conviviality and complicity between both human and non-human species. Furthermore, it is also vital to be aware of how animal mass-slaughter practices are performed within the food system, in order to question what we are eating; that is, to reflect on the ethics of killing others and the violence these practices embed.

I consider that this initial reflection continues by the time food is cooked. Cooking should be thought about within the logic of hospitality, distancing it from patriarchal and phallocentric assumptions, bearing in mind that cooking practices and spaces require constant exercise of an ethics for and to the other that ultimately materialises as food. This permeates both the domestic space, but also the hospitality industry. I contend that if cooking is assumed to be a generous act of hospitality, the subjects performing this activity should never think of it as one that is imposed; especially in light of gender-based logics that subsume women to traditional roles that are mirrored in the professional realm. The kitchen needs to be open to others, regardless of their class, nationality or gender. Moreover, it is worth recognising that culinary knowledge, whether that

is from recipes or cookbooks, serve as documents that reminds us of the labour, materiality, and sensory experiences of the food that is gathered, cooked, and eaten. The notion of otherness permeates cooking practices, especially in light of migration. That means that to host and be hosted by others is to recognise that food is always embedded with *culinary nostalgia*, a notion that constantly reminds us of the homeland: you enter my home through the food that I cook and serve to you. In this sense, recipes become important symbols for subjects, in that they reinforce a sense of belonging—of "feeling at home" while being hosted somewhere else. Culinary traditions give place to a constant process of adaptation and adoption of other cultural influences. To understand and to safeguard these practices, I suggest, helps to understand cross-cultural relationships, and endorse the creation of foreign affairs strategies within a framework of culinary diplomacy in order to welcome others.

This feeling "at home" further relates to commensality and hospitality, especially considering that food becomes a powerful strategy to convey the welcoming gesture and plays a key role in "making guests." Nonetheless, rather than merely romanticising this gesture of hospitality, it is necessary to reconsider the ways in which we submit our guests to a logic of domination by the time they sit at our table, through the use of table manners and table rituals. The welcome determines the relationship between the guest and the host in the sense that it emphasises the conditions by which the new arrival enters the home, and at the same time it establishes the rules and tasks that both parties need to comply. That means, that the pleasant and hospitable experience of commensality can be suddenly transformed into one that prohibits, restricts, and conditions as it aims to protect the host from the guest's actions. Even if I serve food to the guest, my actions can leave a bitter-sweet aftertaste to those who realise that my welcome implies some sort of reciprocation. This idea is worth re-examining in light of hospitality industry practices, but also in domestic and international scenarios: the stranger who arrives to my table, needs to have a seat at the table regardless of its status, and bearing in mind of the possibility that, next time, I could be knocking on someone else's door.

The idea of commensality, furthermore, must also comprise the fact that we do not perform this activity by ourselves. By this, I do not mean in company of other humans, but rather to the fact that our food chain also includes being fed through the bodies of other humans: our mothers. At the same time, to acknowledge that we eat non-humans which are responsible for our diverse diets. Some products we eat on a daily basis are the result of microbial transformations; that is, we eat food that others have already began to assimilate: fermented products. The importance of microorganisms is such that we cannot dismiss their input in our digestive process; even if some of the microbes are noxious to our organisms, others remain as welcomed guests. This is particularly relevant considering the recent interest in fermented products and the use of probiotics for the benefit to the health of the gut, and their impact in the environment. Our process of digestion remains linked to others as the role of gut bacteria exemplifies, highlighting that commensality is also a microbial–human interaction. Rather than endorsing discourses of defence and competition inside and outside the body, we need to acknowledge digestion alongside the notions of hospitality, friendliness, conviviality and negotiation, especially in light of the microbial other. Eating needs to be understood as a process of symbiosis between host and guest, and where embodied hospitality mirrors a micro level in which the body and faecal excretions still constitute a hospitable environment for the microbial other that will later reincorporate and inhabit the land where vegetable and animal species were first gathered.

Consequently, the cycle of food production and consumption follows a continual process of hospitality. In other words, eating needs to be understood as a complex mix of social, economic, cultural and biological practices that require careful attention from a global to a local scale; from a macro to a micro level; between humans and non-human species, the ingestion and incorporation of food is first and foremost an ethical relationship, a gesture of hospitality with and to others. Eating and food practices require us to be constantly open to unexpected arrivals, to foreigners, strangers, animals, plants and microbes, acknowledging their differences but, most importantly, as Derrida mentions, accepting that one never eats alone; it is a hospitality gesture to which all of us must respond.

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